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Affiliate of the American  
Public Health Association

# New Jersey Public Health Association

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## 2017 Annual Report to the Membership

This report is a summary of the activities of the New Jersey Public Health Association (NJPHA) during the past year. If there is a theme to the work of NJPHA this year, it is *partnership*.

### Major Projects

**Climate Change:** The American Public Health Association (APHA) proclaimed 2017 as “The Year of Climate Change” and made this issue its primary focus for the year. Here in New Jersey, NJPHA has been collaborating with staff of the Rutgers Climate Institute on the development of the New Jersey Climate Change and Public Health Working Group. The Working Group, which was formed in October 2015, is a committee of the New Jersey Climate Adaption Alliance. The Working Group advised Rutgers staff on the development of a *New Jersey Climate and Health Profile Report*. A draft of this report was issued in February 2017 for public review and comment. The final Report was released in December and is available on the NJ Climate Adaption website at:

<http://njadapt.rutgers.edu/docman-lister/njcaa-meetings/199-chpr-final-12-6-2017/file>. Also available on their website (<http://njadapt.rutgers.edu/>) is a 15 minute video: *Climate Change and Public Health Implications for New Jersey*. In addition, NJPHA was invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on April 6 on “How Climate Change Impacts Our Health” sponsored by Congressman Frank Pallone.

**Public Health Accreditation:** NJPHA applied for and was awarded a \$5,000 Accreditation Support grant from APHA. This grant will support training on performance improvement methods for local health departments in New Jersey who are preparing to apply for national accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board. This project is a collaboration among NJPHA, the New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials (NJACCHO) and the Center for Public Health Workforce Development of the Rutgers School of Public Health. The training will take place during the first six months of 2018.

### Advocacy

**National:** NJPHA partnered with APHA and the Trust for America’s Health on national sign-on letters to Congress on critical policies impacting on public health, including:

- Opposition to repeal of the Affordable Care Act;
- Opposition to repeal or transfer of funding out of the Prevention and Public Health Fund; and
- Support for Federal Budget appropriations for public health programs in HRSA and CDC.

New Jersey: Working with partner organizations, NJPHA:

- Contacted Governor Christie to recommend that he sign legislation to increase the age at which a person can legally purchase tobacco to 21 years of age. Governor Christie signed this bill into law. He had pocket vetoed a similar bill in 2016.
- Contacted State Senator Paul Sarlo, Chair of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, to urge that the Committee consider and approve Senate Bill 2894, which would require the driver education course, certain new driver brochures, and driver's license written exam to include cyclist and pedestrian safety information. A similar bill has already been approved by the State Assembly.

## **Partnerships**

NJPHA has significantly increased its partnerships with other health-related organizations in New Jersey in the past two years, and particularly during 2017. These have included:

PHACE: NJPHA continues to participate in PHACE – the Public Health Associations Collaborative Effort. PHACE consists of the six public health associations in New Jersey, including NJPHA, NJACCHO, the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association (NJLBHA), the New Jersey Environmental Health Association (NJEHA), the New Jersey Society for Public Health Education (NJSOPHE), and the New Jersey Association of Public Health Nursing Administrators (NJAPHNA). PHACE meets bi-monthly to share information about the activities of the associations and to explore opportunities for collaboration. PHACE's most notable achievement in 2017 was the development of consensus public health policy recommendations to the Healthcare Transition Committee for Governor-elect Murphy.

NJ Department of Health: NJPHA was invited to be a member of the New Jersey Department of Health's *Healthy New Jersey 2020 Advisory Committee*, which advises the Department on the development and implementation of its State Health Improvement Plan. We were also invited to participate in NJDOH's Population Health Summit in June 2017.

Community organization partnerships: For the second year in a row, NJPHA was invited to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's annual gathering of its New Jersey partners. We established a working relationship with the New Jersey Healthy Communities Network and were invited to become a member of the NJ Healthy Communities Advocacy Coalition. We participated in, and had an exhibit table at, the *New Jersey Culture of Health* conference in November. We were invited to attend two conferences sponsored by Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, one on Health Equity and the other on Opioid Addiction, and have met with staff of Horizon's Community Education program about potential future collaboration. We've also met with staff from the Rippel Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and the Nicholson Foundation about potential future collaboration.

Academic partnerships: In recent months, NJPHA leadership was held meetings with the incoming Dean of the Rutgers School of Public Health, staff from the Rutgers University Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, the Chair of the Department of Public Health at Montclair State University, and the Chair of the Department of Public Health at William

Paterson University about increased collaboration between NJPHA and the public health programs at these schools. The Rutgers School of Public Health invited NJPHA to be a co-sponsor of its World AIDS Day program on December 7.

### **Annual Conference**

*Prevention of Brain Injuries* was the theme of the 2017 NJPHA Annual Conference, which was held in New Brunswick, NJ on October 23. This conference was a collaboration between NJPHA and the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ). Keynote speaker William Ditto, former Director of the Division of Disability Services of the NJ Department of Human Services, spoke about why brain injury is a significant public health issue. Psychologist Dr. Cynthia Boyer, a BIANJ Board member, spoke about how brain injury can be prevented, and a panel consisting of representatives of the Rutgers School of Public Health, Safe Kids New Jersey, AAA, BIANJ and the NJ Transportation Planning Authority spoke about existing prevention programs in New Jersey. NJ Commissioner of Health Cathleen Bennett gave a detailed presentation of the epidemiology and cost of brain injuries in New Jersey. The conference also included the presentation of NJPHA's annual Dennis Sullivan, Ezra Mundy Hunt, and Dr. Ronald Altman awards.

### **Other Activities**

APHA: NJPHA President-elect Pascal Nwako and Executive Board member Stanley Weiss attended the American Public Health Association Annual Conference in Atlanta in November. Dr. Nwako represented NJPHA at the APHA Affiliates Day meeting, and Dr. Weiss represented the NJPHA at the meetings of the APHA Governing Council. NJPHA leaders have also been participating in monthly conference calls with the other APHA affiliate associations in Region 2 (New York State, New York City and Puerto Rico).

Communications and Social Media: On-going updating of and improvements to the NJPHA website are being done on a continuing basis, thanks to the efforts of Executive Board member and Communications Committee co-chair Bernice Carr. NJPHA's activities were also actively promoted through the Association's Facebook page, Twitter account, and quarterly newsletter, thanks to the work of Newsletter Committee Chair Gwyneth Eliasson.

Submitted by: Kevin T. McNally, MBA, President

December 20, 2017