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*Mexico Section*

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Héctor López González  
Gerardo García Salinas

## USMBHC PASSES BYLAWS AND ALLOCATES \$2.1 MILLION AT 6<sup>TH</sup> BINATIONAL MEETING

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC or Commission) held its 6<sup>th</sup> Binational meeting in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico on February 5-6, 2003. This meeting brought together the full Commission to review and vote on several important items.

The members voted unanimously to approve the USMBHC Bylaws. Their approval is instrumental in allowing the Commission greater responsibility and flexibility in its own governance in a binational manner.

The Commission allocated \$2.18 million for USMBHC work plans to carry out activities pertaining to border health and addressing Healthy Border 2010 objectives. This included work plans and design layouts for the regional outreach offices in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas; Tijuana, Baja California; and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

A binational office for the Arizona-Sonora region is located in Nogales, Sonora. It is anticipated these offices will allow for greater collaboration with the sister offices already located in the U.S. border states.

Another highlight of the meeting was the approval of the Policies and Procedures guidelines, which set up the financial mechanisms to administer Commission funds. The following items were also approved:

- The transitional budget;
- A border-wide and bilateral Terrorism and Emergency Preparedness implementation plan; and
- The 2003 USMBHC calendar.

The next binational meeting has been scheduled for April 11-12, 2003, in Rio Rico, Arizona. Details of this event and other pertinent information will be available at [www.borderhealth.net](http://www.borderhealth.net). ■

## STRATEGIC MEETINGS WITH CDC

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC) recently held strategic planning meetings with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. These meetings were hosted by the Office of Global Health.

On January 8-9, 2003, Commission members and the Executive Directors from both Sections met with key personnel of the CDC. The discussions and presentations centered on various topic clusters including chronic disease, diabetes, smoking, reproductive health and

injury prevention. In the area of communicable disease the topics were tuberculosis, HIV, immunization and the Border Infectious Disease Surveillance (BIDS). Environmental health was also a key topic.

These meetings served to give both organizations an overview of some of the work each is doing. It is anticipated that this dialogue will translate into greater collaboration between both organizations to improve border health.

*continues pg. 3* ■

**ARIZONA**

Arizona Department of  
Health Services  
Office of Border Health  
4400 E. Broadway,  
Suite 300  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
Tel.: (520) 770-3114  
Fax: (520) 770-3307

**CALIFORNIA**

California Office of  
Binational Border Health  
3851 Rosecrans Street  
(92110)  
P.O. Box 85524  
San Diego, CA 92138  
Tel.: (619) 692-8625  
Fax: (619) 692-8821

**NEW MEXICO**

Border Epidemiology and  
Environmental Health  
Center  
4200 Research Drive  
Academic Research Bldg. B  
Room 101  
Las Cruces, NM 88003  
Tel.: (505) 646-7966  
Fax: (505) 646-8131

**TEXAS**

Texas Department of Health  
Office of Border Health  
1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78756  
Tel.: (512) 458-7675  
Fax: (512) 458-7262

**Texas Regional Offices:**

**El Paso/West Texas**

401 E. Franklin, Ste. 210  
El Paso, Texas 79901  
Tel.: (915) 834-7690  
Fax: (915) 834-7800

**Uvalde**

1021 Garner Field Rd.  
Uvalde, Texas 78801  
Tel.: (830) 278-7173  
Fax: (830) 278-7170

**Laredo**

2600 Cedar St.  
Laredo, Texas 78040  
Tel.: (956) 723-6284  
Fax: (956) 791-5775

**Harlingen**

601 West Sesame Dr.  
Harlingen, Texas 78550  
Tel.: (956) 423-0130  
Fax: (956) 444-3299

## VENTANILLA DE SALUD A NEW PILOT PROJECT IN SAN DIEGO AND LOS ANGELES

*Ventanilla de Salud*, "The Health Station at the Consulate," was recently funded by the California Endowment and cooperating state and local organizations. This collaborative pilot project was originated by Sonia Contreras (Coordinator of the USMBHC California Outreach Office) and sponsored by the California Delegation of the Commission, and the California-Mexico Health Initiative. Health educators stationed at the Mexican Consulates in San Diego and Los Angeles will provide information on the availability of existing health resources and treatment centers. Referral connections to local health agencies and clinics will be established for follow-up and evaluation. This project is set to begin later this year. For more information on this project contact Sonia Conteras at 619-692-8625. ■

