2012 Annual Conference Highlights

Thank you to everyone who planned, organized, and attended the 2012 Annual Conference in April. The conference is always a great opportunity to hear from speakers from across the nation while networking with friends and colleagues from across the state.

We appreciate the hard work and hours dedicated to making this conference a success. Check out the OPHA website at www.opha.net for updates regarding the 2013 Conference.

Above: Governor Mary Fallin and special guest dancers during the 2012 Annual Conference opening.

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2012 Annual Conference Highlights

Above: Ponder, daughter of past president Sunshine Cowan, enjoying the conference!

Above: Lynn Goldberg taking the microphone!

Right: Conference attendees staying physically fit and learning to eat healthy!

Thank you to the entire team who showed us the fun side of health promotion!

Left: Thank you to our conference speakers for your insight and knowledge!

Above: Dr. Cline with speakers Rons Sims and Rajiv Bhatia
MARK YOUR CALENDAR
You won’t want to miss it!
Oklahoma Public Health Association
2013 Annual Conference
April 3rd - 4th & 5th , 2013
Reed Center
Midwest City, OK
More information to come, keep checking the website:
www.opha.net
At the 2012 Annual Meeting, OPHA saw the birth of the new Behavioral Health Caucus. The Behavioral Health Caucus seeks to reach out to the full membership to promote the concept of holistic health that embraces a person’s physical, mental, spiritual and social environment. By recognizing these critical linkages we can identify opportunities to address health in a comprehensive way. This occurs by working across disciplines, pooling resources and reaching people in those settings and during those times in their lives wherein services are most likely to have an impact. Caucus members have stated their belief that the promotion of behavioral health should be central to the public health agenda. To emphasize this point, it is important to note that adults living with serious mental illness die 25 years earlier than other Americans, largely due to treatable medical conditions.¹

The proposed objectives of the Caucus are currently being formulated with these emerging concepts:

- Promote a holistic view of behavioral health within the OPHA
- Advocate for and reduce stigma associated with behavioral health issues
- Promote behavioral health across the lifespan
- Promote behavioral health from primary prevention to recovery
- Prevent mental illness and promote mental health
- Emphasize education and the science of mental illness
- Encourage collaboration between agencies that address behavioral health
- Educate OPHA members about the link provided by behavioral health to other public health priorities
- Integrate health literacy into behavioral health interventions
- Emphasize consumer and end-user input into behavioral health interventions
- Activate and educate key stakeholders and the general public on the value of mental health, substance use and behavioral treatment in order to achieve wellness, recovery and productivity
- Act as a conduit for dissemination of timely information and a recognized contact for Oklahoma Public Health Association members
- Address new and emerging behavioral health issues

James Allen with the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has been selected to serve as the Chair of Behavioral Health Caucus and has already had meetings with the leadership team, developed the first draft of the by-laws and is working hard to recruit new members. If you are interested in becoming involved in this new endeavor that represents the cutting edge of public health feel free to contact him at jallen@odmhsas.org.

The Behavioral Health Caucus is having a quarterly meeting on October 19 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Location: Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS)
1200 NE 13th Street, OKC, OK 73152
Conference Room C.

ODMHSAS is located above the OK County Crisis Intervention Center. Visitor parking is available behind the building (on the south side). Attendees can enter the building from the south entrance. Attendees will need to sign-in at the front desk and take the elevators up to the second floor. The conference room is located to the right of the elevator.

All OPHA members interested in behavioral health, regardless of professional discipline or section membership, are invited to attend.

Contact James Allen, Behavioral Health Caucus Chair, at jallen@odmhsas.org to RSVP or learn more information.
Behavioral Health Caucus

OKLAHOMA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Meeting Schedule:

July 13, 2012—Oklahoma State Department of Health room 1102

October 19, 2012—Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services conference room C

January 11, 2012—Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services conference room A

All meetings are from 10am—noon
WE CLIMB FOR healthy lungs and clean air.
Downtown Oklahoma City is gearing up for the American Lung Association’s Fight for Air Climb hosted February 23rd 2013 at the Cotter Ranch Tower. This exciting event combines fund-raising, health awareness, and a 34 flight vertical stair challenge for the metro area. The Plains-Gulf Division of the American Lung Association is proud to bring this nationally known event to Oklahoma City!

