



USMBHC 7TH BINATIONAL MEETING

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The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC or Commission) convened its 7th Binational meeting in Rio Rico, Arizona on April 11-12, 2003. Commission Members reviewed several important items.

The members reviewed and approved two standing committees:

1. The Work Plan and Budget Committee
2. The Healthy Border Program Committee

The design of these committees, with 3 members of each section, will allow for a more efficient means of conducting the work of the Commission. The Work Plan and Budget Committee will assist the Executive Directors with developing the annual work plan and budget, as well as monitoring the progress. Finally, the Healthy Border Program Committee will monitor, evaluate, and track progress and target of its bilateral health agenda.

There were also a series of technical discussions. They included:

- Efforts to control West Nile Virus were presented by each of the individual U.S border states and Dr. Jorge Méndez representing *Secretaría de Salud*.



Commission members at the 7th Binational Meeting.

- Dr. Miguel Betancourt Cravioto, *Subdirector Dirección General de Epidemiología, Secretaría de Salud* presented Mexico's efforts in Bioterrorism Emergency Preparedness.
- U.S. state health and border health officers spoke on the U.S.-Mexico border states' strategic planning efforts in the area of terrorism and public health preparedness.
- New guidelines pertaining to public health security from the Federal Drug Administration that are going into effect as a result of the Bioterrorism Act of 2002 were discussed.

continues on pg. 2 ■

WORLD TB DAY OBSERVANCE HELD IN EL PASO, LAS CRUCES AND CD. JUAREZ

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission convened a World TB Day observance in El Paso, Texas on March 27, 2003.

The theme was **No TB on Our Borders: Now Is the Time!** (*¡No a la TB en Nuestras Fronteras: Ahora Es el Momento!*)

Featured in the event was the United States-Mexico Binational TB Referral and Case Management Project.

This new initiative is centered around the Binational TB Health Card, which is a card specifically designed to be portable in nature, which will allow for:

- Greater continuity of care;
- Improving the completion of treatment for TB patients; and
- Better coordination for the referral of patients between the health systems of both countries.

Dr. Kenneth G. Castro (Director, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) commented, "this level of consensus and cooperation is almost unprecedented," with approximately 42

continues on pg. 3 ■

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TERRORISM AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANNING FORUMS

With the recent approval of the Commission's 2003 budget, monies were approved and allocated to develop a coordinated and unified binational terrorism and public health preparedness plan. The individual states, working in partnership with Mexico border states and municipalities, took the first steps in the development of the initial phase of this plan.

The Terrorism and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordination team in Arizona-Sonora met in late February to assess the unique needs of the border communities. Some of the key priorities identified were the need for additional funding for training, supplies, communication strategies, and improvement of hospital and lab infrastructure.



Attendees at the Terrorism and Public Health Preparedness Forum in El Paso.

On April 28-29, El Paso, Texas was the site of the Terrorism and Public Health Preparedness and Response Planning Forum. This tri-state event was organized by the New Mexico Office of Border Health, the Texas Office of Border Health, New Mexico Outreach Office, Secretaría de Salud de Chihuahua and sponsored by the USMBHC.

This event is another of several strategic planning meetings that are taking place along the border to assess the needs regarding terrorism and public health response. This binational meeting was attended by 80 participants and included participation by representatives from the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Attendees were broken into the following groups:

■ *7th Binational Meeting cont.*

- An overview of the Telehealth/Telemedicine program was given by Richard McNeely and Alison Hughes both of the Arizona Telemedicine Program.
- A description of the Telemedicine Program of the state of Nuevo Leon was given by Dr. Jesús Zacarías Villareal.

Attendees also made site visits to the Nogales Binational Office, which has been a model for binational

1. Preparedness Planning and Readiness Assessment
2. Surveillance and Epidemiology Capacity, Laboratory Capacity
3. Health Alert Network/Communications and Information Technology
4. Risk Communication and Health Information Dissemination
5. Education and Training
6. Hospital Planning and Preparedness

Discussion leaders then presented their respective groups priorities.

