

ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION



Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA Summer Newsletter

August 13, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 2

Letter from the President



Katmai Brown Bears Cubs

I just returned from a week fly-fishing on the Brooks River in Katmai National Park with my husband and several of our friends. The weather was decent and the fishing was good enough to keep me focused on building my casting skills.

The bears were exquisite. The campground is enclosed behind an electric fence allowing for a good nights sleep and great bear viewing, up close. During the day we shared the river with the foraging bruins. Speaking of focus...

During the January ALPHA Board retreat, the group committed to engage in public health advocacy, learn about our members and involve them in the organization, and provide tangible benefits to the members. Since then we have revised the ALPHA website to provide a public education page focusing on a different topic each month,

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Join Us This Summer for APHA's PHACT Campaign! Have your voice heard at home in your district!

Your Participation is Needed During APHA'S Summer Public Health ACTION (PHACT) Campaign. This summer, APHA is mobilizing its members to educate legislators and candidates running for office about the need to include public health in the upcoming health reform debate and to generate support for APHA's legislative priorities.

How can you participate in this campaign? During the months of July and August, we are asking APHA members and affiliates to schedule meetings with their legislators in their district offices, participate in town hall meetings hosted by their legislators, and seek opportunities to ask questions to candidates, both incumbents and challengers, running for office at the local, state and federal levels.

What is available to help prepare me for these events? You can find information on upcoming events, tips for meeting with your legislator or speaking at a town hall meeting, questions to ask candidates, fact sheets to leave behind with your legislator, information on media advocacy, and other helpful materials on the PHACT Campaign website.

(See APHA PHACT on page 3)

2008 Health Summit update

You are cordially invited to attend the 2008 Alaska Health Summit, which will take place in Anchorage on December 1-3 at the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel.

This year's theme is Alaska's Health: Bridging the Gap. For the first time, the steering committee requested on-line proposals for sessions, receiving more than 40 proposals from around Alaska. The committee is currently reviewing these proposals, and selecting which will be included in the program. We are also looking for sponsors, as well as exhibitors.

Anyone with ideas for the Summit, as well as those interested in helping with the planning efforts can contact Jayne Andreen, Summit Chair, at jayne.andreen@alaska.gov, or Brenda Holden, Information Insights. brenda@ialaska.com.

Join the Awards & Nominations Committee!

Interested in getting more involved in ALPHA? Here is your opportunity! The board is looking for volunteers to participate in the selection process for next year's board members and soliciting/ selecting award recipients at the upcoming Health Summit. If interested, contact Mari Selle at marikoselle@gmail.com, or 907-301-2580.



Working Well in Wrangell

The Southern-Southeast community of Wrangell is working on an innovative program to make “worksites wellness” a community-wide initiative.

The Healthy Wrangell Coalition formed in January,

and received a STEPS grant in May, with Wrangell Medical Center, the community hospital at the lead.

The Coalition is comprised of representatives from several different businesses and organizations around Wrangell, who have committed to collaborating together to make wellness a part of the culture in their organizations. The Coalition hosted a workshop conducted by SEARHC on how to implement worksite wellness programs. The STEPS grant has also been helping the coalition implement community-wide wellness programs that take place during times that accommodate the majority of the workforce in the community, that will be promoted by the members of the Coalition.

For more information on the Healthy Wrangell Coalition, contact Mari Selle at 907-874-7166.



Sue and Jim Nelson Jane Bliss of Wrangell Medical Center are walking their 10,000 steps around Wrangell's 9-hole golf course.

Final Update on ALPHA bills of interest in the 2008 Legislative session

Your ALPHA Advocacy Committee consisting of Debra Caldera, Karol Fink, Alice Rarig and John Riley actively supported and monitored several bills this past session. Bills of interest to ALPHA are listed on the ALPHA website with links to specific bill information at <http://www.alaskapublichealth.org/pdf/2008Legislation.pdf>. We will continue to monitor these and new legislation as they are introduced in the new 26th Alaska Legislature in 2009. Please feel free to contact committee members.