## HRSA HOSTS MEETING FOR REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) hosted a meeting of the regional commissions in Washington, D.C. on December 16-17, 2002. This was the first meeting where the USMBHC, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Authority and the Denali Commission came together to share their respective missions and goals. Representing the USMBHC were Richard Walling, Dr. Paul Villas, Dr. Catherine Torres, Eva Moya and Fernando Sepulveda.

This was a fruitful meeting with future plans calling for:

- 1) A conference with all four Commissions, their members, HRSA and other government agencies;
- 2) A greater presence in Washington in order to communicate issues on a continual basis; and
- 3) Regular communication and development of relationships among the four Commissions.

HRSA has called upon the Commission to assist in planning another regional commissions meeting in the fall of 2003. ■

## NEW APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION

Dr. Victor Arriaga Weiss has been appointed to be the delegate for Dr. Julio Frenk Mora (Mexico's Secretary of Health) to the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC.)

Dr. Paul Villas was named the new Vice-Chair of the U.S. Executive Committee. Villas has been a member of the Commission since its inception in 2000. He is the Executive Director of the Texas-Mexico Border Health Office based out of the University of Texas-Pan American.

Patricia Montoya was named Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Department of Health. She now joins the USMBHC as a member of the New Mexico delegation.

Amanda Aguirre, U.S. Section member was selected by the Board of Supervisors as the new state representative for District 24 in Arizona. Aguirre's appointment marks the first time that a Hispanic female has ever held the post of state representative for Yuma and La Paz Counties.

Eva M. Moya has been named the Executive Director for the U.S. Section of the USMBHC. Ms. Moya will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the U.S. Section office. In addition, she will oversee the USMBHC's health programs and initiatives. ■

## 5th BINATIONAL MEETING

The USMBHC 5<sup>th</sup> Binational meeting took place on November 23, 2002, in San Diego, California with various site visits taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, as well as a binational substance abuse technical seminar held in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. This meeting brought together both Sections of the Commission to discuss border health issues.

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson and Dr. Enrique Ruelas (representing Mexico's Secretary of Health) presided over the general session. Officials from both nations stressed the importance of viewing health problems as a binational problem that must be dealt with through a coordinated program with input from both nations and pledged to continue working together to improve health along the 2,000 mile-long border. Other dignitaries included U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona, Dr. Victor Arriaga Weiss (Director of International Cooperation, Mexico), Josh Valdez (Regional Director, DHHS, Region 9) and Linda Penn (Regional Director, DHHS, Region 6).

Secretary Thompson emphasized, "this Commission must now live up to its potential...we now have to get serious about distributing funds in order to have a real impact on health on both sides of the border." Prior to the meeting, the Mexico Section hosted a technical substance abuse seminar. This seminar brought together researchers and technical experts from the 10 border states, and federal and state governments. The seminars included *Mechanisms for the Protection of Non-Smokers, Risk Perception in the Use of Syringes for Drug Administration, and Pharmacological Treatment for Heroin Substitution*.

*continues pg. 4* ■

### ■ CDC Meeting cont.

An invitation was extended to Dr. Julie Gerberding (CDC Director) to visit the border region.

Participating centers included: Office of Global Health (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Border Urban Research Center, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Response, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention, National Center for Infectious Diseases, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, National Center for Environmental Health, and National Immunization Program. ■



*Dr. Paul Villas, U.S. Section Vice-Chair, at the CDC meeting.*

## MODELS OF EXCELLENCE RECEIVES 62 APPLICATIONS

The Border Models of Excellence (BMOE) call for applications reached its first submission deadline January 15, 2003. This binational initiative received a total of 62 applications from a wide range of projects throughout the border area.

Through BMOE, the Commission will identify community-based health programs and projects using the community health worker (*promotor[a]*) approach that have been successful due to their practices, strategies and

work methods. Another important facet of this initiative is its training component; it provides a monetary award to the winners in order to transfer those experiences and successful strategies across states and throughout the border region to other organizations.