Dr. Hugo Vilchis, meeting facilitator and Commission Outreach Office Director in Las Cruces, commented "the success of this meeting was the fact that this was a binational,

tri-state collaborative effort that was able to bring together professionals from the state and local levels."

Additional meetings are being developed to bring together professionals in the sister city regions of Brownsville-Matamoros, McAllen-Reynosa, Del Rio-Ciudad Acuña, Laredo-Nuevo Laredo, Presidio-Ojinaga, Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras and in the San Diego-Tijuana area. Information from these meetings will be used by the Commission to assess capacity and identify gaps for developing a bilateral border-wide terrorism public health preparedness plan.

For more information contact Texas Department of Health, Office of Border Health (512-458-7675) and the California Office of Binational Border Health (619-692-8625) for upcoming sites and dates.

collaboration. Finally, the Triage and Stabilization Center in Nogales, Sonora was also paid a visit. This center has been instrumental in providing the region greater access to emergency care.

The next binational meeting has been set for June 13-14, 2003, in Mexico City. Information and details on this meeting will be made available on www.borderhealth.net.

COMMISSION LAUNCHES A REGIONAL BINATIONAL MAPPING SERVICE

The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission recently launched an online interactive mapping service pilot project called the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission Mapping Service. This pilot project website geographically covers the Southern California-Northern Baja California border region. Users are given the ability to view, query, identify and print customized maps directly from this interactive site. Key thematic and geographic data layers incorporated within this site

include: public health, epidemiological, environmental, transportation, governmental and satellite imagery. The United States-Mexico Border Health Commission Mapping Service serves as an invaluable tool for the health practitioner, government administrator, researcher or the general public to determine the health and well-being of our binational border region. You can view this service at www.borderhealth.net/gis.htm.

AMY THANKS FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Amy Burns from her position as Coordinator for the USMBHC, in the Office of Global Health Affairs, in Washington, D.C. Ms. Burns has worked with the Commission since its establishment in July 2000.

Her unflagging energy and professionalism have been instrumental in the Commission's successes. The

Commission owes a great debt of gratitude for her perpetual support of the Commission and border health.

She will assume a position as Communication and Outreach Manager with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institute of Health later this month.

Thanks Amy and Good Luck!

World TB Day cont.

organizations joining to make the United States-Mexico Binational TB Referral and Case Management Project possible. Dr. Roberto Tapia Conyer, *Subsecretario de*



Linda Penn speaking on disparity gaps along the border.

Prevencción y Protección de Salud, Secretaría de Salud, was represented by Dr. Oscar Velásquez, General Director, National Epidemiologist Surveillance Center, *Secretaría de Salud*. He stressed the importance of this project for both countries. This initiative integrates CureTB and TB-Net referral services and links them, for the first time, directly to a similar service

offered by the Mexico National TB Program. The Binational TB Health Card was distributed April 1, 2003.

This bilingual, binational event was attended by 130 guests. Presenters included:

Linda Penn-Director Region 6, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, representing Tommy Thompson U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services

Dr. Elizabeth Ferreira-Director, Mycobacteriosis Program, *Secretaría de Salud*

Dr. Kayla Laserson-Epidemiologist International Activities, Division of TB Elimination, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Presenters and participants alike emphasized the importance of the continuity of care for TB patients and combating TB in a coordinated binational manner.

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson; U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX); U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM); and U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes conveyed their support (by video) for the project as well as for the Commission.

Maurice Parker, U.S. Consul General and Juan Carlos Cue Vega, Mexico Consul General expressed the significance of the two governments working together to combat this disease.

Both the U.S. Section and Mexico Section Executive Directors articulated the Commission's long-term commitment to help eliminate this disease and that this referral and case management project will serve as a model for other disease management programs along the border and elsewhere.

