



Association News

An Affiliate of the American Public Health Association

Summer 2006

Also in this issue:

Association News Publication Schedule	2
From the Executive Director	3
Healthy Voices Radio	4
Quality Update	5
Birthing Options Program	6
NMPHA Executive Board Members	7
NMPHA Membership Application	8
Events & Announcements	9

For submissions to
future issues,
contact
Suzanne Marks @
smarks@marchofdimes.com
or 505.344.5150

A Letter from NMPHA President, Corazon Halasan

I appreciate the opportunity of serving as your association President. Thank you to all who voted and thank you to those who trusted me enough to give me your vote.

As I scan the years I have been in public health, a few things strike me. One, these days are hard ones to be in public health; two, what we need is available in community; and three, attitude is so much of everything. Albert Einstein reputedly said that the first decision you ever have to make is whether the universe is friendly or not. A pretty wise statement, whoever said it. This is what I bring to our work this year: a bedrock belief in the goodness of people, a basically health-seeking attitude of resilience, and a decent ability to get things done together.

Generally, we will be staying the course: to build NMPHA as the visible policy leader and advocate for the health of the public. We've made big strides, kicked off by having a part-time executive director to provide continuity and to develop our resources via

grants and collaboration. We will continue this work, strengthen our organizational structure, and sustain our existing efforts. In terms of strengthening our structure, we would likely benefit from having a full-time executive director. We now have a full plate of policy and training efforts that far outstrips what a one-third time position can do.

Secondly, we must craft and carry out a strategic plan that includes developing NMPHA into an organization that can support an expanded director position ---this, in turn, helps create a larger impact in our public health system.

In terms of sustaining our existing efforts, I am committed to supporting our experienced board and membership who carry out the tough work in universal health care, media advocacy and policy development training, and environmental health and justice. I am grateful that our past President not



only created our new environmental health/ justice section but continues to motivate us with her participation on the board and her active leadership in the public health.

I also want to see more members from the eastern and southern part of New Mexico. Public health is just not something that stops in Santa Fe and/or Albuquerque! Yet the majority of our members come from north/central New Mexico.

Continued on Page 2

A Letter from NMPHA President, Corazon Halasan

Continued from page 1

Our membership can better reflect the strength and diversity of our state; we're not there yet. I would like to have some in-depth small group conversations with public health workers in these New Mexico regions to help figure out the why and how of this. What keeps you from joining? How can NMPHA better reflect or represent the public health concerns of your regions? I hope that I can rely on your participation when we get these going.

Those of you who participated in our conference this year know that I am interested in the issue of poverty, specifically poverty elimination.

I attended a statewide working session, where a cross-section of people from the public health and health care system participated. I overheard a hospital administrator saying that he was glad he attended because he overcame his own stereotype of public health people as people who always talked about ending poverty and hunger and what a laugh that was.

Yes, it seems more than a bit quixotic, and irritates those who think that poverty will always be part of our human condition. It would be simpler to send a rocket to the moon. Yet there are places in New Mexico and the world where we know that families and communities have eliminated or decreased poverty in meaningful ways. It is a fundamental way to spread health and wellness. This is not a new message. It is however a message that we in the US public health/ health care arena have been reluctant to delve into in the same energetic way we've faced immunizations, HIV/AIDS, public smoking bans, the war on terror, emergency preparedness, diabetes management, Viagra, and goodness knows what else.

Of course one way of never ending poverty is to hardly if ever talk about it, write about it, hope about it, dream big about it, or do anything meaningful and practical about it. Mostly however, I find that it's a subject that has a lot of us wringing our hands in a hopeless sort of way and agreeing wouldn't it be much better if there weren't so much

poor-ness going around. In one of the richest countries in the world, full of can-do people, I find this so ironic. So—let's find out what can be done, what has been done, what can we do, who we can work with, what doesn't work, what does work, where the resources are....just as we've done for other issues. I hope to learn about practical means that have worked to end poverty and see where we as an association can participate. This won't be a new direction for NMPHA, but a coming to action on one of our three areas of focus.

