

NJPHA President's Column
By Paschal Nwako, PhD, MPH

On October 2, 2018, the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) held its Annual Meeting in the Paul Robeson Campus Center at Rutgers University-Newark. This year's meeting was a collaboration between NJPHA and the Rutgers School of Public Health, with the theme "What Dictates Health – Is It Genetics or Zip Code? Health Equity, Research, and Policy for a Healthier New Jersey."

I welcomed the attendees (<https://bit.ly/2ChkTRQ>), and then introduced Jackie Cornell, Principal Deputy Commissioner for Public Health Services at the New Jersey Department of Health, who gave opening remarks on behalf of the Commissioner. Dr. Pamela Aaltonen, APHA President, followed with her keynote, "What is the domain of equitable health and why address social determinants of health?" (<https://bit.ly/2EoVYwU>). And the crowd was dazzled by distinguished speaker Dr. Denise Rodgers on "Addressing barriers to health – one zip code at a time" (<https://bit.ly/2US18aq>).

After lunch, the annual awards ceremony (<https://bit.ly/2BrBmkO>) was followed by a panel discussion of mapping and place-based approaches to addressing social and environmental factors impacting community health (<https://bit.ly/2BmEoqm>) and a presentation on the place of mental health in health equity (<https://bit.ly/2UQMhNQ>). The meeting concluded with "Can we rely on current data to identify clusters of social determinants that can be used for place-based approaches to addressing health concerns?" (<https://bit.ly/2QAecmn>).

NJPHA's Annual Meeting would not have been a success without the hard work of the Conference Committee: Thank you to Dr. Parvin Ahmadvanlou, Cynthia Golembeski, Kevin McNally, and Don Weinbaum.

It's the end of the year when families and friends come together to celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year. I want to thank you – the members who have been with NJPHA throughout the year. This association exists because of you. Thanks for your support in 2018, and we look forward to working with you in 2019.

Editor's Note: For a partial list of award recipients, see page 2.



2018 NJPHA Annual Conference Award Recipients

Dennis J. Sullivan Award

NJPHA's highest award, presented to an individual who exemplifies dedicated and outstanding public service which has contributed to the cause of public health in New Jersey

William Halperin, MD, DrPH, MPH
Professor, Dept. of Biostatistics & Epidemiology
Rutgers School of Public Health

Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt Award

Presented to an individual or organization for outstanding service and leadership to the cause of public health

Isles, Inc.
New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials

Lloyd M. Felmly Award

Presented to an individual for outstanding contributions through the communications media to the cause of public health in New Jersey

Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH
Newsletter Editor
New Jersey Public Health Association

Dr. Ronald Altman Student Award

Presented to an individual for outstanding work in a health-related course of study

Kristen D. Krause, MPH
PhD Candidate
Rutgers School of Public Health

Working to End the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

By Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA, New Jersey Health Commissioner

Great strides have been made in reducing the incidence of HIV; however, there is still so much more work to be done. There are more than 37,000 residents in the state living with HIV, and while new diagnoses are declining, we must continue the fight against the spread of this disease.

New Jersey is focused on ending this epidemic and reducing the annual incidence of HIV 75 percent by 2025. As a first step, the New Jersey Department of Health is joining the Rutgers School of Public Health (RSPH) and more than 780 organizations across the nation (including healthcare facilities, community-based organizations, foundations, pharmacies, and health departments) to support the *Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)* campaign.

UequalsU or U=U is a global campaign led by the Prevention Access Campaign to increase awareness about the effectiveness of HIV medications in preventing the sexual transmission of HIV. There is effectively no risk of sexual transmission of HIV when people living with disease are taking HIV medications as prescribed and have achieved and maintained an undetectable amount of the virus in the body.

Scientific advances in HIV care and treatment such as these are game changers that can get us to the vision of a future in which new HIV infections are rare. In New Jersey, the rate of newly diagnosed HIV cases has declined 39 percent in nearly a decade because of success in getting people tested for HIV and linked to treatment. Additionally, over the past 30 years, medical advances have led to a decline in the transmission of HIV from mothers to babies: the number of new cases of pediatric HIV diagnoses dropped from eight in 2007 to one in 2017 – a nearly 88 percent reduction. Through campaigns such as *U=U*, together we can accelerate this trend and end the HIV epidemic.

