



ASTHO Executive Director Report July 27, 2007

It is my pleasure to report on the following noteworthy events at ASTHO since my last written summary in March 2007.

ASTHO Members

New State Health Officials include: **John Auerbach (MA)**, **Vivian Ebbesen-Fludd (VI)**, **Mark Horton (CA)**, **Alvin Jackson (OH)**, **Tom Newton (IA)**, and **Alfredo Vigil (NM)**

New Acting State Health Officials: **Alex Haartz (NV)** and **F. E. Thompson, Jr. (MS)**

New Alumni

We thank our outgoing members for their time, energy and dedication during their tenures as State Health Officials. We hope they will continue to share their expertise and insight with us through participation in the ASTHO Alumni Society:

Brian Amy (MS), **Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM)**, **Brad Lee (NV)**, and **Sandra Shewry (CA)**

Executive Committee Leadership Changes

Based on the ASTHO Bylaws, in early August a call for nominations for the following positions of Officer on the Executive Committee will be sent to membership. The Nominations Committee will review all nominations and prepare a slate of candidates for a vote at the Assembly of Members Annual Business meeting in October: President, President Elect, and Secretary-Treasurer

Several other Regional Representative positions will be filled by fax ballot and approved by membership vote at the Assembly of Members Annual Business meeting in October. These Regions include:

End of Term

- Regions 3 and 5—**Dianne Mandernach (MN)** and **Calvin Johnson (PA-Alternate)**
- Regions 9 and 10—**Vacant** and **Chiyome Fukino (HI-Alternate)**

Vacancy:

- Regions 4 and 6—**Vacant** and **Paul Halverson (AR-Alternate)**

State Health Leadership Initiative (SHLI)

National Program Office

In March, ASTHO submitted a proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to become the National Program Office for the State Health Leadership Initiative. The proposal was accepted and the new arrangement went into effect June 1. The SHLI is funded for three years at just under \$3.1 million. The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government will subcontract directly to ASTHO.

Networking Meeting

The SHLI Networking Meeting, which is designed to help new SHOs acquire the skills necessary to work with various audiences within their states, was held on March 13 and 14, in Washington, DC. Planned in conjunction with the NGA Center for Best Practices, the meeting was scheduled immediately prior to the ASTHO Hill Day Meeting. In all, the following eight new SHOs participated in the meeting:

Susan Cooper (TN), Sheri Johnson (WI), Sharon Moffatt (VT), Judith Monroe (IN), Gregg Pane (DC), Janet Olszewski (MI), Brent Sherard (WY), Ana Viamonte Ros (FL)

Representatives of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and partner organizations were also in attendance.

The format provided an expanded opportunity for participants to learn about the SHLI program and the roles of ASTHO and NGA in supporting SHOs. Overall, the meeting participant evaluations were positive. All of the respondents felt the meeting met or exceeded their expectations, with several specifically commenting on how valuable the meeting was in terms of providing networking opportunities. The session on the "Power of the Position" and "Working with the Media" were highly rated.

New SHO Visits

The ASTHO Executive Director visits each new SHO in his or her home state as soon as possible after that SHO's formal appointment is announced. Prior to the New SHO Visit, ASTHO provides each new SHO with copies of the "The New State Health Official's First Days: A Planning Guide," a booklet developed by the SHLI program, and the updated "ASTHO New Member Orientation Notebook."

ASTHO's Executive Director has made (or has scheduled) new SHO visits to the following eight members:

James B. Martin (CO), Tom Newton (IA), John Auerbach (MA), John M. Colmers (MD), Richard F. Daines (NY), Alvin Jackson (OH), David L. Lakey (TX), Sharon Moffatt (VT)

Mentoring Relationships

The following nine mentor relationships began since September. Seven other SHOs are currently selecting mentors.

