



United States-Mexico Border Health Commission

**Vol. 3, Issue 4
Fall 2005**

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2005 Border Binational Health Week “Families in Action for Health”

Border Binational Health Week 2005 celebrated their 2nd year under the theme “Families in Action.” All ten border states and their sister cities participated in the week’s festivities beginning October 10, 2005 and ending October 16, 2005. A goal to provide a specific timeframe and focus to the population targeting audiences of the U.S.-Mexico border and Healthy Border 2010 Program goals and objectives was successfully achieved. Health promotion and prevention

activities were held in local communities to bring together organizations in an effort to develop better health and increase quality of life for residents in 80 Mexican municipalities and 44 United States border counties located along a 2,000-mile stretch of the United States-Mexico border. These efforts were achieved by twenty-one organizations that were awarded funds by the U.S.-

Mexico Border Health Association to implement activities throughout the week.

United States Section

U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission - U.S. Section Commission members and United States federal officials traveled to various locations along the border to attend and participate in area activities during the celebration of Border

Binational Health Week. U.S. Section Commission members, representing California, Rosemarie Marshall Johnson, M.D., Lawrence Kline, D.O., FCCP, FACP, D.ABSM, Sandra Shewry, M.P.H., M.S.W. and Richard J. Rodriguez, M.A. (Alternate for Sandra Shewry) attended the Border Binational Health Week Inauguration Ceremony followed by a health fair that was held in Mexicali, Baja California on October 11, 2005. Sandra Shewry, made an awareness speech on California’s collaboration with

Mexico and California’s priorities at an immunization awareness segment of the event. On October 15, 2005, Robert Guerrero, MBA, Arizona Commission Member Alternate, actively participated in a health walk, health fair and the inauguration ceremonies for the Semana del Anciano (Elderly Week) in Agua Prieta Sonora, and attended a health fair in Naco, AZ.



Commission members actively participating in BBHW events.

A very special thanks to the twenty-one Border Binational Health Week awardees and the countless individuals who, through their volunteerism and hard work, made this week a success:

- Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
- Blacks in Government, Inc.
- Cameron County Department of Health & Human Services
- Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Inc.

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■ *Border Binational Health Week*

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Health services being provided at a BBHW event.

- City of Laredo Health Department
- Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo, Inc.
- Colonias Development Council
- County of Starr
- El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District
- El Paso Diabetes Association
- HOPE-K Tri-National Health Council
- Far West Texas & Southern New Mexico Regional Advisory Council
- La Clinica de Familia, Inc.
- Otero P.A.T.H., Inc.
- Presbyterian Medical Services Salud y Desarrollo Comunitario de Cd. Juarez, A.C.
- San Diego Immunization Partnership-County of San Diego
- San Diego County Task Force
- Texas Department of States Health Services-Presidio Field Office
- U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission Arizona Delegation
- West Texas Regional Poison Center

Through dedication to the border, hard work and commitment these organizations were able to hold countless health activities along the border. For example, the Arizona Delegation of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission hosted an inauguration ceremony followed by a health fair in Ambos Nogales. Health fair activities included vaccines for children and flu shots; health screenings and referrals; health promotion/disease prevention printed material; injury prevention, nutrition, HIV education, dental screenings and many other services.

Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo, Inc. executed a Farm Worker Breakfast at Calexico EDD and an Asthma Conference. It was an opportunity for over 600 farm workers to receive health information and various health screenings at little or no cost. They were very pleased with the outcome at both events. Presenters were very impressed with the communities' willingness to learn and their openness to raise questions about their health concerns.

The El Paso Diabetes Association along with other partner organizations, held a conference called "Faces of Diabetes: Body and Mind" on October 1, 2005 at the El Paso Airport Hilton. The conference gave the opportunity to increase knowledge about the development, prevention and standardized diabetes care in El Paso. It also linked participants to programs that are underway or that are already established in other communities. A count of approximately 235 professionals in attendance marked a great track record. Participants felt this newly gained knowledge will definitely be applied in their present location and practice.

Border Binational Health Week should continue to be a binational health effort that seeks to accomplish goals and objectives established on the bilateral agenda of Healthy Border 2010, and ultimately carry out the mission of improving health and quality of life for all individuals residing along the U.S.-Mexico border.

A special recognition goes to all the organizations and individuals, as well as, the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association, Health Resources and Services Administration and the Office of Global Health Affairs for providing funding for Border Binational Health Week 2005 "Families in Action for Health."

