

NJPHA President's 2017 Annual Report

By Kevin McNally, MBA

If there is a theme to the work of the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) this past year, it is *partnerships*. Given our size and resources, NJPHA is limited in what we can do on our own. But by partnering with other organizations that share our goals, we can greatly amplify our voice and get more accomplished.

NJPHA's primary partnership is the Public Health Associations' Collaborative Effort (PHACE), comprising New Jersey's six public health associations. We've also developed partnerships with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the New Jersey Healthy Communities Network. This year, NJPHA was invited to be a member of NJDOH's *Healthy New Jersey 2020* Advisory Committee; participated in RWJF's annual gathering of its New Jersey partners; joined the New Jersey Healthy Communities Advocacy Coalition; and exhibited at the Building a Culture of Health in New Jersey conference. And we worked to strengthen our partnerships with New Jersey universities and colleges offering public health degrees. (See page 3 on NJPHA and Rutgers School of Public Health.) Even our Annual Conference was a partnership, organized in collaboration with the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey.

In the area of advocacy, NJPHA's partnerships with other organizations amplified our voice. On the national level, we joined the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the Trust for America's Health as signatories on letters to Congress opposing the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and the elimination of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. At the state level, we joined with partners in urging Governor Christie to sign a bill increasing the age of tobacco sale to 21, and in supporting a bill requiring driver education to include cyclist and pedestrian safety information. Our potentially most significant advocacy effort: PHACE's public health policy recommendations for Governor-elect Murphy's Healthcare Transition Committee.

In line with APHA's proclamation of 2017 as "The Year of Climate Change and Health," the New Jersey Climate Change and Public Health Working Group, of which NJPHA is a member, released the *New Jersey Climate and Health Profile Report* and a video on "Climate Change and Public Health Implications for New Jersey." The report and video are available on the New Jersey Climate Adaption Alliance website: <http://njadapt.rutgers.edu/>. So we look forward to 2018 – and beyond – with optimism for the future of NJPHA.

Editor's Note: Watch U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams discuss the importance of public health partnerships and other topics:

<http://www.publichealthnewswire.org/?p=19451>

NJDOH Shines Spotlight on Rising Trend of Congenital Syphilis **By Acting Deputy Commissioner Dana Thomas, MD, MPH**

National rates of syphilis are the highest they have been in 15 years. Unfortunately, the national rise in syphilis among women of reproductive age is paralleled by a rise in congenital syphilis (CS), which can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, early infant death, or severe illness in infants who survive. Although the resurgence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as syphilis presents a challenge for public health and healthcare providers, CS is preventable.

After a steady decline from 2008 to 2012, cases of CS increased by 46 percent between 2012 and 2015, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and preliminary data shows that CS increased again in 2016.¹ New Jersey has experienced the same trend, reporting 12 cases in 2016 after three years of no confirmed cases.² Cities reporting the most cases of syphilis are Newark and Jersey City, followed by East Orange and Paterson tied in third place. Other municipalities in the top ten for incidence of early syphilis in 2016 are West New York, Union City, Elizabeth, Irvington, North Bergen, Orange, and Camden.³

This data underscores the need to work together to protect mothers and newborns. Up to 40 percent of babies born to women with untreated syphilis may be stillborn or die from the infection as a newborn.⁴ Infants who survive birth with CS might have health problems including skin rashes, jaundice, enlarged liver and spleen, or severe anemia. Untreated babies may experience developmental delays or develop bone and joint abnormalities if they survive the newborn stage. However, even among those receiving some prenatal care, detection and treatment of maternal syphilis often occur too late to prevent CS. Of women who gave birth to an infant with CS, 42 percent were not tested in time to be treated to prevent CS.⁵

To raise awareness of CS and the potential harm to infants born to infected mothers, NJDOH launched a “Protect Your Baby from Syphilis” prevention campaign. Our campaign includes CS posters in six languages, social media (#teSTD4baby), and online resources including infographics, CDC reports, and fact sheets, available at

http://www.nj.gov/health/hivstdtb/stds/congenital_syphilis.shtml.

We are calling on public health partners to promote prenatal care and help raise awareness of the importance of getting tested for syphilis. Please consider posting information in public places.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/syphiliscalltoactionapril2017.pdf>

² https://www26.state.nj.us/doh-shad/indicator/complete_profile/StdSyphC.html

³ <http://www.nj.gov/health/hivstdtb/stds/stats.shtml#1>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/syphiliscalltoactionapril2017.pdf>

⁵ *Id.*

Thoughts on NJPHA and the Rutgers School of Public Health

By Perry N. Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH, RSPH Dean



At the December 20, 2017 Reception, I had the pleasure of being officially introduced to the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) as the Dean of Rutgers School of Public Health (RSPH), New Jersey's only accredited school of public health. RSPH holds immense pride in – but also responsibility for – educating the state's public health workforce. Through new initiatives, faculty appointments, and visibility, we aspire to become a top 20 school.

Becoming the Dean of RSPH has been one of my greatest achievements and embodies my nearly three-decade commitment to research, education, and activism. As Dean, I dedicate myself to working with faculty and staff to provide our students an educational experience that situates them for success in public health; to recruiting stellar faculty who expand our portfolio of scholarship; and to assuring that we are keeping the public in public health by working collaboratively with NJPHA, departments of health throughout the state, community-based organizations, and healthcare professions. Collectively, we can address and ameliorate the health disparities burdening our populations subjected to myriad life stressors compromising their health.