Participants also took part in the inauguration of the newest United States-Mexico Border Health Commission Regional Outreach Office located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

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COMING SOON

**USMBHC
8th Binational Meeting**
Mexico, D.F.
June 13-14, 2003
For more information call:
915-532-1006

**Third Meeting of the
USMBHC Outreach Offices**
San Diego, CA
July 14-15, 2003

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Violence Against Women: The Health Sector Responds

In 1995 PAHO launched a project to address violence against women in Central America. This book highlights the results of the projects recent evaluation.

2003, 131pp.,
ISBN 92 75 12292 X,
Order code: OP 12;
US \$22.00/\$15.00 in
Latin America & the
Caribbean

For orders:
paho@pmds.com;
Fax: (301) 206-9789;
<http://publications.paho.org>

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This publication is
downloadable at
www.borderhealth.net



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Conferences and Meetings

- Commission Members Dr. Carlos Gonzales and Dr. Catherine Torres participated as speakers at the National Hispanic Association annual conference "Model Hispanic Health Programs" in Washington, D.C. on March 21-23, 2003.
- Dr. Laurance Nickey and Eva Moya presented an overview of the Commission to the El Paso-Ciudad Juárez Border Liaison Mechanism on April 10.
- HRSA Administrator, Dr. Elizabeth Duke was in El Paso, Texas on March 31-April 1. While in El Paso, Dr. Duke, Frank Cantu (HRSA Field Director, Office of Border Health, Dallas) and Dr. Deborah Parham (HRSA, Associate Administrator, HIV/AIDS Bureau) met with Commission members Dr. Catherine Torres, Dr. Jeffrey Brandon, Dr. Laurance Nickey, U.S. Section Executive Director Eva Moya, Mexico Section Executive Director Fernando Sepúlveda, and directors of various community and migrant health centers. This visit was part of a larger itinerary that had Dr. Duke traveling to the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas where Dr. Paul Villas (U.S. Section, Vice-Chair) met with her as well.
- Eva Moya and Fernando Sepúlveda represented the Commission before the United States-Mexico Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. on March 26.
- The USMBHC in partnership with Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Texas Department of Health and the New Mexico Border Health Office co-sponsored a meeting with the Time Dollar Institute on April 22-23. U.S. Section Executive Director Eva Moya represented the Commission.
- The Commission co-sponsored the Binational Symposium on Environmental, Genetic and Nutritional Factors Affecting Border Health held in McAllen, Texas on March 21.
- The National Conference of State Legislatures sponsored the Health Promotion Policy Institute on April 4-6, 2003 in Washington, D.C. Commission members Dr. Catherine Torres, Patricia Montoya, and Dr. Joseph Sanchez (representing Dr. Diana Bontá) participated in the conference with Eva Moya making a presentation before this group.

Awards

- Dr. Laurance Nickey was awarded the New Mexico Border Health Council Lifetime Achievement Award on March 14 in Las Cruces, New Mexico.
- Dr. Hugo Vilchis, New Mexico Outreach Office Director received the 2002-2003 Globalization Award presented by New Mexico State University's International Programs on April 16.

New Assignments

- Dr. Francisco Javier Muro Avila was named the Secretario de Salud del Estado de Sonora (Secretary of Health for Sonora). He joins the USMBHC as a member of the Sonora delegation. C.P. José Luis García Mayagoitia, *Secretario de Fomento Social* was appointed to the Chihuahua delegation of the Commission.
- Pat Valenzuela has been named the U.S. Section accountant. She will be responsible for financial analysis, tracking and monitoring. Ernestina Jones is the newest staff member of the U.S. Section. She is the administrative assistant to the Executive Director.

Other

- Mexico inaugurated its new Commission regional offices in Tijuana, Baja California; Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.
- The Border Models of Excellence Initiative is currently in the process of conducting site visits with the finalists from its first call for applications. The Commission is expecting to announce the winners in late June.
- The Mexico Section has expanded its office with the addition of several new offices, meeting room and work area.
- U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson; U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX); U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM); and U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes conveyed their support (by video) for the World TB Day observance held March 27 in El Paso. Copies are available by contacting the USMBHC at 915-532-1006.

Mission Statement

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