The Fight for Air Climb is more than just another local event; this is a unique experience for a great cause. The American Lung Association has been in existence since 1904 with a mission to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy, and research. The phrase “we climb for those who can't breathe” goes a long way. It tells the community not only the reasoning behind the event, but the importance of involvement and awareness. The American Lung Association is dedicated to helping create a cleaner air for tomorrow, therefore 91% of fundraising and donations will stay in Oklahoma City to promote local programs such as: Freedom from Smoking, Open Airways for Schools, and many more.

We challenge you to climb for those who can't, and become involved in an organization that fights for a healthy community. Get involved today by forming a team, participating as an individual or a volunteer. Please check out our website to start your fight for clean air, and we look forward to climbing to the greatest heights with you!

Please contact Whitney Proctor, Development Manager with questions at 405-748-4674 x206 or visit the website at http://www.lung.org/pledge-events/ok/oklahoma-city-climb-fy13/
Kingfisher and Blaine Counties are celebrating six new Students Working Against Tobacco Teams and six new 24/7 tobacco free policies. All ten public schools in Kingfisher and Blaine are now tobacco free. At the beginning of the school year, four of the ten schools had a 24/7 tobacco free school policy established at their schools. Kingfisher, Geary, and Okeene Schools passed the policy early on with Hennessey’s SWAT Team getting their policy passed last year. The SWAT teams in Watonga, Dover, Okarche, Cashion, Lomega, and Canton worked in their school systems and communities and were able to pass a 24/7 tobacco free policy in all six schools this year. Each school had unique barriers to the passage, and each SWAT Team, along with their adult partners and CX staff, worked to overcome the specific barriers in their school.

The SWAT Teams created and presented power point presentations and spoke to administrators, community leaders, and school board members. They engaged in activism activities to educate the school and the community. All schools, by state law, are tobacco free from 7:00am to 4:00pm during the school day. But having a 24/7 tobacco free policy states that tobacco use is prohibited 24 hours a day, seven days a week on all school property.

The SWAT Teams spoke about how the policy could impact the students, not just for better health, but to change social norms about tobacco use. Their message to school boards was that they were not against tobacco users, but were encouraging the school to set an example with this policy by showing students that tobacco use is not the norm.

Congratulations to Watonga, Lomega, Dover, Cashion, Okarche, and Canton SWAT Teams!
OPHA Section and Caucus Descriptions

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Membership is open to members of OPHA or persons interested in promoting professionalism among public health support staff, and to designate the Administrative Services Section as their choice. Objectives established by this section are to 1) provide a mechanism of sharing ideas and experiences between people engaged in supporting public health; 2) provide an avenue for improvement of skills relating to public health support staff; and finally 3) provide an opportunity for leadership training to individuals engaged in public health support.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAUCUS
The Behavioral Health Caucus seeks to reach out to the full membership to promote the concept of holistic health that embraces a person's physical, mental, spiritual and social environment. By recognizing these critical linkages we can identify opportunities to address health in a comprehensive way by working across disciplines, pooling resources and reaching people in those settings and during those times in their lives where and when services are most likely to have an impact. Emphasis will be placed on creating system level changes to promote a sustainable impact. Membership is open to all OPHA members, regardless of professional discipline.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION
The Environmental Health Section primarily consists of a broad collection of environmental specialists and sanitarians from local, state and federal agencies. The Section addresses issues ranging from environmental health inspections of community settings and includes, but not limited to: food inspections, environmental complaints, housing, wastewater, swimming pools, hotels, chemical exposures, barber/salon shops and recommends improvements to promote a healthy environment.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SECTION
The membership is comprised of response professionals interested in promoting an interdisciplinary approach among public, private, non-governmental and volunteer individuals with a vested interest in emergency response and preparedness initiatives. This Section strives to engage members in collaborative efforts to increase the preparedness and response capabilities across all disciplines relating to public health initiatives.

EPIDEMIOLOGY & LABORATORY SECTION
Membership includes infectious and chronic disease specialists, physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, microbiologists and others working in or studying epidemiological practices or laboratory sciences. The Epi-Lab section works to promote scientific knowledge and interaction through the presentation of scientific studies across Oklahoma. Additionally, the OPHA Epi-Lab section encourages interaction across all public health disciplines and fosters excellent relationships among the health departments of Oklahoma.