Mexico Section

According to preliminary results, the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (Mexico Section) conducted health promotion events. Some of the significant actions taken were screenings for approximately 16,000 tests for diabetes and blood pressure, 5,000 tests for breast and cervical evaluations, 600 prostate cancer screenings were performed and approximately 200 Tuberculosis tests were also administered throughout the course of the week. The participants of these evaluations were indeed given the opportunity during this week that they may not had available to them, otherwise.

On October 17, state health officials held a closing event for 2005 Binational Health Week in Zacatecas, Mexico. According to the California Policy Research Center, Zacatecas has the highest proportion of migrant population. Over 200 people attended the event including officials such as Torres Mercado, Secretary General of the State of Zacatecas; Esperanza Avalos, General Director of the Zacatecas Department of Health Services; Héctor Xavier Martínez, Executive Secretary of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission-Mexico Section; Mauricio Bailoñ, General Director of Secretariat of Health Department of International Relations; and Carlos Esponda, Director of Vete Sano, Regresa Sano.



BBHW closing event in Zacatecas, Mexico.

Quarterly Highlights

- **United States Section Commission Members held a retreat** in El Paso, TX on November 13-14 for an interactive strategic meeting facilitated by Charles Markert, DLCCG, Inc. The purpose of the retreat was to create a Vision and Strategy for the U.S. Section of the Commission given the recent review of focus. Also, to develop a product that could be presented to the full Commission as a recommendation to be revised as needed, plus gain consensus and eventually be adopted. Currently, U.S. Section members are reviewing a draft report. More details about the Commission's vision and strategic efforts are forthcoming.
- **State Officials Talk Influenza Preparedness** – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt convened a Pandemic Influenza Symposium early December in Washington, DC inviting governors to send senior health and emergency services directors to talk about Pandemic Planning. "The public health people get this and have been advocating preparation for some time," Leavitt said. "What's now necessary is for the political leadership at the county, city, school and business level to understand it so they can prepare in the ways unique to them". (Source: AP, Nov. 30, 2005)

In the following months, all 50 states will begin a series of in-state pandemic planning summits to help public health and emergency response teams in each state inform and involve their political, economic and community leadership in this process. The administration's plan calls for local governments to establish clear guidelines on who should get the first chance to take a vaccine or antiviral drug. Secretary Leavitt said the federal government would continue to offer recommendations but the decision will be made by each state. (Source: AP, Nov. 30, 2005)

- **Ten Against Tuberculosis (TATB) Update** Since the 2005-2010 Ten Against TB Strategic Plan was presented to the Commission in August 2004, the Technical Committee held various sub-regional meetings to elaborate specific action plans for each sub region of the border. They include: Epidemiological Surveillance, Laboratories, Health Promotion, Trainings and Communication, and Binational Tuberculosis Case Management. The implementation of the Strategic Plan is currently hindered by the lack of clarity on the possibilities of funding for the proposed actions. The TATB Steering Committee is planning a meeting in February 2006 to discuss next steps (Source: Jose Moreira, Texas Department of State Health Services).

- **TB Cross-border Issues** The Commission's Central Office assisted in facilitating a conference call with key stakeholders to discuss the long-standing issue of cross-border medications. According to Kayla Laserson, ScD, Team Leader, Epidemiology and Evaluation Team, Division of TB Elimination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) can receive the medications from the state of Texas as a donation. Dr. Melanie deBoer, Disease Control and Prevention Mexico representation, PAHO Mexico will work with the National Program and the Mexico Ministry of Health to receive the appropriate letter from PAHO requesting assistance with the movement of medications and soon after follow-up with the state of Texas to move these medications.

Currently, there are 25 patients on a short-term medical treatment managed by Grupo Sin Fronteras. However, a long-term solution is greatly needed. The group suggested discussing in greater detail the situation at the next Ten Against TB Steering Committee meeting. Nevertheless, they are pleased with

the current and continuity of care that has been designated for these patients. (Source: Kayla Lasercon, ScD, CDC)

- **Yuma, Arizona celebrated the Dia del Campesino Health (Farmworkers' Health Day)** with a fair organized by Campesinos Sin Fronteras. Emma Torres, U.S. Section Commission Member and Executive Director for Campesinos Sin Fronteras was among the more than fifty-five health and social services agencies and 200 volunteers that came together and offered services to an estimated 4,000 farm workers. Among the services offered, they administered 800 flu shots, cholesterol screenings and glucose screenings. A breakfast was served and a raffle was conducted for a chance to win a computer, TV, stereo, blankets and coats. Congratulations to everyone on this successful event! (Source: Emma Torres, U.S. Section Commission Member)
- **The Central Office continues to update the Border Region Calendar of Events for FY06.** To view and find out meetings or conferences of interest, please visit the Commission's web page at www.borderhealth.org
- **The U.S. Section Central Office staff is operating under new management, Tessada & Associates, Inc.** The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA) awarded Tessada & Associates, Inc. a contract to oversee the administrative aspects of the U.S. Section staff in El Paso, TX. In turn, Tessada & Associates, Inc. named Pat Valenzuela, BBA Program Manager. Pat is working closely with the new contractor and OGHA in defining a strategy and course of work on the future of the Commission.