Bills Passed by both House and Senate

SB 212 Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA) IT resources for CHCs

HB 312 APCA request for CHC funding

HB 325 Teachers Healthcare Professional Loans

Bills not passing both House and Senate

SB 160 Mandatory Universal Health Care

HB 337 Health Care: Plan/Commission/Facilities

HB 234 Education Loan Repayment Program

HB 231/HB 140/SB 87/SB212 Medical Assistance eligibility expand Denali Kid Care

HB 271 Flame Retardants and Toxic Chemicals

SB 288 Pesticides/Broadcast Chemicals in Schools

SB 113 Nursing mothers in the workplace

SB 179 Dependent Health Insurance; Age Limit

HB 364 Minor's Consent to abortion

ALPHA Call for Resolutions and Position Papers

Current Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) members are invited to respond to the **Call for Resolutions and Position Papers**. Resolutions and position papers are an important advocacy tool and an excellent way for members to dialogue on the issues of important public health policy. Resolutions and Position Papers will be presented and voted upon by ALPHA membership at the Alaska Health Summit Annual Meeting held at the Sheraton in Anchorage, Monday, December 1, 2008. **All proposed position papers and resolutions are due September 30.**

Download the Resolutions and Position Papers Solicitation and Process instructions at www.alaskapublichealth.org/resolutions.shtml

Student's Alaska Summer Internship Experience

This summer I packed up my things and headed to Anchorage for an internship with Karol Fink at the Obesity Prevention and Control Program within the Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, State of Alaska Health and Human Services.

I have to admit I was a bit nervous about venturing up to the Land of the Midnight Sun, being a "born and raised Southern girl," but the entire experience has been absolutely wonderful. Under Karol's leadership, I developed a module for the Physical Activity and Nutrition Training for childcare providers, wrote a White paper on the relationship between childhood obesity and hunger, developed a preschool nutrition resource list, helped to develop the state's employee wellness website, and attended many state coalition meetings.



Karol Fink (left) with intern Christina Bass

It is very refreshing to know that all my studies from last year paid off because I discovered I will actually *use* the stuff! Childhood obesity has become a very serious problem in our society, and I feel I will be well-prepared to aid in the movement to end it. On another note, I have had the experience of biking to work all summer long (something I never dreamed I would be able to do). Alaska has shown herself to me as a beautiful and awe-inspiring place with people who are eager to pass along their traditions and values.

This internship experience, for which I will receive 6 credit hours, has given me the confidence to take on the public health realm once I graduate from my program, wherever I may end up.

—By Christine Bass MPH Student, University of Alabama at Birmingham, MCH

News from the Education Committee

In January 2008 at the annual ALPHA board retreat, the board took the opportunity to try some new things with the hope of providing additional benefits to the ALPHA members and the public at large. One of the identified actions was to add a Public Education and Information page to the ALPHA web-site. (Another suggestion was to create and publish the newsletter you're reading right now.)

Tim Struna and Sandra Woods serve on the Public Education and Information workgroup. Using the National Health Observances calendar as a guide, they select health topics to feature each month. The topics for the next few months are Oral Health, Immunizations, Suicide Prevention, Domestic Violence, Smoking /Tobacco Cessation, and HIV/AIDS. Tim and Sandra gather information and write a short article that attempts to make the health information relevant to Alaska, easy to understand, and inspire the reader to take some sort of action. Resources and links are also provided so the reader can explore an issue further.

Tim and Sandra are open to any feedback regarding the content of the topics. Additionally, (and most importantly) anyone interested in contributing to the Public Education and Information health topic is welcome to contact Tim or Sandra. If you haven't visited it lately, please take a look at <http://www.alaskapublichealth.org/education.shtml>

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APHA PHACT (Continued from page 1)

The website can be found at: www.apha.org/advocacy/tips/advocacyActionCampaign.htm.

Why is my participation important? As a public health professional, you understand the importance of maintaining adequate funding for public health programs in your state. You also know the impact that inadequate funding can have on your legislator's constituents. We need you to urge your legislators and candidates running for office to support efforts to improve and protect the public's health and ensure that our health system focuses more on prevention instead of costly treatment alone. Whether you work in environmental health, maternal and child health, chronic diseases, epidemiology, emergency preparedness, nutrition, oral health, adolescent health, HIV/AIDS, or one of the many other public health fields, your input is extremely important. This is a critical time to act!

The result? You can help make public health a priority. Improving and protecting the health of the public is all of our jobs. Start today by making that visit, calling or sending an email to your legislators; participating in a town hall meeting; or attending a candidate event. You also may hear from a member of the APHA affiliate in your state requesting your participation in any activities they have planned for this summer or fall.

