



Association News

An Affiliate of the American Public Health Association

Spring 2007

NMPHA 2007 Annual Conference

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The week of April 2-6, 2007, is National Public Health Week. Join the NMPHA in Albuquerque for a stimulating experience and opportunity to network with public health employees and advocates from all over the state!

The 2007 conference theme is "**Make Public Health a New Mexico Priority**." An array of workshops and

presentations will be offered that not only bring everyone up-to-date on where we are with NMPHA's priority issues of health care access, environmental health, poverty, substance abuse, health disparities, but take us a step further by exploring how NMPHA can move these critical public health issues to the top of the list of priorities for New Mexico decision

makers, community leaders, the news media, business community, and New Mexico's diverse population.

Download the Registration Form and the preliminary agenda at www.nmpha.org

Also, there is still time to sign up as an exhibitor! See Exhibitor Forms at www.nmpha.org

Part of the tradition of the New Mexico Public Health Association Annual Meeting is election of new Board Leadership. In 2007, NMPHA members will determine leadership for the open positions of President Elect, Treasurer, Nominating Committee, and APHA Representative. A list of candidates and their biographical information begins on Page 2

Thoughts from NMPHA's New Executive Director Marsha McMurray-Avila

Dear NMPHA Members...

I've now been in my new job for almost three months and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the privilege of letting me be your Executive Director. For many years I have admired the work and the membership of NMPHA and it is a real joy to now be able to immerse myself in that work along with all the good people that make up the Association.



For submissions to
future issues,
contact
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Candidates for NMPHA Open Board Positions

President Elect

Carolyn DeVore-Parks is a candidate for the position of President-Elect and she would like your support and your vote. Carolyn has the professional background and academic credentials needed to accept all of the challenges in this position. Although she has only been a member of NMPHA for two years, she has been a member of APHA for nearly ten years. She is very active on the NMPHA-Policy Committee.

Professionally, C. DeVore-Parks has a very diverse professional background in the areas of health science education (teacher of biology and health consultant, Boston School); and public health administration (Director, Sickle Cell Disease Program, Erie County Department of Health (NY); complemented by leadership experience in elected politics as a Town Representative, Brookline, MA)

Academically, Carolyn has a BS and EdM in Health Science Education, University of Buffalo (NY) and was a candidate for a doctorate in Community Health Education and Epidemiology. In addition, she completed graduate studies in the MSPH Program, Boston University.

At present, C. DeVore-Parks is on the Allied Health Faculty of a small private college in Albuquerque teaching academic medical courses. For her volunteer community service, she is very active in the League of Women Voters as the Public Relations Director and Executive Board member. She continues to remain an active leader in Party politics in Albuquerque/Bernalillo County. She has received the following career awards: "Who's Who in Health Care"; Teacher Fellow, Harvard College of Medicine (Boston); Dodge Fellow, Wellesley College, School of Research for Women (Ma); Outstanding Board Member, Brookline Human Relations Commission

Mallery Downs RN moved from the Midwest to southwest Colorado in 1970 and to New Mexico in 1978. In 1987, she graduated from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Since then she has worked as an outpatient nurse for the Indian Health Service at Acoma, Canconcito, Laguna facility; as a 'frontier' nurse in southwest Colorado, doing home health and public health; and as a discharge planner, at San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington. In 1992, she accepted a position as a health promotion specialist at the San Juan County Health Office in Farmington, with the New Mexico Department of Health/Public Health Division. In 1999, she and her husband moved to Albuquerque and since then she has worked as the program manager for the Community Environmental Health Program at UNM, Health Sciences Center doing federally funded environmental health research. She has been a member of NMPHA since 1993, was Treasurer from April 1999 to 2001, was elected President-elect in 2004, and still serves the NMPHA board as Past-President. Since April 2006, she has been serving as the chair for the Environmental Health and Justice Section. If elected as Treasurer she would work with the board on the Association's sound financial future

Treasurer

Toby Rosenblatt retired from the Public Health Division in 2004 after serving almost a decade as Deputy Division Director, which included work in policy development and oversight of several districts Offices, and a Bureau. Before that, he was Chief of PHD's Office of Administration and Program Support, which included work in Budgets, Finance, Human Resources, and Contracts. After his work as Deputy Division Director, he was self-employed in a solar and residential enterprise for two years. He is currently the Budget Director at the General Services Department, which has a budget of about \$400M and about 500 employees. Toby has been Treasurer of NMPHA for two years and believes that the association needs to continue to work on its long-term financial stability.