As much as possible, I want to see where we can build upon work that we are already part of rather than starting a new section. If this is something that moves you, if this is a way in which you want to contribute in, please join me. In conclusion, I look forward to being of service to you and to continue NMPHA's movement forward. Please stay tuned; better yet, come along for the ride.

Association News Publication Schedule

Autumn

Call for submissions: 8.28.06
Deadline for submissions: 9.11.06
Distribution: 9.25.06

Winter

Call for submissions: 12.4.06
Deadline for submissions: 12.18.06
Distribution: 1.2.07

Submit articles to smarks@marchofdimes.com or call Suzanne Marks at 505.344.5150 with questions

From the Executive Director

NMPHA has made visits to three of our five Congressional Delegation offices this past month to urge support for funding through the federal budget of critical public health programs, including the work of CDC and HRSA and to advocate for legislation needed to assure that all children have financial access to the health care they need and legislation to encourage students to enter public health and public health workers to work in underserved areas. We also advocated for no cuts to the federal Medicaid budget and other programs such as food stamps that provide critical support to people living in poverty.

These visits brought home to me, once again, the importance of each of us knowing our legislators and taking personal action through calls, e-mails, or faxes to our members of Congress as well as our state legislators and local policy makers on issues of concern to us personally and to NMPHA. This is the time of year to make contact with our local state representative and senator. Set up a meeting (invite one or two other people concerned about public health issues to go with you). I will be sending out some guidelines shortly for face to face meetings with our

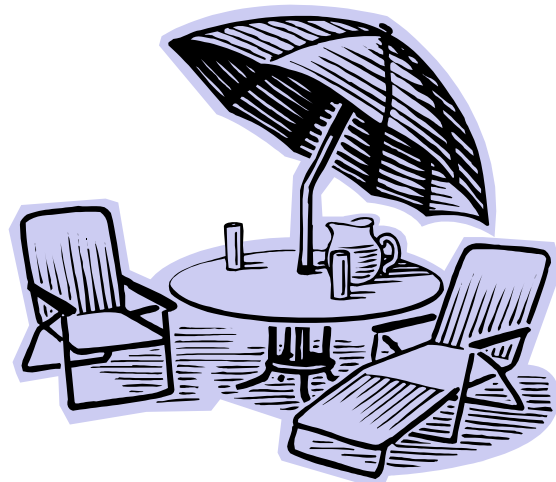
legislators. The prospect of such a meeting, if you haven't done it before, may be intimidating, but always remember that legislators are real people who have been elected to serve the needs of their constituents. For the most part, they are happy to meet constituents and interested in hearing about what concerns you.

Which leads me to ask you to mark your calendar, spread the word, and plan to attend our

**2005
Health Policy
Legislative
Forum,
organized by the
NMPHA
Policy
Committee,
Thursday,
December 8,
at the UNM
Continuing
Education Center.**

Note: this is a change in date from what was originally announced (December 9).

The event will begin with lunch, keynote talks on major health policy issues and roundtables for more in-depth discussion and sharing related to key issues for the 2006 legislative session.



The morning of December 8 the NMPHA Training Committee is planning an exciting first training on the state legislative budget process. This training will provide very important information for all public health and human need advocates as they seek funding through the legislative process for the needs of New Mexico's most vulnerable populations and for improving the health of all New Mexicans. Plan to attend!

Look for a Media Advocacy training in early spring – we offered this training in 2003. A sub-group of our Training Committee has been working on updating and revising the training to make it even better! A schedule of beginning and advanced Public Health on the Web trainings made possible through a new contract with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/South Central

Region will be out soon.

Let us know how you want to be involved with NMPHA. If there are activities or services that you think NMPHA should be offering, but isn't, let us know. There are many opportunities for involvement – foremost right now our Conference Committee which is hard at work on plans for the 2006 Annual Conference; our Policy Committee; our Training Committee; and our Membership Committee. Also, think about whether you are ready to run for an NMPHA office! Jerry Montoya and the Nominating Committee would be pleased to hear from you.