**SHO Jay Butler (AK) – Donald Williamson (AL)
SHO Mark Horton (CA) – Mary Selecky (WA)
SHO Ana Viamonte Ros (FL) – Alum Eduardo Sanchez (TX)
SHO Tom Newton (IA) – Leah Devlin (NC)
SHO Sharon Howard (LA) – Alum Sandra Shewry (CA)
SHO John Colmers (MD) – Janet Olszewski (MI)
SHO Alvin Jackson (OH) – Eric Whitaker (IL)
SHO Susan Cooper (TN) – Alum Mary Mincer Hansen (IA)
SHO David Lakey (TX) – Alum J. Nick Baird (OH)**

Kennedy School Leadership Retreat

ASTHO worked in concert with the Harvard JFK School of Government to encourage new SHOs to attend the leadership retreat, held July 15-20. ASTHO coordinated and paid the costs associated with new SHO travel to Harvard. In all, 12 new SHOs attended the leadership retreat. They include:

Susan Gerard (AZ), Mark Horton (CA), Ana Viamonte Ros (FL), Tom Newton (IA), Sharon Howard (LA), Jane Drummond (MO), Joan Miles (MT), Mary Ann Cooney (NH), Richard Daines (NY), Alvin Jackson (OH), David Lakey (TX), Sharon Moffatt (VT)

Alumni Society

The current ASTHO Alumni Society (AAS) officers are:

President—**Chris Grant (NJ)**
President-Elect—**Diana Bonta (CA)**
Secretary-Treasurer—**Jan Malcolm (MN)**
Past President—**Tom Vernon (CO)**
Member at Large—**David Johnson (MI)**

Alumni Program

ASTHO Alumni Society (AAS) officers continue to explore ways the Society can contribute to the needs of ASTHO members and alumni. ASTHO staff is working with the officers of the ASTHO Alumni Society to strategically identify and engage former SHOs to help meet the needs of current ASTHO members. In April, ASTHO held a teleconference for alumni. Over 27 alumni participated. The call featured a Government Relations update as well as updates on ASTHO operations, several ASTHO initiatives involving alumni, and ASTHO's strategic plan for 2007-2009. AAS Officers also invited alumni to run for officer positions for the 2007-2008 year and encouraged all alumni to attend the ASTHO Annual Meeting, where the AAS will hold its annual business meeting.

As of June 30, 2007, 45 alumni remitted their 2007 AAS dues. The officers continue outreach efforts to increase dues payments.

Affiliate Council

The Council met by teleconference on May 8 and in-person on July 25, 2007 in Atlanta, GA. The Affiliates have been exploring ways to strategically align activities over the past several months. They have shared their activities in workforce development and health disparities with each other. They also completed an assessment that identifies ways to align activities--on the policy and programmatic side, as well as the operations side--to achieve common goals.

New Affiliate Leadership-STIPDA, AMCHP, and ASTPHND

STIPDA - In April 2007, Amber Williams was named Executive Director of the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association . Amber served as the Interim Executive Director from June 2006 until her appointment.

AMCHP - In June 2007, Mike Fraser was named CEO of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs. He will start in August 2007.

ASTPHND - In June 2007, Karen Probert was named Executive Director of the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors. Karen will start this position in October 2007.

Annual Meeting

A strong preliminary program has been approved by the Planning Committee and is available on the ASTHO Web site. Keynote speakers include leadership coach Steve Farber, CDC Director Julie Gerberding, Center for Health Transformation founder Newt Gingrich, and environmental health experts Richard Jackson and Jonathan Patz. In addition, 20 session proposals were received and 11 were chosen to be part of the program, which is focused on leadership, improvement, and emerging issues in public health. In preparation for the meeting ASTHO has updated all of its exhibition materials to reflect the new logo and brand.

Sponsorships totaling approximately \$70,000 have been pledged to date and half the exhibit booths have been sold. We anticipate 165 paid registrations at various fee levels for a total of about \$71,000.