Continued on page 3

Candidates (continued from page 4)**Nominating
Committee**

Jerry Montoya is currently employed with the New Mexico Department of Health; Public Health Division as the Health Promotion Program Manager for Regions 1 & 3. In this position, he provides support to local public health offices and community partners on issues involving the public's health. He has extensive experience in training, facilitation, and planning. In terms of facilitation and planning, Jerry has worked with school districts, emergency management and preparedness committees, and a variety of local, county and state planning teams.

Jerry has been a member of the New Mexico Public Health Association since August 2000. He has served one term on the Nominating Committee and now as part of the Health Access Section he currently represents the Association on the Health Care for All Campaign Steering Committee.

Cheryl Ferguson is the owner of Policy Matters, an Albuquerque-based consulting firm that specializes in health policy and media advocacy, training and research. I provide consulting services to tobacco use prevention and other health policy efforts in New Mexico and across the country. I have worked on public health issues in the state for over sixteen years and received my Masters in Public Health from the University of New Mexico in May 2000.

I have been an active member of NMPHA since 1993. I currently serve as the Affiliate Representative to the American Public Health Association (APHA) Governing Council – a position that I have held since 2004. In 2006, I was elected as the Region VI Representative to the Committee on Affiliates (CoA) and I have also been very involved in the CoA Advocacy Workgroup. I have been a member of APHA since 1998.

My activity in NMPHA has also been extensive. I am the co-chair of the Policy Committee and have organized three incredibly successful Health Policy Legislative Forums for NMPHA (2004-2006). I have also provided several trainings to NMPHA members in Policy and Media Advocacy. From 2001-2003, I served as the NMPHA Treasurer.

I want to continue to serve as the APHA Affiliate Representative because this position has a direct link to APHA policies and I believe that my extensive policy experience is useful. Additionally, the Affiliate Representative is charged with bringing forward local concerns and views to the national organization. I have been a strong advocate for NM and have worked to keep our affiliate and our issues visible at the national office. I believe that my long-time involvement in NMPHA will allow me to continue to represent our affiliate well in Washington, DC.

APHA Rep

Tom Scharmen has worked for the public's health for 22 years, in both Chihuahua and New Mexico. He is currently a community epidemiologist in Albuquerque with the Public Health Division of the New Mexico Department of Health, Vice President of NMDOH for the State Employee Alliance, and Adjunct Professor at the UNM Masters in Public Health Program.

Thoughts from NMPHA's New Executive Director Marsha McMurray-Avila

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The last couple of months have been quite full as I gradually get to meet NMPHA members and become acquainted with the various individuals and groups with which we have partnerships.

Some of this has been accomplished by weekly trips to Santa Fe during the Legislature, connecting with Lydia (who has done an absolutely amazing job, in case you haven't noticed!), and attending meetings of the Human Needs Coordinating Council (HNCC), the Health Care for All campaign, the HNCC lobbying day in conjunction with the student social work advocates and the Family Justice Coalition, the Peace & Justice Day at the Roundhouse and the Environmental Justice Day at the Roundhouse.

I've also been spending a substantial amount of time supporting the Conference Committee in getting ready for our big Annual Conference on April 4-6. We've got a great line-up of speakers and workshop presenters to help us focus on what it really means to "Make Public Health a New Mexico Priority." The Association has the benefit of having an extremely committed and energetic President- Elect, Cynthia Serna, who has managed to put this conference together at the same time that she has been directing the campaign for the "Dee Johnson Clean Indoor Air Act" so that we can all breathe easier. Our Annual Conference is one of the big NMPHA events of the year that you simply don't want to miss and I definitely hope to see all of you there.