As always thanks for your continuing service on behalf of public health in New Mexico!

Lydia Pendley



Healthy Voices Radio – Students tell their stories about life and health in Northern New Mexico

By Stefani Hines

In 2005 the NMPHA awarded a mini-grant to the University of New Mexico Community Environmental Health Program to create a pilot radio show based on writing submissions from students, community members, and health practitioners. Northern New Mexico residents from the Chama Valley, Espanola, and Santa Fe and students from Pojoaque Middle School submitted stories, poetry, and essays about their own health concerns, interests, and issues with respect to health and the environment of Northern New Mexico. The result of this effort was a unique 11-minute image-inducing compilation called “Healthy Voices: Smoke, Trash, and Trout, Writings from the Upper Rio Grande Valley.”

NMPHA member Stefani Hines and award-winning radio producer Deborah Begel (Fresh Air, LatinoUSA, Studio 360, NPR, Justice Talking, and This American Life), reviewed and selected writings for the recording. Writings were selected based upon length, voice, topic, and expression, as well as, how well the writings fit together to tell a story about environmental health in Northern New Mexico. Ultimately, ten Pojoaque students were chosen to read and record their creative writings about smoking, heroin/drugs, illegal dumping, pollution, their love of New Mexico, and appreciation of good health.

The narrator for the pilot radio show was award-winning New Mexico author Rudolfo Anaya. Mr. Anaya’s narration weaves together the students’ stories to paint a picture of life in Northern New Mexico and share the students’ passions for protecting human health from local environmental hazards. Producer Deborah Begel skillfully inserted music and image-inducing ambient sounds, such as restaurant chatter and roosters, to complete the listeners’ transport into the students’ Northern New Mexico world.

This pilot Healthy Voices radio show gives students and community members a platform for expression and sets the stage for a radio series to educate and engage listeners about health and environmental health issues important to local communities. Please visit the website www.healthyvoices.org to enjoy the recording.

Quality Update: The New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA) Leads Quality Improvement Efforts on Many Fronts with Health Care Providers in New Mexico

**Submitted by Jennifer Troller,
Communications Manager
NMMRA**

With health care quality taking on an ever-increasing role in the national policy arena, health care providers in New Mexico are receiving free assistance in improving quality of care from the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA). NMMRA is a Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), contracted with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

NMMRA provides expert resources and materials, at no charge, to assist health care providers to improve the quality of care and to transform the health care delivery process. By assisting hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and physician practices with data submission for quality measures to CMS, NMMRA is central to Medicare quality improvement efforts. Quality measures are widely accepted standards of care for common medical conditions. These data are used by CMS and other national health care organizations such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to promote transparency and public reporting of quality. For example, AHRQ recently unveiled 2005 State *Snap Shots* from the National Healthcare Quality Report via a new [Web site](http://www.qualitytools.ahrq.gov/qualityreport/2005/state/summary/intro.aspx) (www.qualitytools.ahrq.gov/qualityreport/2005/state/summary/intro.aspx) that includes health care quality measures that stem from the QIO Program.

For Physician Offices: NMMRA is hard at work implementing the Doctor's Office Quality-Information Technology (DOQ-IT) project. Through DOQ-IT, participating family practice, internal medicine, and other primary care physicians who serve Medicare patients receive NMMRA's support during all stages of electronic health record (EHR) implementation, from vendor

selection to performance improvement using the new technology. As of May 2006, NMMRA has recruited 29 practices in New Mexico to participate. Central to NMMRA's recruitment success has been its work with independent physician associations (IPAs) in Silver City, Las Cruces, and Roswell to support IPA members in adopting health information technology. By working through the IPAs, NMMRA is able to help their members facilitate obtaining EHRs that are capable of talking to each other and developing a synergy through information sharing among the physician community. This approach is particularly beneficial, given the reality of limited EHR technical support resources in many parts of the state.