GERONTOLOGICAL HEALTH SECTION
This Section’s membership includes nurses whose professional focus includes the health and welfare of senior citizens. Our goal is to provide information and education with respect to the needs and trends in gerontological care. We provide community outreach events such as education regarding issues facing senior citizens. We did provide a program that included cardiovascular health which was well received. Members are encouraged to discuss their interest and concerns. We welcome discussion and ideas that promote prevention and the optimal health of our seniors.
OPHA Section and Caucus Descriptions

HEALTH EQUITY CAUCUS

The Health Equity Caucus is an opportunity for members regardless of their professional niche to promote and express themselves in this area of interest. They desire to pursue health equity as a means of helping people have an opportunity to “attain their full health potential.” Consequently, the aim is to share ideas and experiences all focused on furthering health equity and awareness of the social determinants of health (SDOH). The Caucus works in collaboration with the Oklahoma Health Equity Campaign to increase training opportunities and to share health equity and SDOH resources.

MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

The Maternal/Child Health Section is comprised of leaders in the MCH field, including nurse practitioners, nurses, doctors, social workers and anyone with a vested interested in the health and well being of Oklahoma’s women and children. We strive to provide leadership and promote healthy life style choices in this population, as well as within their families.

ORAL HEALTH

Membership includes oral health professionals and other advocates interested in public health dentistry. Our objectives include: presenting oral health education programs, aiding the establishment of standards and guidelines, providing leadership and expertise for oral health projects, promoting the importance between oral health and overall health, and striving for the reduction of disease for all Oklahomans.

PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION & PROMOTION

Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behavior towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions. Health Educators serve as specialists who provide education, advocacy and organizational support within communities, schools, health care facilities, businesses and public health agencies. This Section will focus on the Certified Healthy Oklahoma Programs: Certified Healthy Schools, Businesses, and Communities are a few examples. Join us as we learn how to become part of a synergistic movement to create positive changes and work together to improve the Health of Oklahoma.

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Public Health Nursing leads the way in building healthy communities, achieving health equity and social justice, and improving quality of life for all communities. The OPHA Nursing Section provides an opportunity for the members to express their specific concerns about community health nursing as it related to total health care and allows persons with like interests to promote preventive health measures, and provide leadership in the development and promotion of public health education in the State of Oklahoma.

STUDENT CAUCUS

Membership in the Student Caucus is open to any student enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program who is interested in the field of public health, whether that is their particular degree focus or not. The Student Caucus provides a means for students to interact with others across the state of Oklahoma to exchange information, ideas, and experiences, and to advance public health involvement.
Youth Fellows Lead Tobacco Awareness Efforts Nationwide

Oklahoma is represented among the members of the Legacy 2012-2013 Youth Activism Fellowship (YAF). Natalie Syharath was chosen as one of 11 young adults to represent a public health organization, Legacy, best known for the truth® youth smoking prevention campaign. As part of the Youth Activism Fellowship, students engage in tobacco control educational efforts at the local, regional, state and national levels.

“As the Tobacco Prevention Assistant Coordinator for my county, I have gained a passion in learning more about how tobacco use can affect lives. Local people create local change, and I want to be able to bring back to my community the new research or techniques I have learned from going through this program,” Syharath said.

YAF promotes and invests in youth leadership, and gathers insight and perspective on youth culture. The Youth Activism Fellows will develop innovative and effective initiatives to help Legacy, the largest national public health foundation dedicated to keeping teens from smoking and providing resources to smokers who want to quit, continue its efforts to communicate the harmful effects of tobacco use, with an emphasis on communicating those messages to teens and young adults across the nation.

“Research shows that most smokers begin smoking before the age of 18,” said Cheryl G. Healton, DrPH, president and CEO of Legacy. “While we have made great strides in reducing the smoking rates among our young people, the tobacco industry is always mindful of the ‘next generation’ of smokers. To sustain the success we’ve had in curbing teen smoking and eradicating tobacco use in America, new and fresh leadership is always needed. We created the Youth Activism Fellowship as a way to grow the skills of young people already achieving success at the local and state levels in tobacco control or public health. Through the Fellowship, we provide our activists with the skills and resources so that they may share their knowledge with other emerging leaders on this issue.”

YAF is an 18-month program, running from January 2012 through June 2013. The program trains young adult tobacco control advocates, increases awareness of new and emerging tobacco products through education, and builds and supports leadership among young adult advocates in the tobacco prevention and tobacco control fields. The fellows will actively engage in tobacco control educational efforts at the local, regional, state, and national levels. This year, the fellows will work together to produce and distribute a new Legacy Youth Activism guide to promote effective strategies for addressing tobacco use in communities and campuses across the country. The guide will feature information related to tobacco industry marketing tactics, emerging products, and practical tools that activists can use to take action in the fight against commercial tobacco use.
The issue of restoring local rights in Oklahoma communities came to its furthest point this legislative session. HB 2267 hoped to remove the pre-emptive clause that took away the rights of local communities to make healthy decisions through local ordinances. However, the effort missed its mark.

