



United States - México Border Health Commission

Volume 4, Issue 1

April 2006

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New Members to the United States-México Border Health Commission

On March 20, 2006, U.S. President George W. Bush appointed **Dr. Antonio Falcon** of Texas, **Dr. Cecilia Rosales** of Arizona, and **Dr. Bruce D. San Filippo** of New Mexico as members of the United States Section of the United States-México Border Health Commission (BHC).

Dr. Falcon is a family physician in Rio Grande City and serves on the Texas Nursing Facility Administrators Advisory Committee. He was elected to the Starr County Hospital District Board of Directors in 1997 and has served on the Texas Medical Foundation Board of Trustees. Dr. Falcon is a graduate of Baylor University College of Medicine.

Dr. Rosales is an Associate Pro-



fessor at the University of Arizona (UoA), Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health. She previously served the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) as Chief of the Office of Border Health, Division of Public Health Services. Dr. Rosales received her medical degree from the *Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez*, School of Medicine in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México in 1987.



Dr. San Filippo has practiced as a neurosurgeon in Las Cruces since 1982. He is the Chief Medical Officer of Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces since 2000. Dr. San

Filippo is a graduate of University of Iowa, and Albany Medical College.

The new appointed members will replace **Dr. Paul Villas** of Texas, **Dr. Carlos Gonzales** of Arizona, and **Dr. Catherine Torres** of New Mexico who have served on the U.S. Section of the BHC since December 1999.

New members of the México Section of the BHC include **Dr. Raymundo S. Verduzco Rosan**, Secretary of Health for the State of Coahuila (profile on page 4), **Dr. Jorge A. Durón Martínez** also for the State of Coahuila, and **Dr. Luis Fernando Garza Frausto** for the State of Tamaulipas (picture provided).



Ventanillas de Salud

On February 1, the Méxican General Consulate in Tucson, Arizona hosted an inaugural ceremony that included the participation of **Consul Juan Manuel Calderón, Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez, Robert Guerrero**, representing the Arizona Department of Health Services, and **Dr. Jaime León Varela**, representing the *Secretaría de Salud de Sonora*.

The Mexican General Consulate in McAllen, Texas opened its own *Ventanilla de Salud* on March 16. **Consul Luis Manuel López Moreno, Lic. Martínez, Dr. Brian Smith**, Regional Director of the Texas Department of State Health Services, and **Dr. Jorge Sebastián Hernández Rodríguez**, representing the State



Consul Juan Manuel Calderón and Lic. Héctor Martínez signing the Memorandum of Understanding

(continued on page 4)

First Mexican National Immunization Week in 2006



México celebrates three immunization weeks every year to emphasize the importance of immunizations as a part of primary care for children. The Secretary of Health of the State of Baja California, **Dr. Francisco Vera**, kicked-off the first 2006 National Immunization Week in Tijuana, Baja California. **Mrs. María Elena Backeller de Elorduy**, First Lady of Baja California, **Mrs. María Elvia Amaya de Hank**, First Lady of Tijuana, **Dr. José Bustamante Moreno**, Chief of Health Services Jurisdiction 2, and numerous State and Federal officials attended the event.

Special thanks goes to Dr. Carlos Gonzales, Dr. Catherine Torres, and Dr. Paul Villas for their leadership, dedication, commitment, and tireless efforts to improve the health of the people on the United States-México border region, and their excellent service as members of the United States Section of the United States-México Border Health Commission.

Border Health Status Report

A team of border health experts led by **Dr. Sam Notzon**, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention within the Department of Health and Human Services, is developing a health status report for the United States side of the U.S.-México border. The major goal of the report is to provide health status information for decision-makers, researchers, health foundations, and others along the U.S.-México border.

On January 25, team members and Mexican counterparts met

in El Paso, Texas to review progress to-date on the report and to discuss activities that address health issues on both sides of the border. The meeting provided an opportunity for team members to establish a firm timeline for completion of the report. Team members agreed that draft versions of all chapters would be completed by the end of March. This team consists of staff from the border health offices of the four U.S. border States, academic experts on border health research, and federal statistical experts. Members of the report team

include: **Maura Mack** and **Alfonso Rodriguez** from California; **Graciela Silva** from Arizona; **Hugo Vilchis** and **Jacob Nevarez** from New Mexico; **Kassie Rogers** and **Robert Garcia** from Texas; **Mike Lebowitz**, University of Arizona; **Antonio Furino** and **Alma Martinez-Jimenez**, University of Texas-San Antonio; **Roy Luchino**, New Mexico Alzheimer's Association; and **Sam Notzon** and **Juan Albertorio**, from HHS/CDC.