Following a site visit on July 30-31, a final decision will be made on the venue for the social event. Two possibilities are the City Museum and Harry's Restaurant. ASTHO Contact: Paula Steib 202-371-9090 ext. 1638; psteib@astho.org

2008 ASTHO/NACCHO Joint Conference

The 2008 ASTHO/NACCHO Joint Conference will be held in Sacramento, California, September 9-12. Two hotels, the Sacramento Hyatt Regency and the Sheraton Grand Sacramento, as well as the Sacramento Convention Center, will serve as housing and meeting facilities. Sacramento is a smoke-free city.

2009 ASTHO Annual Meeting

Site selection for this meeting will be based on the geographic rotation used to determine meeting locations. Sites in the East will be asked to provide bids and smoke-free hotels will be sought.

Government Relations

Hill Day 2007

ASTHO had another very successful Hill Day. ASTHO members met with over 100 Members of Congress as well as Secretary Leavitt and other senior HHS Administration officials and OMB officials. Immediately following Hill Day, the Executive Committee met with HRSA Administrator Betty Duke to discuss public health workforce and other HRSA issues. The Committee also discussed public health preparedness issues with Senior HHS official Bill Raub.

Educating Administration Officials Concerning State Public Health Activities

ASTHO staff took Charles Johnson, Assistant Secretary for Resources and Technology, Dept of Health and Human Services, Tom Reilly, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resources and Technology, Dept of Health and Human Services, Richard Turman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, Dept of Health and Human Services, and Aisha Tyus, CDC Analyst, Office of Budget, Dept of Health and Human Services to the Virginia Department of Health to learn about what states are doing in preparedness, immunizations, and other important public health programs.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations Committee met by phone in April and May of 2007 to discuss advocacy efforts. The Committee will convene another call later this summer.

Immunizations

ASTHO and nine other public health organizations faxed a letter to all members of the House of Representatives expressing opposition to legislative language that prohibits the use of federal funds to administer to any child less than 3 years-of-age an influenza vaccine during the 2008-2009 influenza season for which thimerosal is listed on the labeling as an ingredient. ASTHO staff worked with several Members of Congress to ensure that there were official statements made by key congressional leaders on the House floor expressing opposition to this language.

ASTHO staff met with staff of the National Association of Community Health Centers to discuss the issue of deputization of health departments for the purpose of immunizations. Following this meeting, staff of both organizations met with Rep. Waxman's staff to discuss this issue further. ASTHO sent out an Immunization Action Alert to all of its members asking them to urge their Senators and House members to sign on to the House and Senate letters that request funding increases for the CDC National Immunization Program.

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

ASTHO sent an Action Alert to its members asking them to urge their Senators and House members to sign on to congressional correspondence requesting increased funding for the Prevention Block Grant.

Public Health Funding

Another ASTHO Action Alert asked members to urge their House Representatives to support the House FY08 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Bill. This bill provided a \$10 million funding increase for the Prevention Block Grant, significantly increased immunization funding, and provided significant increases for a number of other important public health programs.

ASTHO joined over 1,000 other organizations by signing a letter urging passage of the House FY08 Labor, HHS bill. In addition, ASTHO provided resources to help pay for an ad in Roll Call (a Capitol Hill newspaper) expressing support for the FY08 Labor, HHS bill.

ASTHO sent out an Action Alert asking its members to invite congressional leaders and their staffs to Public Health Departments during congressional district work periods in an effort to educate policymakers about the important work done by state health agencies and the need to properly fund public health.

Preparedness

ASTHO sent an Action Alert to its members asking them to contact Secretary Leavitt and express concern about a proposal to use FY07 hospital preparedness dollars to directly fund special partnership projects.