Please inform us of your actions and successes. Complete a follow-up report on your meetings and events available at: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227Z8A4GFND>.

Questions? Feel free to contact Nicky Bassford in the Government Relations Department at (202) 777-2513 or nicky.bassford@apha.org.

www.alaskapublichealth.org

posted legislative advocacy information, and a newsletter. We have also increased our efforts to recruit new members.

In addition to that the Alaska Public Health Association applied for and was awarded a mini grant of \$8,000 from the American Public Health Association (APHA) Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative. This APHA mini-grant awards, funded through the Pfizer Public Health Group, are the second phase of a larger APHA Affiliate Capacity-Building Initiative funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Initiative is designed to strengthen the capacity of its Affiliates, to grow the APHA/Affiliate grassroots policy network, and to improve the nation's state and regional public health associations' ability to respond to new and emerging public health threats such as pandemic flu. During the first round of funding in 2007, APHA awarded direct grants to 31 Affiliates.

The grant award is to be used in one year, ending in April 30, 2009. ALPHA's mini-grant has three main components:

1. Recruit and Engage membership in ALPHA
 - a. Conduct a survey to better understand current membership demographics and interests
 - b. Increase member recruitment efforts
 - c. Enhance the ALPHA website
2. Facilitate and promote public health wellness activities in three-five communities during Public Health Week in April 2009
3. Complete a long-term strategic plan and business plan If you are interested in working on any phase of the project please contact me at debrac@acsalaska.net.

Finally, the Board, at its last meeting, decided to provide opportunities for members to make financial contributions to ALPHA, beyond annual dues contributions. The tax deductible contribution will be used to further the mission defined in our by-laws. This year donations will be used to provide scholarships to deserving individuals to attend the 2009 Health Summit. During my career, I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to attend conferences, often at someone else's expense, and come away inspired with new perspectives to support my work. I want to help provide these opportunities to others so am contributing \$150 to ALPHA this year for this purpose. I hope you will join me in our efforts.

New ALPHA Payment System

ALPHA has just made it easier for you to renew your membership, pay your Health Summit fee, and make tax deductible contributions to the new scholarship fund.

Beginning this month, will be contracting with Pay Pal to handle all credit card transactions. Now it's as easy as following the link at the bottom of your membership renewal e-mail to pay your ALPHA membership dues.

Important Events:

Friday-Saturday, September 12-13, 2008

The Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, Alaska Chapter is hosting the Third Annual Alaska Asthma & Allergy Conference. For more information visit <http://conference.aafaalaska.com/>

Friday-Saturday, September 12-13, 2008

Alaska Medical Group Management Association 2008 Annual Conference. Hotel Captain Cook - Anchorage, Alaska. For more information visit http://www.akmgma.org/annual_conference/index.html

Monday-Thursday, September 22-25, 2008

Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association Annual Meeting. Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge near Talkeetna. Educational sessions on the 22nd and 23rd, annual meeting on the 24th and 25th. For more information visit <http://www.ashnha.org/content/>

Thursday-Saturday, October 23-25, 2008

Alaska Federation of Natives Convention. Denaina Center, Anchorage. For more information call (907) 274-3611 or visit <http://www.nativefederation.org/>

Friday, October 24, 2008

HIV Prevention Planning (HPPG) meeting 11:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. *Public comment 12:00-12:30pm each day Frontier Building, Room #336, 3601 C Street, Anchorage. For more information call (907) 269-8027 or visit <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/hivstd/hppg/>

Saturday, October 25, 2008

HIV Prevention Planning (HPPG) meeting 9:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. *Public comment 12:00-12:30pm each day Frontier Building, Room #336, 3601 C Street, Anchorage. For more information call (907) 269-8027 or visit <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/hivstd/hppg/>

Saturday-Wednesday October 25-29, 2008

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA "Public Health Without

Monday-Wednesday, October 27-29, 2008

The 14th annual Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management (ATCEM), Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage. For more information: <http://www.anthc.org/cs/dehe/sustops/rasc/atcem.cfm>

Tuesday-Saturday, November 12-15, 2008

33rd Alaska EMS Symposium, Captain Cook Hotel, Anchorage. For more information visit <http://www.sremsc.org/pages/Symposium.htm>

This newsletter is generated by the ALPHA Membership Committee with input from ALPHA membership. For comments, clarifications or questions send an email to: ☆ Brian_Lefferts@ykhc.org



ALPHA