Workshop on Lead Issues Along the U.S.-México Border

On January 26-27, the New Mexico Office of Border Health, in collaboration with the BHC, held a meeting of border and federal stakeholders in El Paso, Texas to discuss

lead issues along the U.S.-México border. Participants included lead experts from all four U.S. border States, the Mexican Section of the BHC, and federal participation from

the HHS Food and Drug Administration, the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, OGHA, and the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission.



Binational Border Information Platform Meeting

The HHS Office of Global Health Affairs (OGHA) hosted a meeting on February 9 and 10 on the Binational Border Health Information System project in Rockville, Maryland. The meeting was led by **Dr. Sam Notzon**, HHS/CDC/NCHS and **Dr. Rafael Lozano**, General Director for the *Dirección General de Información de Salud* of the *Secretaría de Salud de México*.

Participants worked together to identify health data for the creation of a binational border health information system. Collected health information will include morbidity and mortality data on select health indicators, hospital data, public health resources, and infrastructure.

BHC; **Elizabeth Yuan**, International Health Officer, OGHA/HHS; **Ing. Pablo Guadarrama**, Coordinator of Information Technology, México Section, BHC; and **Lic. Paola Pliego**, Coordinator for Social Communication and Public Relations, México Section, BHC.



Other participants included **Mary Lou Valdez**, Deputy Director for Policy, OGHA/HHS; **Colleen Goodman**, President of Quality Resource Systems, Inc.; **Lic. Alejandro Suárez** from the General Directorate of Health Information, *Secretaría de Salud de México*; **Juan Albertorio**, Statistician of the NCHS/HHS; **Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez**, Executive Secretary, México Section,

“This [pandemic influenza] is the greatest public health challenge of our time, and we need to be prepared for the work while hoping for-and working toward-the best possible outcome”

Susan Gerard, Director of Arizona Department of Health Services

Tuberculosis and Leprosy Workshop

A workshop on “Actions for the Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis and Leprosy” was held at the Chihuahua State Outreach Office of the U.S.-México Border Health Commission in February. Thirty-two physicians from the Ciudad Juárez Health Jurisdiction attended this workshop and shared their know-

ledge and to help fight against Tuberculosis and leprosy.

Panelists in the workshop included **Dr. Héctor Puertas Rincones**, Director, Ciudad Juárez Jurisdiction of the Health Services of Chihuahua; **Ana Rascon, RN**, Chihuahua State Coordinator for Mycobacteriosis; **Dr. Elisa Aguilar**,

Coordinator, Chihuahua Outreach Office, BHC; **Dr. Esteban Vlasich de la Rosa**, Coordinator for the “*Juntos*” Binational Tuberculosis Project in El Paso, Texas; and **Dr. Bertha Armendariz**, TB-Net Binational Coordinator, Texas Department of State Health Services.

Pandemic Flu Summits

On January 6, Arizona Governor **Janet Napolitano** and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Director **Susan Gerard** were joined by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (**HHS**) **Mike Leavitt**, HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director **Dr. Julie Gerberding**, and other officials at the *Arizona Prepares* conference in Phoenix. **Ms. Emma Torres**, U.S. Section member was among the more than 1000 participants gathered to learn more about local, state, and national planning efforts. Since the conference, ADHS released an updated Influenza Pandemic Readiness Plan available at www.azdhs.gov/pandemicflu.

Other scheduled State Pandemic Flu Summits include **Texas on March 27**, **New Mexico on March 28**, and **California on March 30**. More information on these three summits will be provided in the next newsletter.



Ventanillas de Salud

(Continued from cover page) of Tamualipas Secretary of Health, participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony. The event was followed by a workshop on *Ventanillas de Salud* aimed at community health workers (*promotoras*). These health stations are the products of a joint agreement signed in August 2005 by representatives from the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the Border Health Commission (BHC), Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Institute of Mexican Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior*), and the Mexican Ministry of Health.

The primary purpose of *Ventanillas de Salud* is to provide resources to help direct persons at-risk to the most appropriate sources of care, health information, and other key health resources and contacts at the community level.

A *Ventanilla de Salud* is scheduled to open later this year in El Paso, Texas.

Border News on Public Health Emergency Preparedness

On March 6-7, Dr. R.J. Dutton, Alternate for Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, Commissioner for Texas Department of State Health Services and chair of the Border Governors' roundtable on health organized a border States meeting to discuss Public Health Emergency Preparedness, which will be a topic of the 2006 Border Governors' Conference.