ASTHO Initiatives

ACCREDITATION

In May 2007 the Board of Incorporators selected an executive director to lead the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Albert C. Gray, PhD, CAE began his position at PHAB on June 11, 2007. Dr. Gray has experience leading accreditation and certification programs in the areas of public water supply, sanitation, environmental science and engineering practice and education. He also has more than three decades of expertise in the fields of water/wastewater management, industrial and hazardous waste, contaminated site remediation and public health protection. PHAB is temporarily housed at the American Public Health Association in Washington, DC, pending the selection of a permanent office location in the DC-Metro area. PHAB applied for and was granted incorporated status in the District of Columbia (501c3 status is still pending). At this time, the Board of Incorporators transitioned to be formally known as the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors held their first meeting on June 14, 2007, and additional Board members were selected as follows:

- Marie Fallon – President
- **Georges Benjamin** - President-elect and Treasurer
- **Paul Jarris** - Vice President and Secretary
- Pat Libbey - Immediate Past President.

The following committees and workgroups will be established to develop the aspects of the accreditation program:

- Standards and Accreditation Activities Review Committee will oversee workgroups on standards, assessment process, and equivalency recognition.
- Fees and Incentives Workgroup will develop a fee structure for applicants and identify strategies for securing incentives for program participation.

- Public Outreach Committee will work with the marketing consultants to develop messages about accreditation in general and PHAB in particular.
- Research and Evaluation Committee will develop a plan for evaluating the assessment processes of the national program and identifying research that would improve the standards-setting and accreditation program.

The following new Board members were selected:

- Kaye Bender, RN, PhD, FAAN, Dean, School of Nursing, University of Mississippi,
- Edward A. Harrison, President, National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- William Riley, PhD, Associate Dean, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota.

Accreditation funding for the 2007/2008 cooperative agreement year was approved in full. The project received \$1,582,402, including \$900,402 for PHAB. ASTHO Contact: Lindsey Caldwell, ext 3137 or LCaldwell@astho.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Climate Change

ASTHO is expanding our activity around the public health impacts of climate change and has engaged with the EPA and CDC on climate change and public health issues. We are incorporating climate change related themes, activities and considerations within existing environmental health programs. ASTHO continues to identify and pursue funding opportunities to support projects centering on education, information exchange, and preparation for the effects of climate change in state health agencies. A position statement is being prepared and ASTHO is supporting the State Environmental Health Directors newly formed climate change workgroup to provide input on these issues.

Climate change and the built environment will be featured in the closing plenary session at ASTHO's annual meeting. Dr Jonathan Patz and Dr Dick Jackson will speak at the session. Jonathan Patz, MD, MPH, is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Population Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has served as Co-chair for the Health Expert Panel of the US National Assessment on Climate Variability and Change. Dr. Jackson is Adjunct Professor of Public Health in the Division of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley. ASTHO Contact: Gino Marinucci, gmarinucci@astho.org; ext. 3158.

Green Office Policy

ASTHO has commenced working on a Green Office Policy intended to promote a sustainable and energy efficient workplace. The Green Office Policy will focus on areas of recycling, waste management, paper, energy, water, purchasing and transport. Upon completion, the policy will be available for possible adoption by state health agencies. ASTHO contact: Sarah Neiderer, 202-371-9090 x 3160, sneiderer@astho.org.

Governmental Public Health Official Strategic Alignment

On June 22, 2007 leadership teams from CDC (Drs. Gerberding, Bailey and Solomon), ASTHO (Leah Devlin, (NC), Terry Dwelle, (ND), Howard Rodenberg, (KS), and Dianne Mandernach (MN), and Paul Jarris, and NACCHO (Poki Stewart Namkung, Bobby Pestronk, Gary Cox, Anthony Iton, and Patrick Libby) met at the Emery School of Public Health to discuss development of strategic alignment between the governmental public health organizations. The session was facilitated by Tim Fallon. The group developed a vision to: "Create the 21st Century Health System to Help the U.S. Become the Healthiest Nation in the World". Three tracks of work were developed including:

1. Define, Deliver and communicate Health Value and Equity
2. Assure System accountability, capabilities and improvement

3. Strengthen alignment and collaboration of governmental public health

Next steps include development of an implementation plan to present to the CDC foundation for support of the initiative.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CDC Portfolio Management Project

