



United States-Mexico Border Health Commission

Vol. 3, Issue 3
Summer 2005

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USMBHC Holds Binational Meetings in Washington D.C.

Commission members met at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on July 18 to hold a binational discussion on health issues and challenges along the U.S.-Mexico Border.

The discussion was facilitated by Mary Lou Valdez, Delegate to Secretary Michael Leavitt, and by Lic. Mauricio Bailón, representative for Dr. Gabriel García Pérez, Delegate to Secretary Julio Frenk Mora. Members discussed the Commission's vision for the future; its strategic direction; and the Commission's unique role that contributes to the improvement of health at the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Members identified the following priority issues: disease and injury prevention; immunizations; cervical cancer; migrant health; obesity; access to health care; health disparities; advocacy; ongoing communication and dialogue; Commission's leadership role; and development of partnerships and alliances with academic institutions.

On July 19, the Commission held its 12th binational meeting. The agenda included:

- Fiscal Year 2006 base budget;



Commission members met at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- Commission outreach offices' work plans;
- Binational Health Information Platform;
- HHS recommendation to initiate awareness for the 2006 Summit and engage partners from the Inter Agency Action Team on Border Health;
- Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA) is working with HHS agencies to deliver principals to the various Border Binational Health Week events throughout the week;
- Business presentations and updates on: U.S.-Mexico TB Binational Referral and

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Mary Lou Valdez named Commissioner Michael Leavitt's Delegate

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt named Mary Lou Valdez as his delegate for the Commission.

Lou, a native El Pasoan, cares deeply about U.S.-Mexico border communities. She embodies the spirit of leadership, service and excellence,



Mary Lou Valdez

and her expertise makes her uniquely qualified to lead the efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission in addressing public health challenges on both sides of the border. The Commission congratulates Lou on her appointment.

Under the leadership of Dr. William Steiger, from the Office of the Secretary, Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA), a very capable and talented HHS team was assembled to work with the U.S. Section Members and the Central Office. The Commission welcomes David Cade, Liz Gianturco, Sam Manning, Brian Trent, Jeff Waggoner, Chris Hickey and Elizabeth Yuan.

Commission Members Meet with Mexican Legislators

The Executive Committee of the Mexican Legislature's Health, Budget and Foreign Affairs Commissions of the LIX Congress convened a working meeting with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission on July 20 in Mexico City.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Commission to present the Commission's core activities and the

2006 work plan; and to present the Commission's budget needs for the next year.

The Mexican Legislative Commissions are committed to:

- Focus on the review of the Commission's work plan and budget needs;
- Tour the El Paso del Norte Region.

the Commission's objectives.

Participating Commission members included Dr. Rosemarie M. Johnson, Dr. Jose Manuel de la Rosa, Dr. Dora Elia Cortes and Dr. Javier Lozano. Lic. Héctor Martínez, Dr. Ernesto Ramírez and Lic. Ricardo Selley also attended.



From left: Dr. Ernesto Ramirez, Dr. Rosemarie Johnson, Lic. Héctor Martínez, Dr. Gabriel García Pérez, Dr. Dora Elia Cortes; Dr. Jose Manuel de la Rosa, Dr. Javier Lozano and Lic. Ricardo Selley.

Following the meeting, the Commission delegation met with Dr. Gabriel García Pérez, Titular de la Unidad Coordinadora de Vinculación y Participación Social and delegate for Secretary Dr. Julio Frenk Mora, to brief him on the developments and agreements from this meeting.

Dr. García Pérez reiterated his support to

Binational Meeting

(continued from page 1)

Case Management Project; Border Binational Health and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; Border Binational Health Week by the Health Resources and Services Administration and the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Organizations 3 Cs meeting (more on page 3).

Jim Towey, Assistant to the President and Director of The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives addressed the Commission members at the conclusion of the binational meeting.

U.S.-Mexico Border Consulates Meet in El Paso

The U.S.-Mexico Border Consulates meeting, held August 3-5 in El Paso, formalized the funding of \$100,000 to establish Ventanillas de Salud (health stations) in the Mexican Consulates in El Paso and McAllen, Texas, and in Tucson, Arizona.