Our next big project following the Conference is implementation of the grant we received from the Con Alma Foundation to offer policy and media advocacy trainings around the state, using the Health Care for All campaign as the case study for the trainings. We hope in this way to encourage active participation from members and others in all parts of the state to work for universal health care coverage. As preparation for that we will be working with other Health Care for All members to hold Town Hall meetings around the state to discuss the results of the study commissioned by the Governor's Health Coverage Committee that will compare three different approaches to providing universal health care coverage for all people in New Mexico.

Based on what I've heard so far – in Board meetings and other conversations – it sounds like two of my over-arching priorities over the next few months are:

- expanding and strengthening our membership around the state, and
- increasing our resources through grant writing, fundraising, and other means

Acquiring more resources would also help expand and strengthen the membership. We have a possible opportunity coming up this summer to apply for funding from APHA through a Kellogg Foundation grant intended for building capacity and infrastructure in their state affiliates. Stay tuned for more on that – it could be very exciting!

I still have a lot to learn about what the membership needs and expects from the Association and what you're willing to contribute. I hope to have the chance to meet soon with many of you individually or in small groups, so that I can begin to find out your needs and expectations, as well as any skills, talents and interests that you're willing to share with this wonderful organization.

I'm really looking forward to an exciting and fun year in 2007. I emphasize the "fun" part because I know how easy it is for all of us to get so over-committed and over-extended that the work is no longer fulfilling and we burn out. And when it quits being fun, well in the words of Emma Goldman "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." Over the past many years, I have come to the realization that in order for our good work to result in good outcomes, we must take care of ourselves, keep ourselves healthy, surround ourselves with loving family, friends and community, and learn to practice the peaceful arts of cooperation and communication. So if you have any ideas for how we can have more fun while we continue to work hard on our commitment to public health – please don't hesitate to let me know!

In peace and health,

Marsha McMurray-Avila

What your dentist knows about your health

WebMD Feature By Sid Kirchheimer
Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD
Submitted by Patricio Larragoite, DDS
Courtesy of Joel Flores

The eyes may be the window to your soul, but for a look into your physical health, open wide: your teeth and gums say a mouthful. From predicting heart disease, diabetes, and premature birth to revealing leukemia, eating disorders, and vitamin deficiencies, your teeth and gums say a mouthful about your health. Receding or inflamed gums, cavities, tooth loss, gingivitis, and other dental dilemmas in adults can indicate the presence of serious health problems -- including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, vitamin deficiencies, and even the risk of having a premature or low-birth-weight baby. These dental problems can result from poor dental hygiene such as not brushing well or not flossing regularly. But even by following your dentist's golden rule, you may still be hurting your overall health.

"Every time you brush your teeth, especially if there's any inflammation in the mouth, it puts some bacteria into your bloodstream," says Honolulu periodontist Michael P. Rethman, DDS, President of the American Academy of Periodontology. "This isn't good, but it is normal."

That may explain a recent jaw-dropping study in the journal *Circulation* that links any of five common dental problems with an increased risk of heart disease. The kicker: dental problems proved to be stronger predictors of heart disease than more traditionally used risks factors such as low "good" cholesterol, high triglycerides, or high levels of a clotting factor called fibrinogen.

And it doesn't end there.

"Often, it's a dentist or periodontist who is the first to identify a systemic health problem because of what they see in the patient's mouth," says Col. Brian Mealey, DDS, chairman of Periodontics (the treatment of gum diseases) at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio, the nation's largest Air Force hospital. "And as more evidence accumulates, I think you'll see more dentists looking at oral health specifically to search for possible problems affecting the rest of the body."

They're now teaching this stuff in dental schools, which wasn't the case 10 years ago." So what can these dental detectives detect in those twice-yearly exams?

Undiagnosed **diabetes**, or poor blood sugar control in those already diagnosed with the disease, can be identified by several dental woes, says Sally Cram, DDS, a periodontist in Washington, D.C., and spokeswoman for the American Dental Association. "Diabetics tend to get periodontal disease at a rate three to four times higher than people without diabetes, but when their condition is controlled with medication, diet, or other treatments, their periodontal condition will usually stabilize and return to health," she tells WebMD. "If I see a lot of inflammation in someone who brushes and flosses regularly, or they have an abscessed tooth (an infection-caused pocket of pus in the tissue next to a tooth), I ask, 'Have you checked your blood sugar lately?'"