CMS announced the Physician Voluntary Reporting Program (PVRP) late last year and is working closely and collaboratively with physician leadership on the program. Voluntary reporting is a first step toward aligning reimbursement and quality. NMMRA is integral to supporting physicians in New Mexico who are participating in PVRP, including providing data collection assistance and feedback reports to doctors. Physicians can register their intent to participate in PVRP by visiting <http://www.qualitynet.org/pvrpintent>.

For Nursing Homes: Thirty-three nursing homes in New Mexico have committed to a three-year program with NMMRA to improve quality of life and care for America's nursing home residents. The clinical focus will be on management of pressure ulcers, physical restraints, depression and pain.

For Home Health Agencies: QIOs nationally are working with home health agencies to achieve goals to reduce avoidable hospitalizations by more than 83,000, leading to substantial savings of Medicare dollars. NMMRA is working with all 65 Medicare-certified home health agencies in New Mexico to improve patient outcomes. In addition, NMMRA is collaborating intensively with 21 of these agencies to improve publicly reported quality measures and to implement telehealth.

For Hospitals: NMMRA is working to increase the percentage of patients treated appropriately for heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia. NMMRA will also work with many local organizations focused on hospital quality and public health to reduce the number of surgical patients who develop complications (like an infection) after surgery as part of the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP). NMMRA has also engaged local hospitals to support the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 100,000 Lives campaign (see <http://www.ihl.org/IHI/Programs/Campaign>), which culminates on June 14, 2006.

Continued on Page 6

Quality Update

Continued from Page 5

More information on these quality improvement efforts is available at www.nmmra.org.

NMMRA is a not-for-profit, physician-sponsored organization that is New Mexico's federally contracted Medicare Quality Improvement Organization and External Quality Review Organization for Medicaid. The organization works with health care providers, consumer and health care organizations, and state and federal agencies to improve the quality of health care in New Mexico.

This material was prepared by NMMRA, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 8SOW-NM-CORP-06-08



Human Services Department Announces the Birthing Options Program Submitted by Shiela VanDerveer, Certified Professional Midwife and Outreach Coordinator for the National College of Midwifery in Taos

Secretary Pamela Hyde recently announced the implementation of the Medicaid Birthing Options Program, which offers choices for New Mexico's pregnant women and their families. "This is a terrific program that will help ensure that pregnant women across New Mexico have choices when it comes to receiving the health care they need from conception to birth, and will help reduce the maternal and child health care risks," said Hyde.

The Birthing Options Program was developed by the state with input and support from the New Mexico Midwives Association, the New Mexico Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives and the SALUD! Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Women in New Mexico have choices when it comes to giving birth through this program, including a birth center, a hospital or at home with the assistance of a midwife. "More people in New Mexico choose midwives for their health care during their reproductive years than any other state in the nation," said Shiela VanDerveer, Certified Professional Midwife and Outreach Coordinator for the National College of Midwifery in Taos. "The Birthing Options Program is a return to honoring homebirth and midwifery services for Medicaid members."

Licensed midwives across the nation have had difficulty getting malpractice insurance which did not allow them to receive Medicaid reimbursement for out of hospital births. The Birthing Options Program addresses this issue through agreements with the midwives, the MCOs and the mothers-to-be. "Providing Medicaid recipients with options is a requirement of Medicaid's pregnancy-related health care services, and we are glad that we could reach an agreement with all parties to ensure that this practice continues," said Larry Heyeck, HSD's Medical Assistance Division Deputy Director.

Continued on Page 7

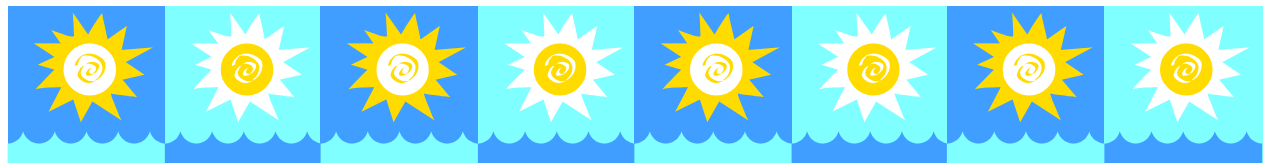
Birthing Options Program

Continued from Page 6

To qualify for pregnancy-related health care services, which include the new Birthing Options Program, women must be eligible for and enroll in Medicaid. Currently, the income guideline is 185% of the Federal Poverty Level; however, the guidelines change in July, which will allow more women to qualify for the program.