During the summer Management Committee meeting held in conjunction with the Senior Deputies Annual Meeting (July 11, 2007 in Irvington, VA), Michael Sage, Director of CDC's Portfolio Management Program, provided an update on the development and potential expansion of the Portfolio Management Program in states. Recognizing the two year anniversary of this initiative, the project is evolving into a recognized program within the Public Health Practice Office of CDC. Enlisting the support of the Management Committee, Mr. Sage offered to share a draft Strategic Plan for the new program for reaction and comment. He also offered to engage in a dialogue on the criteria needed to guide the placement of new Senior Management Officials (SMO), review several draft SMO deployment models, and identify the best way to convene State Health Officials with SMO assignees for a networking session to be hosted by CDC and held in the late fall/early winter 2007. Discussions will also continue on assigning an SMO to ASTHO to support portfolio management program activities. ASTHO Contact: [Jim Pearsol@astho.org](mailto:Jim.Pearsol@astho.org); ext. 3162.

Senior Deputies Annual Meeting

ASTHO proudly hosted the 14th Annual Senior Deputies Meeting held in Irvington, Virginia on July 11-13, 2007. The meeting, with the theme of *Sailing Past Challenges to Open Horizons*, was attended by over 80 Senior Deputies and Executive Team members from 33 states, ASTHO staff, guests, and speakers. **Terry Dwelle (ND)** and ASTHO Secretary/Treasurer gave an inspiring and motivational presentation on leadership and the power of cultural communications." Copies of the session presentations will soon be posted on the ASTHO website. Our many thanks go out to the ASTHO Management Committee which served as the program planning committee, the session speakers, meeting attendees, and President **Bob Stroube (VA)** and his staff, especially Jeff Lake, for making this annual meeting such a success! Save the date. Next year's meeting is set for July 8-10, 2008 in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. ASTHO Contact: Jim Blumenstock, jblumenstock@astho.org; ext.3134.

PANDEMIC AND ALL HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS

DHS Pandemic Influenza Border Management Planning

ASTHO is involved with a DHS project to develop a federal operational plan to support border management during an influenza pandemic. This project is in response to five national implementation plan action items. Also, the DHS-led project team will develop entry and screening policies for persons and cargo arriving by air, land, and sea; interagency response protocols for inbound flights with suspected pandemic influenza cases; educational materials for non-medical, front-line screeners and officers; and an interagency exercise to validate the plan. ASTHO staff have met with DHS and facilitated state participation at a "community of interest" meeting convened to gather stakeholder input on the project. ASTHO Contact: Anna DeBlois, adeblois@astho.org; ext. 3141.

Model Guidance on the Protection of Vulnerable Populations During a Pandemic

At the request of CDC, ASTHO has submitted a proposal to develop model guidance for state, territorial, and local health officials on the protection of vulnerable, at-risk and special populations during an influenza pandemic. The guidance will include considerations for infection control, social distancing, school closure, cessation of mass gatherings, disruptions of essential community services, isolation, quarantine, and distribution of antivirals and vaccine. In addition, it will contain model frameworks for a variety of key aspects of protection and care in emergencies, such as provision of shelter, access to appropriate medical services, establishing

community resiliency, and considerations for mental health services and recovery. Following receipt of funding, ASTHO will convene an Advisory Panel to oversee the project, and a series of practitioner-based Work Groups to provide input and facilitate drafting the document. ASTHO Contact: Anna DeBlois, adeblois@astho.org; ext. 3141, or Jim Blumenstock, jblumenstock@astho.org; ext.3134.

Pandemic Influenza Regional Roundtables

ASTHO completed the Pandemic Influenza Regional Roundtable project this summer and issued a final report outlining key points and action items resulting from the meetings. Meetings were held in Dallas, Philadelphia, and San Francisco in March and April 2007, and resulted in the formulation of nine discrete action points for ASTHO. This fall, ASTHO will continue work with the HHS Regional Health Administrators to begin addressing the action items. The final report, slide presentations, and meeting resources are available at www.astho.org/templates/display_pub.php?pub_id=2439&admin=1. ASTHO Contact: Jim Blumenstock, jblumenstock@astho.org; ext. 3134.

Preparedness Funding and Implementation of PAHPA

ASTHO leadership is working hard to cultivate an open and collaborative working relationship with the principals of the new Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response office in HHS, which is responsible for implementing the provisions contained in the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). This relationship is tested as we continue to question, challenge and oppose certain key decisions that affect the hospital and public health program guidance and relating funding. This includes the creation of a separate cooperative agreement track entitled "the Healthcare Partnerships Program," implementation of the Real-Time Disease Detection provision that would benefit poison control centers, and the possible requirement of the Maintenance of Funding that may include federal funding as well as one-time state investments. Our engagement continues to make a difference (e.g. reducing the amount of funding to the Healthcare Partnerships Program from \$50 million to \$15 million and dropping the federal funding component in the formula to determine state and territory Maintenance of Funding obligation.)

We continue to suffer congressional and media scrutiny over states' and territories' ability to spend and draw down on preparedness funds in a responsible and timely manner. The perception continues that increases and even level funding to states and territories is not warranted, given that "significant" carry forward balances exist year after year. While much effort has been expended to correct this impression, this mindset continues to exist. The Management Committee, in collaboration with the Executive Committee and Preparedness Policy Committee, is working with ASTHO staff to conduct an assessment of true carry forward occurrences and to identify trends or patterns in spending levels among the states and territories, including potential root causes of high carry forward balances and successful state and/or territorial strategies and tactics to overcoming barriers to timely spending/draw down. ASTHO Contact: Jim Blumenstock, jblumenstock@astho.org; ext. 3134 and Steve Curren, scurren@astho.org; ext, 3139.

Performance Measurement

At the request of the Preparedness Policy Committee, a Directors of Public Health Preparedness (DPHP) working group assisted CDC with the development of six performance measures for public health preparedness. These measures were released in April 2007, and data was collected from states through the end of May. This data will be used by CDC as part of a report on progress in state and local public health preparedness that will be released in November 2007. ASTHO staff, committee members, and DPHP working group members have provided input into the content and format of the report. ASTHO has also provided data and success stories to CDC. ASTHO Contact: Steve Curren, scurren@astho.org; ext. 3139.

"States of Preparedness"

ASTHO continues to collect promising practices and success stories on the *States of Preparedness* section of the ASTHO Web site. The goal is to demonstrate how state health agencies have invested in preparedness and how that investment has resulted in improved response. Currently, there are 56 success stories and 39 promising practices described on the page. Several of these stories were used during ASTHO's Hill Day in March, 2007. Newly collected material will be compiled in the second annual *States of Preparedness* report to be released in early 2008. ASTHO Contact: Jennifer Nieratko, jnieratko@astho.org; ext. 3161.

Surveys of State and Territorial Antiviral Stockpiling

In May, ASTHO published results from a survey on state progress toward stockpiling antivirals for pandemic influenza. The results indicated that most states have received some or all of the funding needed to purchase antivirals, but that 24 states and territories lacked sufficient funding to purchase their entire allotment. The amounts needed by these states ranged from \$1 million to \$36 million.

In June, HHS informed ASTHO that they were ready to proceed with reallocating a portion of antiviral allotments from states who chose to forfeit courses to states who requested to purchase additional courses. In all, six states forfeited some courses and four states requested additional courses. ASTHO informed the SHOs in each state of the pending adjustments, which were finalized on July 6, 2007. The survey results are located at www.astho.org/pubs/April07AntiviralSurveyResults051607.pdf. ASTHO Contact: Audrey Chan, achan@astho.org; ext. 3138.