State Pandemic Flu Planning Activities

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and the Division of Public Health Services is updating the ADHS Pandemic Influenza Response Plan to coincide with the new U.S. Department Health and Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan. The revised plan will feature supplements covering a wide variety of factors associated with

pandemic influenza and detailing department's response. The Arizona Department of Health Services will hold a preparedness conference in late March 2006.

In California, the Influenza Pandemic Response Plan was developed to collaborate with the Emergency Medical Services Authority, the Health and Human

Services Agency and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a health advisory describing the distribution of Influenza A (H2N2) virus samples to domestic and international laboratories for testing panels has recommended destroying all samples due to a lack of



The USMBHC
newsletter is published
quarterly.

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The USMBHC newsletter
is also available on our
website at:

www.borderhealth.org
or at
www.saludfronteriza.org

**Mission
Statement**

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

■ **State Pandemic Flu Planning Activities**

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vaccine and risk of causing a pandemic. The California Department of Health Services is collaborating with CDC, Department Health and Human Services, the World Health Organization and the College of American Pathologists to destroy virus samples. The California Department of Health Services has begun a tracking system to monitor and confirm destroyed virus samples.

New Mexico participates in planning activities of the El Paso/Doña Ana County joint Metropolitan Medical Response System, the only multi-jurisdictional MMRS in the nation according to Tres Hunter Schnell, Director of Office of Health Emergency Management. Activities focus on the development of medical response capacity in the area. Currently, a Border Health Annex to the NM Department of Health Emergency Operations Plan is being developed. According to Mr. Schnell, the Annex will include a description of how New Mexico Department of Health will collaborate with other emergency response partners such

as the Public Health Regional Office in Las Cruces and Border Health Office and other partners to efficiently respond to events affecting the border.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has revised the Pandemic Influenza Plan, with input from local and regional partners as well as the public. The plan includes guidance to local health departments; considerations surrounding the allocation and distribution of vaccine and antivirals; updates designs for mass vaccination clinics; and the development of informational toolkits for healthcare providers. The DSHS sponsored a one-day Pandemic Influenza Conference in Austin, TX on December 12, 2005 to discuss the state's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan. Clinical and epidemiological experts presented the most current information related to surveillance, vaccine production, and the role of state and local governments responding to influenza.

Calendar of Upcoming Events
January - March 2006

January

*Cervical Health Awareness Month**

January 27-28

Regional Youth Tobacco Conference

Location: Texas
Contact: Becky Zima
Phone: (915) 834-7675

January 27-29

15th Annual Western Migrant Stream Forum

Location: Portland, OR
Contact: (206) 783-3004
Email: www.nwrpca.org/conf/forum.php

February 9, 16, 23:

*Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine
Preventable Diseases*

Contact: California Distance Learning Health
Center (more information: www.cdc.gov/nip/ed
then click on Live Satellite Broadcasts)

February 15-16

*Advisory Council for the Elimination of
Tuberculosis (ACET)*

Location: Atlanta, GA
Contact: Paulette Ford-Knights
Phone: (404) 639-8008
Email: pbf7@cdc.gov

February 18

*National Women's Heart Day**

February 27-March

NRHA 2006 Rural Health Policy Institute

(Registration deadline 2/6/06)
Location: Washington, DC
Contact: www.NRHArural.org
Phone: (703) 519-3865

March 1-4

*26th Annual Conference on Families and Health:
The Call for Leadership: Improving Health
Through Partnerships* (Sponsored by the Society
of Teachers of Family Medicine)

Location: Austin, TX
Contact: Ray Rosetta
Phone: (800) 274-2237 ext. 5412

March 22

*American Diabetes Alert Day**

March 23-26

*National Hispanic Medical Association 10th
Annual Conference*

Location: Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 628-5895,
Email: nhma@nhmamd.org

* Source: 2005 National Health Observances - www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho