Dear State and Territorial Health Officials,

Announced at the ASTHO Annual Meeting, the 2014 President’s Challenge addresses the alarming epidemic of overdose deaths related to prescription drug misuse and abuse. From 1999 to 2010, the number of U.S. drug poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics more than quadrupled.

Therefore, I invite you to be part of this “15x15” challenge—to reduce both the rate of nonmedical use and the number of unintentional overdose deaths involving controlled prescription drugs 15 percent by 2015. Specifically, I am urging all state and territorial health officials to commit to taking action to improve health outcomes by applying strategies to achieve measurable reductions in controlled prescription drug misuse, abuse, and overdose.

As part of this initiative, I ask that you lead the way in fostering important partnerships, and that you consider implementing or strengthening the policies and programs in your state to comprehensively address prescription drug misuse and abuse.

We’ve identified four domains that have significant opportunities for mobilizing support and action:

1) Expand and Strengthen Prevention Strategies
2) Improve Monitoring and Surveillance
3) Expand and Strengthen Control and Enforcement
4) Improve Access To and Use of Effective Treatment and Recovery Support

As ASTHO president, my challenge is for each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the eight territories and freely associated states to (1) select at least one of the categories above and (2) identify a policy or program within that category that you intend to implement, improve, or evaluate in the next year. Please use the form on the following page to indicate your pledge.

Please see the resources on the ASTHO website (www.astho.org/rx) for additional information and state examples.

I appreciate you considering this request, given the many commitments and priorities you oversee each day. Thank you for your continued leadership. I am available if you have any questions or concerns, as is the ASTHO staff. I look forward to many opportunities to work with you on this challenge in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Terry Cline, Ph.D.
ASTHO President
Oklahoma Commissioner of Health
Secretary of Health and Human Services
ASTHO 2014 President’s Challenge
15 x 15: Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse and Deaths by 15% by 2015

Briefly identify and provide a description of what the health agency aims to implement, improve, or evaluate in 2014. Indicate if this is a new activity or complementary to ongoing work.
You may select more than one of the four areas (listed below) for your state to focus on this year.

State or Territorial Health Agency: _______________________________________________________________________
Primary Contact: _______________________________________________________________________
(Phone and/or Email) _______________________________________________________________________

☐ Expand and Strengthen Prevention Strategies

☐ Improve Monitoring and Surveillance

☐ Expand and Strengthen Control and Enforcement

☐ Improve Access To and Use of Effective Treatment and Recovery Support

Please return this form to president@astho.org.

For additional resources, including a gap assessment tool based on national recommendations for preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse, see: http://www.astho.org/Prevention/State-Rx-Assessment-Tool/.