That's because uncontrolled diabetes impairs white blood cell function, the main defense against bacterial infection -- and periodontal disease results from bacterial infection. Besides gum problems, diabetes also can produce dry mouth, thrush, a burning of the mouth or tongue, or a distinct, telltale breath odor. "It's called 'acetone breath' and produces a sweet smell that's associated only with diabetes," adds Rethman. "Breath that really smells bad, meanwhile, could indicate infection of the nose, mouth, lungs, or stomach."

Osteoporosis and tooth loss often go hand-in-hand because the same decrease in bone mineral density that boosts risk of hip and other fractures affects the jawbone and teeth. That's one reason why women are especially vulnerable to tooth loss following menopause -- and why despite its other health risks, estrogen replacement therapy has been found to reduce their rates of tooth loss and gingivitis. "Actually, there are four times in a female's life when she's more vulnerable to oral problems," says Cram. "Besides menopause, during puberty, during pregnancy, and around the time of her monthly period, certain hormones levels are elevated that stimulate inflammatory mediators that make them more susceptible and responsive to bacteria in the mouth." So mark your calendar, ladies: It's during these times when a dental exam is especially useful."

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Your New Mexico Public Health Association Board of Directors

President	Corazon Halasan	Santa Fe	476.3676	Corazon.halasan@state.nm.us
President Elect	Cynthia Serna	Albuquerque	262-6024	Cynthia.serna@cancer.org
Secretary	Judith Seltzer	Santa Fe	989.1486	Jrseltzer03@comcast.net
Treasurer	Toby Rosenblatt	Santa Fe	983.1989	tobysolarage@aol.com
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NMPHA Association News Submission Guidelines

Contributions to the *Association News* from NMPHA members are welcome, but the right is reserved to select material to be published and/or to edit material for length and clarity.

Unless otherwise specified, publication of any announcement or statement is not deemed to be an endorsement by the New Mexico Public Health Association of the views expressed therein, nor shall publication of any advertisement be considered an endorsement by the New Mexico Public Health Association of the product or service involved. Articles are not necessarily the opinion of the New Mexico Public Health Association nor its Executive Board. Submissions are not verified for accuracy.

All authors wishing to submit their manuscripts must do so electronically in Word format. Hardcopy submissions cannot be accepted. Submissions should be no more than 1,000 words in length.

Include the submitter's name and phone number in the event of questions. Include the submitter's/author's organizational affiliation if it should be included in publication.

Requests for reprints should be addressed to the editor who is responsible for coordinating such requests with the submitter/author.

2007 Publication Schedule

Summer

Call for submissions: 5.29.07
 Deadline for submission: 6.11.07
 Distribution: 6.25.07

Autumn

Call for submissions: 8.27.07
 Deadline for submission: 9.10.07
 Distribution: 9.24.07

Winter

Call for submissions: 12.3.07
 Deadline for submission: 12.17.07
 Distribution: 1.7.08

Submit articles to
Suzanne.marks@ihs.gov

Heart Disease

In the recent Circulation study, after comparing the oral health of 256 adult heart patients with that of 250 others with no heart disease, researchers did some math. Their calculations showed that the strongest predictor of heart disease was pericoronitis, a gum infection around the molars, usually the third molars or wisdom teeth; followed by root remnants, in which teeth decay to the point that only the tip of the root remains; gingivitis, an inflammation of gums around the teeth due to improper cleaning; cavities; and missing teeth. The possible connection: "It seems that bacteria often found in the mouth can appear as the same atherosclerotic plaque associated with cardiovascular disease," Rethman tells WebMD.

Premature and Low-Weight Births

Research shows that women who have gum disease during pregnancy are seven times more likely to have a baby that is born too early and too small than other expecting mothers -- and the risk increases with the severity of their gum problems. "That's because when you have periodontal disease, the inflammation causes certain chemicals to be released in your bloodstream that could affect the baby's birth weight and delivery," Cram tells WebMD.

So if you're pregnant, head to the dentist or periodontist. A study last year in the Journal of Periodontology suggests that performing a common procedure to remove plaque and tartar from teeth that cause gum problems could reduce risk of premature delivery.