The Commission has formed a review panel to evaluate the applications. Site visits of the finalists will be scheduled for March 2003. The announcement of the winners and presentation of awards will take place in April 2003. ■

### MEXICO COMMISSION OUTREACH OFFICES

#### BAJA CALIFORNIA

Hospital General de Tijuana  
Av. Centenario 1851  
Tijuana, BC 22320  
Tel.: (664) 684-0080  
Fax: (664) 684-0325

#### CHIHUAHUA

Hospital de la Mujer  
Paseo Triunfo de la  
República 3530  
Cd. Juárez, Chih. 32330  
Tel.: (656) 611-5168  
Fax: (656) 611-5260

#### SONORA

Oficina de Salud Pública de  
La Frontera Sonora-Arizona  
5 de Febrero y Moctezuma  
Col. Bolívar  
Nogales, Son. 84000  
Tel./Fax: (631) 313-7920

#### TAMAULIPAS (REGIONAL OFFICE)

Hospital Civil  
Calle González #5501  
Nuevo Laredo, Tamps.  
Tel.: (687) 712-8888

COMING SOON  
USMBHA  
61st Annual Meeting  
San Diego, CA  
May 27-30, 2003  
Register at  
[www.usmbha.org](http://www.usmbha.org)

#### World Tuberculosis Day Binational Card Pilot Project Event

El Paso, Texas and  
Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua  
March 27, 2003  
For more information  
contact Scott McCoy at  
[rum3@cdc.gov](mailto:rum3@cdc.gov) or call  
the Commission at  
915.532.1006

# TATB BECOMES TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO USMBHC

Ten Against Tuberculosis (TATB) became the first organization to formally become a technical advisor to the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission. Dr. Eduardo Sanchez and Dr. Jesús Zacarías Villarreal presented the proposal at the USMBHC's 5th Binational meeting in San Diego, California on November 23, 2002.

The proposal was well received with the members voting unanimously for TATB to officially become the technical advisory group in the area of tuberculosis for the Commission. It is anticipated that this decision will serve to facilitate communication between the two organizations and allow for maximizing the use of personnel and material resources.

In related news, the TB Binational Health Card will be launched March 27, 2003. This pilot project consists of a portable health document that will facilitate the treatment completion for TB patients along the border.



## ■ 5th Binational Meeting cont.

Site visits were also conducted at San Diego Children's Hospital and Health Center (SDCH). This is a state-of-the-art children's hospital and is the only children's hospital located in the border area. As part of this site visit, a separate roundtable discussion was held with *Reel to Real* (a youth violence prevention program). The participating youth showcased a video production dealing with various youth issues, while the roundtable discussion focused on better communication between youth and adults.

El Cajon Public Health Center was the site of a presentation by Project Dulce-a diabetes prevention and management program. Simultaneously taking place in Tijuana, Baja California, Dr. Victor Arriaga Weiss and Dr. William Steiger gave welcoming remarks to participants of the Border Substance Abuse Seminar and the Border Health Program Seminar. There were various technical presentations along with question and answer sessions. The main objective of these seminars was to share border experiences pertaining to alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse.

The Border Health Program Seminar consisted of several presentations including "Go Healthy-Return Healthy" (*Vete Sano-Regresa Sano*), Georeferenced Epidemiological Surveillance System, Immunization Program and Popular Health Insurance Program.

To submit stories contact:  
John Carrillo,  
Communication and Advocacy  
Officer at  
jcarrillo@borderhealth.net

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201 E. Main Dr., Suite 1616  
El Paso, TX 79901  
Tel: 915 532 1006  
Fax: 915 532 1697  
www.borderhealth.net

Homero 213, 2do Piso  
Col. Chapultepec Morales  
Delegación Miguel Hidalgo  
México, D.F. 11570  
Tel: 55 5263 9227  
Fax: 55 5263 9212  
www.saludfronteriza.net

## Mission Statement

*To provide international  
leadership to optimize health  
and quality of life along the  
United States-Mexico Border.*