As an HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ health researcher, activist, and author, I am committed to ridding our world of HIV/AIDS and to improving the health of LGBTQ people through powerful research, teaching, activism, and community partnerships. More broadly, I seek to lead RSPH in addressing the health needs of marginalized populations disproportionately impacted by health disparities. In this regard, we are proud of our newly-developed Urban Public Health Master of Public Health program, rooted in a social justice perspective. This MPH program will train students in the unique and growing needs of urban populations; cultivate a body of urban health research; and build strong partnerships with the populations of Newark and other urban centers,

And as a newly-elected Member-at-Large of NJPHA's Executive Board, I look forward to the continued partnership between the RSPH and NJPHA as we address the health and well-being of the diverse and dynamic populations of New Jersey, through education, research, and practice. Together with NJPHA, we will embody our vision of keeping the public in public health.

Editor's Note: Follow Dean Halkitis on Twitter - @DrPNHalkitis

NJPHA Awards for 2017 Presented at Annual Conference

By Kevin McNally, MBA, NJPHA President

On October 23, 2017, during its Annual Conference, the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) presented awards to four individuals for their outstanding contributions to public health in New Jersey.

NJPHA's highest honor, the **Dennis J. Sullivan Award**, is for dedicated public service and contributing to the cause of public health. This year, there were two recipients of the Sullivan Award: James Brownlee and Peter Tabbot.

James A. Brownlee, MPH, Director of the Trenton Department of Health and Human Services, was honored for his revival of public health services in the City of Trenton; his service as an Officer on the Trenton Health Team; and his 30 years of leadership of the Consumer and Environmental Health program at the New Jersey Department of Health.

Peter N. Tabbot, MPH, Health Officer of the Rockaway Township Division of Health, was honored for his 26 years of accomplishments, including teaching public health (and coordinating the REHS training course) at Rutgers University; serving as President of both the New Jersey Association of City and County Health Officials and the New Jersey Environmental Health Association; and taking a leadership role in the state's obtaining federal grants for pandemic influenza and performance improvement.

The **Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt Award**, for outstanding service and leadership to the cause of public health, was presented to Rochelle Evans, RN, MS, former Director of the East Orange Health Department, for her leadership of the Essex-Passaic Wellness Coalition, and for proactive outreach to – and education about the Ebola virus for – East Orange's community of immigrants from West African countries impacted by the Ebola epidemic.

The **Dr. Ronald Altman Award**, for outstanding work in a health-related course of study, was presented to Mariam Rashid, MPH, a PhD candidate at Rutgers University, for her research papers on youth homelessness in Newark and on access to sanitation in South Africa.



Getting Started in Public Health Advocacy By Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH, Newsletter Editor

On October 25, 2017, the New Jersey Society for Public Health Education (NJSOPHE) presented its “Public Health Advocacy Overview” webinar. NJSOPHE President Candice Davenport, BSN, RN, MPH, MCHES, HO, discussed individual and organizational advocacy at the federal, state, and local levels and highlighted these resources:

- Advocacy Versus Lobbying: “Know the Difference Between Lobbying and Advocacy,” <http://bit.ly/2gqtedQ>; “Advocacy vs. Lobbying, Coalition Building and Public Engagement,” <http://bit.ly/1SUJ85O>
- Federal and State Legislation: GovTrack, “tracking legislation and votes in Congress,” and the New Jersey Legislature website, <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>
- Advocacy Tips: “Making Your Advocacy Efforts Count,” <http://bit.ly/2mOMsd3>; *APHA Legislative Advocacy Handbook: A Guide For Effective Public Health Advocacy*, <http://bit.ly/2ENyLSg>
- Advocacy Presentations: YouTube video and three slide decks from the Public Health Associations’ Collaborative Effort (PHACE) May 2016 program, “How Do We Advocate To Improve Health” - <http://bit.ly/2DqrhHu>

On January 10, 2018, the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) presented its “Government Affairs Update: What to Watch in 2018” webinar. Eli Briggs, Senior Government Affairs Director, and two Government Affairs Specialists discussed what happened in 2017 and previewed 2018. For the webinar recording, go to <http://bit.ly/2mi11EX> (Adobe Connect is required). NACCHO’s 8-page Advocacy Toolkit includes examples of advocacy versus lobbying activities, a Congressional calendar, and a timeline of the federal funding process: <http://bit.ly/2FrTfkH>.

Career Corner: Resources for Job Seekers Compiled by Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH

- From *Washington Post* Jobs: “10 Resume Mistakes You’ll Want to Avoid” <http://bit.ly/2hmtkzl>
- Idealist Careers on “4 Questions to Ask During Your Next Job Interview” <http://bit.ly/2goq3TM>
- From *Washington Post* Jobs: “6 Common Interview Types and How to Ace Them” <http://bit.ly/2geh4on>
- *New York Times* on “How to Use Social Media in Your Career” <http://nyti.ms/2jNNK9D>
- From *Washington Post* Jobs: “Tips for Cutting Your Resume Down to One Page” <http://bit.ly/2ApcFTTr>



New Jersey Public Health Association

NJPHA's quarterly Newsletter offers you an opportunity to write about public health topics.

Deadline for Spring 2018 Issue: Friday, March 23rd

Articles on ANY public health-related topic are welcome, such as:

- Internship or fieldwork (capstone/practicum) experience
- Work with a public health program or research project
- Public health events or news at your school
- Thoughts on a policy with public health implications
- Commentary on a public health issue
- Public health career advice
- Local, state, or national public health events, projects, or advocacy efforts
- Other news of public health importance

Please include this information:

- Title of article
- Byline with:
 - Your name and degree(s)
 - Your academic institution or employment affiliation
- A head shot or picture of yourself (if available)

Please follow these article submission guidelines:

- In Microsoft Word with 12-point, Times New Roman font
- Single-spaced
- 300-word maximum
- References (if applicable)

For examples of published articles, see past newsletters posted on NJPHA's website:

<http://njpha.org/category/newsletter>

Email your article (or any questions) to the Editor - Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH:
gme10467@gmail.com