For more information and to choose a health care practitioner, contact the Medical Assistance Division at 1-888-997-2583. For more information regarding services provided by midwives, contact the New Mexico Midwives Association at 1-888-332-4784, the American College of Nurse-Midwives New Mexico chapter at <http://nmmidwives.org/practices.php> or the Department of Health's Maternal Health Program at 505-476-8908.

The Birthing Options Program gives mothers-to-be several delivery choices, including homebirth and birth center midwifery services.



Your New Mexico Public Health Association Executive Board

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
Executive Director	Lydia Pendley	Santa Fe	983.1495	Lpendley1@juno.com
Affiliate Representative	Cheryl Ferguson	Albuquerque	856.1403	Cheryl@nmpolicymatters.com
Region 1 Representative	Milagros Padilla	Gallup		Milap55@hotmail.com
Region 1 Representative	Dottie Ruple	Bloomfield	634-0229	dorothy.ruple@state.nm.us
Region 2 Representative	Katherine Mueller	Santa Fe	476.2665	Katherine.mueller@state.nm.us
Region 2 Representative	Valery Henderson	Santa Fe	476.2645	Valery.Henderson@state.nm.us
Region 3 Representative	Dana Schultz Millen	Albuquerque	856.8359	dsmillen@msn.com
Region 4 Representative	Theresa Teti	Portales	226-6456	terryteti@msn.com
Region 5 Representative	Benny Jacquez	Las Cruces	646.3441	jacquez@nmsu.edu

NMPHA Membership Application

Please print clearly

Name _____ Job Title: _____

Address choice for mailings (*Association News*, etc.):

Street: _____ Home phone (with A/C): _____

City: _____ Work phone (with A/C): _____

State: _____ Zip code: _____ Email address: _____

County: _____

Membership Type	New	Renewal
_____ Organizational	\$100	\$100 (allows up to three members to attend annual meeting at member rates)
_____ Friend of NMPHA	\$50	\$100
_____ Regular*	\$30	\$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 and students.)

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

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

Please indicate your section of 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

I am willing to participate in the following committees:

_____ Membership _____ Annual Meeting _____ Policy _____ Legislative
 _____ *Association News* _____ Awards and Scholarships _____ Media

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 (if known):

Senator _____ District Number: _____

Representative: _____ District Number: _____

Please mail completed membership application and dues to:
 NMPHA, PO Box 26433, Albuquerque, NM 87125

Upcoming Public Health Events and Learning Opportunities

HEALTH LITERACY: IMPROVING CLEAR HEALTH COMMUNICATION FOR BETTER PATIENT OUTCOMES

A hands-on training workshop to help health care providers develop the skills necessary to apply verbal and written communication methods with their patients to convey important health messages.

August 2 – 3, 2006
Nativo Lodge
Albuquerque, NM
Limited to 30 people
Hotel deadline is July 2!

August 18 – 19, 2006
Omni Austin Hotel
Austin, TX
Limited to 30 people
Hotel deadline is July 26!

FOLLOW THE LINK TO REGISTER: <http://www.nrharural.org/conferences/sub/HlthLit.html>

Amazing Newborns

Prematurity & Beyond

A conference focusing on perinatal, neonatal, and prematurity issues and their impact on families and communities

*We hope you will save the
date for this year's
conference!*

November 9 & 10, 2006
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Brochures will be available in July from March of Dimes or
Division of Neonatology Outreach at UNM.**



NM Public Health Association
Association News
P. O. Box 26433
Albuquerque, NM 87125