The event was presided over by Dr. Gabriel García Pérez and Lic. Gerónimo Gutiérrez, Undersecretary for North American Affairs for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 13 Mexican general consuls assigned to the U.S.-Mexico Border were also present.

A letter of intent was signed between the Commission and the Mexico Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreeing to:

- Carry out activities to promote health in Mexican communities along the U.S.-Mexico Border in accordance with the Healthy Border 2010 objectives;
- Encourage communication with Mexican communities along the U.S.-Mexico Border to address and solve border health issues;

- Collaborate in the development of programs and projects focused on health prevention in support of the Mexican communities along the border; and
- Advocate for the training of health professionals, community health workers, and specialized technical support for the health information network exchange.

Lic. Héctor Martínez and Mary Lou Valdez represented the Commission. The signing parties will look to develop cooperative actions geared toward the agreements on the letter of intent, and within their own capability and legislation in the United States and Mexico.



(From left) Lic. Gerónimo Gutiérrez, Lic. Mauricio Bailón, Lic. Héctor Martínez and Mary Lou Valdez.

Quarterly Highlights

- The co-chairs for the **Border Governors Health Work Table**, Dr. Eduardo J. Sanchez, Commissioner, Texas Department of State Health Services, and Dr. Bertha Cristina Castellanos, Secretary of Health of the state of Coahuila, hosted a meeting, entitled "Border Health Organizations of the U.S.-Mexico Border: Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration," on May 24 in Austin, Texas.



Attendees (left to right): Senator Robert Cannell, Dr. José Inéz Escobedo Velásquez, Lic. Héctor Manuel Reyes Soto, Edgar Ruiz, Dr. Federico Saracho Weber, Dr. Daniel I. Gutiérrez, Dr. Manuel Robles Linares, Dr. Bertha Cristina Castellanos Muñoz, Dr. Eduardo J. Sanchez, Dr. R. J. Dutton, Eva Moya, Dr. Gustavo Alonso Contreras Martínez, Dr. Marta Elizondo-Fournier, Dr. Nick Curry and David M. Austin.

Participants included representatives from: the U.S.-Mexico Border Governors Health Table, USMBHC; U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association; U.S.-Mexico Border Counties Coalition; Border Legislative Conference and the Pan American Health Organization.

Dr. Sanchez and Dr. Castellanos described the purpose and goals of the meeting, and Dr. Sanchez asked the participants to give a short presentation about their group and how they are associated with work along the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Dr. Sanchez proposed that the USMBHC web site be used as a clearinghouse of information.

The group identified the following priorities:

- Web Site - through the USMBHC Central Office to provide the resources and/or infrastructure for web site;
- Name other possible organizations with a common border-wide focus;
- Clarify mechanism for joint collaboration (e.g., Border 2012

Agenda);

- Development of joint meetings on a larger scale to enhance impact of consensus recommendations.
- Explore possible Memorandum of Agreement between the organizations to achieve binational communication, coordination and collaboration.

- **The Association Liaison Office for University Cooperation in Development and the U.S. Agency for International Development** convened the first binational conference to celebrate the accomplishments of 37 higher education partnerships that address a variety of key development issues in Mexico. The meeting was held from June 29 - July 1 in Guadalajara,

Jalisco, Mexico.

Higher education partnerships are an essential element of the U.S.-Mexico Training, Internships, Exchanges and Scholarships (TIES), a program created under the Partnership for Prosperity initiative launched in 2001 by Presidents Bush and Fox. The program focuses on promoting economic growth and higher living standards for the citizens of both countries.

Representatives from various universities involved in public health participated in a binational health discussion, facilitated by Eva Moya, General Program Manager/LTS Corporation for the U.S. Section of the USMBHC, to explore binational health issues and identify best practices and models.

- On August 8, the Central Office in El Paso hosted **Dr. Yeldos A. Izatullayeb, from the Kazakhstan National Medical University, and Dr. Kazbek A. Tulebayev, from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan**, as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program from the Office of International Visitors, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

Dr. Fernando Gonzalez, Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance Project Coordinator, welcomed the visitors and gave a presentation on border public health issues. Piedad Huerta, representing the U.S.-Mexico Border Field Office of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), presented the binational role of PAHO and the collaborative activities with the

Commission.