The Department is proud to collaborate with RSPH to spread awareness about the *U=U* science and will encourage stakeholders and other state agencies to help us promote this campaign. The Department announced this effort as part of its recognition of World AIDS Day on December 1st. As part of that day, I sat down with courageous clients at Hyacinth Foundation and leaders of that organization to talk about our commitment to ending this epidemic. Collaborations such as these are critical to the success of our efforts.

We will also continue to work with partners to promote testing and link individuals with treatment and HIV medications that are effective in preventing transmission of the virus. In 2017, nearly 80,000 free, confidential rapid HIV tests were administered at more than 170 locations, and more than 6,200 persons living with HIV received medications through the NJ AIDS Drug Distribution Program. In the past two years, more than 1,240 people were linked to PrEP through the New Jersey PrEP Counselor Program. Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a way for people who do not have HIV but who are at substantial risk of getting it to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day. Through the program, a network of PrEP counselors link individuals with physicians and advanced practice nurses who can prescribe preventive medication—a pill a day—to those at significant risk of contracting HIV.

We are also investing in expanding services at New Jersey's Syringe Access Programs. The Department is using federal funding to increase the harm reduction specialist role at all SAP sites to provide education, counseling, and case management to individuals at risk of contracting or transmitting HIV and other communicable diseases. The Department also utilizes nurses to enhance the services of SAPs to offer basic health and health education services. Access to Reproductive Care and HIV Services (ARCH) nurses counsel about reproductive health and reducing HIV transmission, conduct pregnancy and STD testing, offer adult vaccines, teach safer injection practices, provide wound care consultations, and arrange referrals for preconception, antenatal, and HIV specialty care. New Jersey has expanded the number of ARCH nurses in the state: now there are 14 nurses at 13 sites, including SAP locations and local health departments.

Ending this epidemic will require strong commitments and partnerships across the state. The Department invites public health associations—like NJPHA—to join us in employing efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and help individuals living with this disease. Local health leaders can find out more about becoming community partners in the *U=U* campaign on the Prevention Access website.



Public Health and Preemption

By Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH, Newsletter Editor

On October 16, 2018, ChangeLab Solutions (CLS) presented a webinar on “Preemption, Public Health, and Equity: The Search for Local Solutions” with Sabrina Adler (CLS), Kim Haddow (Local Solutions Support Center), and Miya Saika Chen (Partnership for Working Families (PWF)).

Ms. Adler described preemption as “an essential concept for policymakers and equity advocates to understand.” Her definition: “When the law of a higher jurisdiction [higher level of government] limits – or even eliminates – the power of a lower level of government to regulate a certain issue.” Ms. Haddow discussed past preemption (e.g., in gun control) and “new” preemption, such as state laws barring local efforts to address local problems (e.g., banning soda taxes).

Ms. Adler then focused on preemption’s relation to public health and health equity, mentioning the area of tobacco control, e.g., Tobacco 21 initiatives. Preemption has equity implications, affecting local efforts to address economic, health, racial, and social discrimination. Her key point: Preemption isn’t always negative; how it affects health equity depends on its type: ceiling (e.g., menu labeling), vacuum/null (common today), or floor (e.g., school nutrition standards) – and how it’s used.

Ms. Chen highlighted the impact of preemption – termed “state interference” – on equity, specifically state actions undermining racial and gender justice. One resource is PWF’s interactive map of 9 issues: <https://bit.ly/2I9hzsd>. Another resource is Grassroots Change’s preemption map of 8 public health concerns: <https://bit.ly/2LkR31q>. Ms. Haddow then concluded by offering 3 messages against preemption, emphasizing local control. Her 8 recommendations included: Do give examples of preemption’s negative impact; do consider language, e.g., use terms like “local authority” and “local democracy”; but don’t insult the role of state government.

For a fact sheet on “Preemption in Public Health,” go to <https://bit.ly/18PuTzI>. Watch the CLS webinar and download the slides at <https://bit.ly/2UQx6nw>.

Career Corner: Resources for Job Seekers

Compiled by Gwyneth M. Eliasson, JD, MPH

- “3 Mistakes To Avoid On Your Cover Letter” <https://bit.ly/2MrIaTE>
- “3 Tips For Your Best Reference List” <https://bit.ly/2ORK4OM>
- “Top 5 Resume Resources of 2018” <https://bit.ly/2SMJTG2>
- “How to Select the Perfect Writing Sample” <https://bit.ly/2yAOX7K>



New Jersey Public Health Association

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

Deadline for Spring 2019 Issue: Friday, March 22, 2019

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:
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