

New Jersey Public Health Association

Advocating for Public Health in the State of New Jersey

Winter 2017 Issue

2016 NJPHA Annual Conference

By Kevin McNally, MBA, NJPHA President

Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue was the theme of the 2016 New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) Annual Conference, held in Edison, New Jersey on October 14th.

The opening speaker was the Honorable State Senator Loretta Weinberg (District 37 - Bergen County), Senate Majority Leader and Senate Judiciary Committee member. Sen. Weinberg spoke about the New Jersey Legislature's efforts to prevent gun violence and her experience with these laws, using the implementation of the Childproof Handgun Law of 2002 (the "smart gun" law) as an example. (Editor's Note: For more on Sen. Weinberg, see page 3.)

Christopher Rinn, an Assistant Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health, then discussed the Department's recent initiatives in the area of population health.

The keynote speaker was Bernadette C. Hohl, PhD, who has a joint appointment at the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice and the Rutgers School of Public Health. (Dr. Hohl filled in for Linda Degutis, DrPH, MSN, who was unable to attend due to last-minute travel problems.) Dr. Hohl gave an overview of the national and New Jersey data on deaths and injuries caused by firearms, and then described promising approaches to address this problem, drawing on her experience with violence prevention research conducted in New Jersey and Philadelphia.

In the afternoon, a panel discussed initiatives currently being implemented in New Jersey to prevent gun violence. Panelists included Mighty Fine, a Deputy Director of the American Public Health Association; Karen Kanter, Chair of the Middlesex County chapter of the Brady Campaign To Prevent Gun Violence; and Gurbir S. Grewal, Bergen County Prosecutor.

Conference speakers and panelists conveyed this message: Gun control legislation is only one of several possible public health approaches to gun violence. Other options include community-level programs that have been shown to be effective in decreasing all forms of violence, as well as those that aim to reduce the fears that influence people to consider guns for self-protection.

At the end of the day, attendees gathered in small groups to discuss what they had learned and to create written recommendations for NJPHA's Advocacy Committee to use in developing an action plan to guide NJPHA's actions to address this issue.

Editor's Note: More information on the 2016 New Jersey Public Health Association Annual Conference is available at <http://njpha.org/njpha-annual-conference/>.

The Best Way to Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure Is to #kNOwLEAD

By Cathleen D. Bennett, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health

There is no safe level of lead in children.

As lead exposure continues to be an ongoing health challenge, it is important that parents take precautionary measures to keep their children safe and healthy. While exposure can damage a child's learning and development, it can be prevented. The New Jersey Department of Health provides [resources](#) for parents to stay informed so exposure can be avoided.

The Department recently launched our #kNOwLEAD public education campaign, which aims to increase awareness of all lead hazards in homes, schools and on the job, and also educate residents about what they can do to prevent exposure and safeguard their child's health. I encourage everyone to follow our #kNOwLEAD campaign on Facebook and Twitter. The Department kicked off the campaign with a series of events across the state. The education campaign includes outreach about lead exposure and advertising in corner stores and buses.

Lead can disrupt the normal growth and development of a child's brain and central nervous system. While lead paint in homes built before 1978 remains the largest contributor to elevated blood lead levels in children, there are many different lead exposure sources, including water from leaded pipes and imported toys, candy, spices, jewelry, cosmetics, herbal remedies, and pottery.

Parents should make sure their child is tested for lead exposure at a pediatrician's office at ages 1 and 2. For uninsured residents, local health departments and community health centers provide free or low cost testing. Parents can also speak to their local health department about testing paint and dust in homes, especially in houses built before 1978.

The campaign builds on the state's commitment to addressing childhood lead exposure. New Jersey is one of only 17 states that require universal lead screening of all children at ages 1 and 2. Additionally, the Department of Health is strengthening New Jersey's standard for intervening in cases of potential lead exposure. The Department regulations are being updated to require earlier intervention when lower levels of lead are detected in a child — from 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood to between 5 and 9 micrograms. This change will enable public health officials and medical providers to intervene with education, case management, home visits and other steps, at the earliest possible time.