PUBLIC HEALTH PERFORMANCE

BioSense Roundtable

A group of experts from public health, healthcare, and informatics participated in a meeting on June 19, 2007, to provide recommendations on programmatic issues, challenges, and opportunities around CDC's BioSense program. The meeting was part of a collaborative effort by ASTHO, NACCHO, and CDC to look at the future of BioSense. A set of issues currently surrounding BioSense was identified with the purpose of prioritizing the foundational, phasing, and operational components of the program. The next roundtable will be held November 8, 2007. ASTHO contact: Angela Fix, 202 371 9090 ext. 3147; afix@astho.org.

Joint Public Health Informatics and ASTHO Informatics Committee Meetings

The Public Health Informatics Policy Committee met in San Diego, CA, on April 10-11, 2007, to receive updates on national informatics initiatives, make revisions to the ASTHO Informatics Policy Statement, and to discuss strategies for moving public health informatics forward to improve the public's health. In addition, ASTHO, in collaboration with affiliates and partner organizations, co-sponsored a meeting of 80 public health professionals, representing multiple associations and federal partners, in San Diego on April 12, 2007. The meeting laid the groundwork for a unified public health voice in the advancement of the electronic exchange of health data. ASTHO contact: Angela Fix, 202 371 9090 ext. 3147; afix@astho.org.

National Public Health Performance Standards Project

ASTHO staff participated in the development of a two-day training session to prepare state, local, and governance users of the National Public Health Performance Standards Program assessment instruments. The training was held in Scottsdale, Arizona and was attended by more than 80 participants. Draft versions of the revised instruments (state, local, governance) were shared and a session was held to highlight the changes and improvements made to each, as well as their relationship to accreditation. The instruments are currently being reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget, and are projected to be available in late summer 2007. ASTHO Contact: Lindsey Caldwell, ext 3137 or LCaldwell@astho.org.

Privacy & Pan Flu Workshop

ASTHO convened experts in public health law and pan flu preparedness from ten public health agencies and four partner organizations and agencies on May 30-31, 2007, to discuss privacy concerns related to pan flu planning and response. The product of this workshop will be a guide to assist public health professionals in analyzing and resolving privacy concerns that arise during pandemic flu planning and response activities. The guide will be available fall 2007. ASTHO contact: Sterling Elliott, 202 371 9090 ext. 3145; selliott@astho.org

State Alliance for eHealth and the American Health Information Community

ASTHO Informatics staff and committee members represent state-based public health by being active members and participants in the State Alliance for eHealth and the American Health Information Community. These groups work to influence policy regarding the electronic exchange of health information, working on issues such as: the protection of consumer health information, ensuring system and network interoperability, and the process of electronic health information exchange within and across multiple jurisdictions. ASTHO contact: [Sterling Elliott](mailto:sterling@astho.org), 202 371 9090 ext. 3145; selliott@astho.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

State Engagement

The State Engagement project team is completing a member needs assessment, which seeks to identify the following from members

1. Policy and programmatic, advocacy, and general day-to-day needs
2. Satisfaction with current ASTHO products, services, and member engagement
3. Thoughts on proposed new ASTHO products, services, and member engagement

The assessment will consist of a written survey and telephone interviews, both to be completed by all 57 ASTHO members. Currently, the State Engagement project team is working with Kevin Hartley to develop and pilot the survey and interview questions. ASTHO will launch the survey in mid-August, and interviews will be conducted from mid-August to mid-September. The executive director will provide a report on the Member Needs Assessment at the ASTHO Annual Meeting in October.

WORKFORCE SURVEY

In January 2007, ASTHO deployed the 2006-2007 State Public Health Workforce Survey. The survey was sent out to the human resources and personnel directors of all 57 state and territorial health agencies, including the District of Columbia. The goal of this survey is to update the *2004 State Public Health Employee Worker Shortage Report* to determine current workforce trends and identify strategies being used to prevent a shortage of public health workers. ASTHO has received responses from 45 states, including the District of Columbia, and is currently compiling the results into a report that will examine trends between the original 2004 survey and this one. The report will also detail the current strategies used in states in areas such as recruitment, retention, and retirement.