Dr. Carmen Sánchez-Vargas, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Liaison for the Commission, presented the Border Binational Health and Risk Factor Surveillance Project.

Drs. Izatullayeb and Tulebayev presented their educational and preventive programs and collaborative projects with the World Health Organization. The Kazakhstani specialists in public health and environmental management practices were in the United States participating in a three-week International Visitor Leadership project examining environmental health practices.

- On July 11, Eva Moya and Lic. Héctor Martínez met with **Susan Gerard, Director of Arizona Department of Health Services**, to brief her on the various activities of the Commission. The Commission has endeavored to hold meetings with the health officers of the 10 border states. Discussions included the 12th binational meeting in Washington, DC; latest developments on the Commission's Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance Project; and the outline for linkage and special projects between the Commission, Arizona and Sonora State Health Offices.

Gerard discussed the department's border health priority areas: Access to Care; Immunizations; Chronic Disease, and Terrorism Preparedness.

- **Dr. Jill McDonald**, from the Division of Reproductive Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, spent the months of April and May at the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, working with state health officials from various government agencies.

The purpose of her visit, made possible through a fellowship from the American Fellows Program, was to explore opportunities for U.S.-Mexico collaboration and to develop a plan to evaluate sampling procedures proposed for use in the Brownsville-Matamoros Sister City Project (BMSCP). The BMSCP pilot project is designed to study the feasibility of establishing reproductive health surveillance in border communities.



*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.*

Border Binational Health Week

October 10-16, 2005

The goal: To raise the awareness of underserved border populations about health programs/services and how to access these services.

On September 8th, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded a Cooperative Agreement to the United States-Mexico Border Health Association in support of the 2005 Border Binational Health Week (BBHW), being held from October 10-16.

The partners involved with BBHW encourage community organizations and agencies to participate and celebrate the week.

The Commission commends the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,



HRSA, CDC, and the Mexico Secretariat of Health for their outstanding support and funding.

For information on BBHW awardees, please contact Dr. Manuel Robles Linares, Executive Director, U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association, at (915) 833-6450 or by email at roblesma@usmbha.org.

For a border-wide calendar of events and additional information, please contact Mr. Frank Cantu, HRSA Office of Border Health, at (214) 767-3171 or by email at fcantu@hrsa.gov.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October - November 2005

October 6-7

2005 Expert Panel on Populations at Risk for Poverty, Low SES and No Health Insurance
Location: Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia.
Contact: Cristina Gonzalez-Parcell (contractor)
Phone: (904) 861-0601
Email: cgp@martinezcommunications.com

October 10-16

United States-Mexico Border Binational Health Week
Location: multiple sites along the border region.
Contact: Frank Cantu, HRSA Office of Rural Health Policy
Calendar is available @ www.fep.paho.org
Phone: (214) 767-3171
Email: fcantu@hrsa.gov

October 11

Binational Health Week – Kick Off / Opening
Location: James R. Thompson Center, Chicago, Ill.
Contact: Gustavo Cano or Francisco Cisneros
Phone: (773) 579-0832 ext. 237

October 11-12

Binational Health Week – Health Policy Forum
Location: Hyatt Regency Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
Contact: Gustavo Cano or Francisco Cisneros
Phone: (773) 579-0832 ext. 237

October 20-22

13th Annual HIV/AIDS Update Conference
Location: Radisson Resort, South Padre Island, Texas
Contact: Marlina Rodriguez
Phone: (956) 428-9322 or visit
<http://www.valleyaids.org>
Email: marlena.vac@tahc.org

October 27-28

Border Health: Information for Action VI
Location: Viscount Suite Hotel, Tucson, Ariz.
Contact: Jesus Kataura or Rosario Morales
Phone: (520) 287-4722
Email: kataura@ahsc.arizona.edu or
rmorales@ahsc.arizona.edu

November 15-16

Clean Air Advisory Committee – Environmental Protection Agency
Location: TBD El Paso, Texas
Contact: Karey Fitzmaurice
Phone: (202) 564-1667
Email: fitzmaurice.karey@epa.gov

November 16-17

Advisory Council for the Elimination of Tuberculosis
Location: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia.
Contact: Beth Wolfe
Phone: (404) 639-8029