To learn more, please visit the Department's webpage: www.nj.gov/health/childhoodlead (which includes videos in English and Spanish to educate residents about lead exposure), and follow the #kNOwLEAD campaign on Facebook and Twitter to get the most current information.

Senator Loretta Weinberg Receives NJPHA's Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt Award

By Kevin McNally, MBA, NJPHA President



The New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt Award for 2016 was presented to the Honorable State Senator Loretta Weinberg at NJPHA's Annual Conference on October 14th. One of NJPHA's highest awards, it is presented to an individual "for outstanding service and leadership to the cause of public health."

Senator Weinberg, who represents District 37 (Bergen County) in the New Jersey State Legislature, received the award for her many legislative achievements and contributions to the health of everyone in New Jersey, including her sponsorship of such landmark legislation as the Smoke-Free Air Act of 2006 and the Childproof Handgun Law of 2002. Other significant legislation sponsored by Sen. Weinberg has required insurance companies to cover at least 48 hours of hospital care for newborn babies and their mothers; created the Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy; and provided funding for autism research. She has been a prime sponsor of marriage equality, anti-discrimination, and anti-hate crimes laws.

This NJPHA award was established in 1995, and is named for Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt (1830-1894), a physician from Metuchen who was a leading advocate for establishing public health programs in New Jersey. He served as the first Secretary of the New Jersey State Board of Health, and was one of the founders of NJPHA.

Editor's Note: Sen. Weinberg's New Jersey Legislature webpage is available at <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/BIO.asp?Leg=260>

Public Health Data in the Courts

By Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH

On November 17, 2016, the Network for Public Health Law (NPHL), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Law Program (PHLP), and the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics (ASLME) presented "Public Health Data in the Courts: *Gobeille v Liberty Mutual* and Its Implications," another webinar in their Public Health Law Series. Moderated by PHLP's Montrece Ransom, the webinar featured three speakers: Jason Lacey (Foulston Siefkin LLP), Tara Ramanathan (PHLP), and Denise Love (National Association of Health Data Organizations).

Mr. Lacey discussed *Gobeille v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Company*, a conflict between a Vermont law requiring all health plans operating in the state to report claims information to an all-payer claims database (APCD), and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) governing health plan administration, including reporting and disclosure. In *Gobeille*, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that states cannot enforce reporting requirements on self-insured ERISA health plans. For PHLP's "Selected Issues regarding ERISA, Health Benefits Plans, and State Laws that Address Health System Transformation," go to <http://bit.ly/2fdpvJK>.

Ms. Ramanathan highlighted the importance of health claims data for public health surveillance (e.g., vital statistics) and guidance on public health activities (e.g., prevention programs). Examples of public health uses for APCDs included chronic disease prevention, healthcare quality, and disparities research. State legal counsel should be consulted on the impact of *Gobeille* in states with – and without – APCDs.

Ms. Love suggested post-*Gobeille* actions for APCDs, such as commenting on the U.S. Department of Labor's proposal to authorize it to collect data from ERISA health plans. For more information, visit the APCD Council: www.apcdouncil.org/.

View/download the webinar slides at <http://bit.ly/2gsrK0m>.

Career Corner: Resources for Job Seekers

Compiled by Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH

- Idealist Careers' "Tips To Make Your Resume Stand Out" <http://bit.ly/2aXsdCR>
- From *Fast Company*: "How To Answer A Hiring Manager's Inappropriate (Or Illegal) Questions" <http://bit.ly/2aW959H>
- In *The New York Times*: "Looking for a New Job? These Free Apps Can Help" <http://nyti.ms/2bYfkKw>



New Jersey Public Health Association

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

Deadline for Spring 2017 Issue: Friday, March 24th

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, please see past newsletters, posted on NJPHA's website:
<http://njpha.org/>

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