Results of the 2007 ASTHO survey indicate:

- A Graying Workforce
 - The average age of a public health worker in state government is 47.
 - The average age of *new hires* in state health agencies is 40 years old.
 - 20% of the average state health agency's workforce will be eligible to retire within three years.
 - By 2012, over 50% of some state health agency workforces will be eligible to retire.
- A Continued Shortage of Workers
 - A high shortage of nurses in public health remains a key concern.
 - Other public health classifications including epidemiologists, laboratorians, and environmental health workers continue to be affected by shortages in most states.
 - Other classifications such as nutritionists, dieticians, public health physicians, and social workers were also identified by states as emerging fields affected by worker shortages.
- Barriers in Overcoming the Crisis
 - Certain barriers remain in place to improving the demographics of the state public health workforce include:

- Budget restraints.
- Lack of competitive wages for public health careers.
- Lack of understanding among recent graduates as to the benefits of public health careers.
- Lack of visibility about the importance of public health careers.
- Bureaucratic processes in selection and hiring qualified candidates.

The survey was developed through an iterative process guided by a working group of members, partners, and subject-matter experts. **Terry Dwelle (ND)** chaired this working group. We also received support from ASTHO Alum **Kristine Gebbie**, Kathy Vincent, Senior Deputy, Alabama Department of Public Health, and Lisa Waddell, Senior Deputy, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.

ASTHO expects the final report to be completed by August 2007. ASTHO Contact Melissa Lewis: ext. 3132 or mlewis@astho.org.

ASTHO Operations

New Headquarters

ASTHO took occupancy of its new headquarters at 2231 Crystal City Drive, Arlington, VA, on May 21, 2007. While we are still working on a punch list of items, the new space is far superior to our old offices, houses state-of-the-art electronic equipment, has expanded meeting space, and is only five minutes from Reagan National Airport.

Association Management Systems Software

New software that will replace our current contact management system has been purchased and is schedule to go online in November. This software will cover our financial and accounting system needs, provide greater flexibility in maintaining our contact records, and offers many other program enhancements that our current system lacks. A new Intranet system has also been purchased which will simplify in-house operations and facilitate the sharing of documents, information, and program data.

Human Resources

A Human Resources and compensation plan audit was completed. The HR audit report identified systemic issues that are being addressed through updated SOPs, training and general transparency in data. The compensation assessment revealed that ASTHO is competitive and aligned with the market. A few minor adjustments were made totaling \$20,000, to bring everyone to the agreed upon 75% percentile of the 50% market value. ASTHO in addition also decided on an updated schema for titles.

Operating Budget

The Finance Committee under the leadership of Secretary-Treasurer **Terry Dwelle (ND)**, will present a healthy 2007 financial picture for ASTHO.

Staff Additions and Promotions

I am pleased to announce the following staff promotions and new staff appointments:

Antoinette Bragg	Specialist, Member Services
Ellen C. Jefferson	Senior Director, Human Resources
Barbara Levine	Chief, Government Relations and Legal Affairs
Gerardo(Jerry)Luna	Senior Director, Finance and Accounting
Sarah Niederer	Analyst, Environmental Health
Ellen Schleicher	Program Analyst

Daniel Sinclair	Analyst, Environmental Health
Jennifer Sinibaldi	Senior Program Analyst
Sabrina L. Smith	Chief Operating Officer

Promotions since March 15, 2007

Adam Reichardt	Director, Environmental Health
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In closing, I would like to thank each of you for volunteering your valuable time to assure that we at ASTHO are serving State Health Officials in the most effective manner possible. I and the staff at ASTHO are dedicated to assisting State Health Officials obtain the resources needed to successfully serve the health needs of the people living in our states and nation.