Many supporters of restoring local rights dealt with disappointment as HB 2267 was not considered to be heard in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. With weeks of waiting to be placed on the agenda and much local support through letters and phone calls, the bill died for lack of due process in the Senate committee.

HB 2267 was a statewide effort to give back to local communities what once was taken away by the tobacco industry. Preemption took away the rights of Oklahoma communities to adopt or enforce any tobacco-related ordinances more stringent than state law. This industry effort was a strategy against the growing number of Oklahoma communities restricting smoking in public places in 1986. If the bill passed, local communities would have been able to make healthy decisions to protect their citizens and youth from secondhand smoke.

However, the work still continues. Pottawatomie Alliance Toward Community Health is a group of volunteers dedicated to the health of the community. PATCH members promote healthy choices and healthy lives, and they focus on changing social norms around tobacco throughout Pottawatomie County.

“Even though the bill has not passed, those of us trying to make a difference in the life of a child will not stop,” PATCH member Jennifer Birchett said. “I hope in the future that everyone will realize communities should have the right to decide what is best for its citizens.” Oklahoma ranks 48th in the nation in health rankings, with high obesity rates and tobacco use significantly affecting citizens. Oklahoma citizens are encouraged to continue to contact his/her state representative and senator with issues related to improving the health of the state.

“We need to work together to continue to educate our legislators on ways that help our community improve health outcomes,” PATCH member Tina Johnson said. “By doing this, we not only improve the health of our citizens but we help our communities bring in new industry and more people interested in moving to our community.”

Local people create local change. Johnson recommends community members take part in community coalitions in his/her area to help make local communities a healthier place to live. PATCH meets every first Wednesday of the month in The Doctor’s Building, 1414 N. Kennedy Suite 108, at noon. Lunch is provided. Contact Holly Gordon at (405) 275-3391 ext. 105 for more information.
Bachelor of Science in Public Health

Langston University is pleased to begin offering an undergraduate public health degree. The program is designed to prepare graduates who can create and advance healthy communities by exposing students to the principles and practices of public health. The program is centered on exposure to the five core areas of public health, and allows students to gain in-depth knowledge in one of two areas: Minority Health and Health Disparities or Nutrition and Wellness.

The undergraduate program in public health is the only one in the state, and will prepare students for further education and/or entry level non-clinical health professions.

For additional information about the program, please contact:

Marshan Marick, MPH, CHES
Langston University
School of Nursing and Health Professions
mlmarick@langston.edu
(405) 466-3675
Logan County’s Project S.T.U.N.! (Stop Tobacco Use Now!) is a diverse and active coalition comprised of individuals who live, work, and worship in Logan County. Project S.T.U.N.! is fortunate to have assembled a “coalition of the willing” whose mission has been the execution of strategic plans which promote local tobacco control efforts while highlighting the fact that non-tobacco use is the norm throughout Logan County.

This goal has been achieved through the coalition’s activism and presence at various events around Logan County. Over the years, coalition members have repeatedly mobilized and concentrated its efforts in order to move Logan County towards being a community of excellence in tobacco control.

Among other things, coalition members have: 1) actively lobbied for the repeal of preemption on the state level; requested and received an ordinance amendment to strengthen the City of Guthrie’s Prevention of Youth Access to Tobacco statute; written letters to the editor in support of coalition objectives; conducted tobacco use surveys of Logan County residents at events around the county; made countless contacts to engage key stakeholders and potential advocates from around the county; and worked to have 100% of Logan County public schools adopt a 24/7 tobacco-free policy!

This makes Logan County one of only a handful across the state to have achieved that milestone. As the coalition continues to gain recognition and exposure, it will expand its current efforts to empower Logan County citizens to resist and counter the deceptive practices of the tobacco industry.

For more information, please contact Marshan Marick at mlmarick@langston.edu or (405) 466-3675.
Did you know? OPHA has two social media pages for members to connect, share information, and learn the latest news about OPHA. Members and friends of OPHA are encouraged to post any information they would like to share with other members! This is a great way to stay connected in between newsletters and in between annual meetings.

“Friend” us on Facebook: Search for OPHA Oklahoma

Follow us on Twitter @OPHA_Health

Thank you to all who contributed to the OPHA newsletter for Summer/Fall 2012. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the newsletter please email editor Brittney Hodges at brittney_hodges@occhd.org.

Thank you for all you do to promote public health in Oklahoma!