What your dentist knows about your health

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Other Conditions

- Leukemia causes gums to be fiery red, very inflamed, and spongy.
- Bulimia. "When you binge and purge, it creates acid in the mouth that eats away at tooth enamel, especially on the insides of teeth," says Cram. "Bulimics also have a lot more gum recession and higher rates of cavities."
- Kidney problems can cause inflamed gums.
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can also cause tooth erosion from digestive acids entering the mouth.
- Vitamin deficiencies. Not getting enough iron can cause sores at the corners of the mouth, the taste buds to become small, or can lead to a sore tongue. In some cases, advanced iron deficiency can lead to anemia and may cause scarring in the throat and esophagus, making swallowing difficult. While vitamin C deficiency causes gums to easily bruise and bleed, deficiency can lead to tooth loss. Vitamin D deficiency boosts risk of jaw fracture and gum disease.

Drugs Do Damage, Too

As you age, there's a natural decline in the amount of saliva you produce. But to add insult to injury, hundreds of drugs -- including antidepressants, high blood pressure medications, and allergy remedies such as antihistamines and decongestants -- can cause dry mouth.

"When the mouth dries out, you don't have the protective enzymes in saliva that help kill bacteria," says

Cram. "Not only that, but gum tissue dries, which causes cells to die on the surface, allowing it to proliferate." Dry mouth can be avoided by drinking plenty of water or using over-the-counter toothpastes, mouthwashes, and chewing gums, such as Biotene, that are especially formulated to replace these protective enzymes. Still, the mouth-body connection stresses the importance that long preached advice: See your dentist regularly, especially during those vulnerable times of womanhood -- or if you're about to be hospitalized.

"If you're going in to the hospital for an extended stay, having an oral exam and good cleaning is a great idea because you're going to decrease the risk of hospital-acquired problems such as pneumonia," Mealey tells WebMD. "It's also advised to have a cleaning before getting joint replacement surgery, because the mouth can be a source of bacteria that, if it seeds, can cause an infection that could destroy tissue around the joint."

But even if you're feeling perfectly fine, there's good reason for opening wide and staring at the ceiling as your mouth is picked and probed. "Today, more dentists aren't just looking at teeth and gums," says Cram. "They're giving you a good medical exam."

New Mexico Public Health Association
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

☐ NEW MEMBER

☐ RENEWAL

Please print clearly

Name: _____

Organization and Job Title: _____

Preferred address for mailings:

Phone numbers (with area code):

Street: _____

Home _____ Cell _____

City: _____

Work _____ Fax _____

State: _____ County: _____

Email address: _____

____ Organizational Membership - \$100 (Allows 3 members of the organization to attend the Annual Conference at member rate)

____ Friend of NMPHA - \$50-100

____ Regular* - \$40 (*Membership is \$30 annually for those who earn \$25,000 or less per year. No proof of income is needed.)

____ Full-time College Student - \$10

____ High School Student - \$2

____ Promotor(a)/Community Outreach Worker - \$10

____ Retired - \$15

Donations to NMPHA:

\$_____ Pressman Fund (in memory of Ann Pressman, MD, supporting training for public health workers/students)

\$_____ Rosenblatt Fund (in memory of Wilhelm Rosenblatt, MD, for students studying for public health career)

\$_____ NMPHA (donation to further NMPHA's public health activities)

Total enclosed \$_____ (check or money order only)

Please indicate in which of the sections you have the most interest. If you are interested in more than one section, rank them in order of preference, with "1" being the section of greatest interest. Also include any area of interest not listed.

____ Social Determinants of Health

Other _____

____ Environmental Justice/Equity

____ Universal Access to Health Care

Please indicate in which committees you are willing to participate:

____ Membership

____ Annual Conference

____ Association News

____ Policy

____ Awards and Scholarships

Are you a member of the American Public Health Association (APHA)? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you want to be added to the NMPHA electronic mailing list? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Already on

Please note the names of your State senator and representative, and your senate and house district numbers:

Senator: _____

District Number: _____

Representative: _____

District Number: _____

Please mail completed application and dues to:
NMPHA, PO Box 26433, Albuquerque, NM 87125
www.nmpha.org