On March 9, HHS announced the successful commitment of \$5 million U.S. dollars towards a cooperative agreement with the U.S.-México Foundation for Science (FUMEC) for Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) at the United States-México Border. This funding will assist the six Mexican states and the Secretariat of Health of México to create systems that will be coordinated and interoperable with those of their U.S. counterparts. The goals of this cooperative agreement are to improve cross-border activities in early detection, identification, and reporting of infectious diseases associated with potential bio-terror agents or other major threats to public health. Specifically, the cooperative agreement aims to strengthen critical capacities in infectious disease surveillance and epidemiology, laboratory capacity for biological agents, surveillance-related communication and information technology, and surveillance and epidemiological education and training.

Advisory Council for the Elimination of TB

Ms. Mary Lou Valdez, Secretary Leavitt's delegate to the BHC, participated in the February 15-16 meeting of the HHS/CDC Advisory Council for the Elimination of Tuberculosis held in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Ken Castro, Director of the HHS/CDC Division of TB Elimination (DTBE), gave a presentation on the Binational TB Card and Dr. Zachary Taylor, Chief Field Services and Evaluation Branch DTBE, presented on efforts to eliminate TB from the Border States. A case presentation on the complexities of providing TB treatment to binational, interstate, and international patients, was given by Dr. Gary L. Simpson, Medical Director of Infectious Disease, New Mexico Department of Health. Ms. Valdez provided an overview of the unique challenges and dynamics along the U.S.-México border in terms of public health; background on the U.S.-México Border Health Commission (BHC) and its support of the Binational TB card project; and a request to the advisory committee to collaborate with the BHC to improve TB control on the U.S.-México border.

The BHC April 2006 Border Hero



Starting with this issue of the BHC Newsletter, the U.S.-México Border Health Commission (BHC) gives special recognition to an individual for his/her leadership, innovation, and impact on border health.

Because of his commitment and dedication to community outreach, his leadership and enthusiasm, **Emilio Saenz, Jr.** an El Paso native, is our Border Hero for this issue.

Mr. Saenz is the Community Relations-Education Coordinator for the West Texas Regional Poison Center (WTRPC) at R.E. Thomason General Hospital in El Paso. He increased awareness and utilization of the 24-hour bilingual poison center services by the Spanish-speaking border communities that are within the 36-county area of the west Texas region.

More recently, he built a "Poisons in the Home: A Bilingual Interactive Museum Exhibit" as a part of the 2005 Border Binational Health Week geared toward children and their parents. The innovative bilingual exhibit was further presented by the El Paso Insights Science Museum as a moving exhibit throughout the west Texas region.

Other innovative projects by Mr. Saenz include the implementation of a Tri-State Collaborative project to provide bilingual poison information services and the annual "Poison Jungle Safari Program" at the El Paso Zoo to increase public awareness of poison prevention and poison hazards in the home. This project was funded by the HHS Health Resource and Services Administration.

DO YOU KNOW A BORDER HERO? Details on how to nominate deserving individuals for our July Newsletter can be found at www.borderhealth.org.

Tenth Annual U.S.-México Border Issues Conference

Dr. Manuel de la Rosa, Regional Dean of the Texas Tech Medical Center and U.S. Section member from Texas, represented the U.S. México Border Health Commission on a border health issues panel at the Tenth Annual Congressional U.S.-México Border Issues Conference in March 2006. This conference was co-chaired by Congressman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) and organized by the United States-México Chamber of Commerce to explore common issues, learn about border programs and review the impact of new legislation on the U.S.-México border. Panels were held on health, the environment and immigration. Senators Kay Bailey-Hutchinson of Texas and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico were guest speakers at the luncheon and a number of other Congressional leaders attended throughout the day's session.

U.S.-México Border Counties Coalition

Dr. Tom Lindsey participated in the annual legislative conference of the U.S.-México Border Counties Coalition (USMBCC) in Washington, DC on March 7 and 8. The USMBCC was founded to address issues that are common to all border counties. Working with the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Lou Valdez, Dr. Lindsey also met with staff from a number of Border Congressional representatives.

News from the California Outreach Office (COO)



On February 17 and 18, California Department of Health Services (CDHS) Director Sandra Shewry and Dr. Francisco Vera González, Secretary of Health of Baja California, participated in a Binational Cervical Cancer Symposium organized by the American Cancer Society,

the CDHS Office of Binational Border Health (COBBH), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the BHC. Also in attendance was Dr. Lawrence Kline, Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez, representatives from the COBBH, and the COO. The event was hosted by the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* in Tijuana. As a result of the event, the American Cancer Society will continue to develop a strategy that will reduce the incidence of cervical cancer mortality in the border region.

A request for proposals for projects to be funded in fiscal year 2006 was issued by the COO. Funding priorities include asthma, tuberculosis, childhood obesity, and prevention of tobacco use.

A new COO initiative with COBBH began this year to address access to health care for children in the California border region, which will focus on improving access to care for Latino children up to the age of 18. First steps include meetings with local resource service provider agencies and the development of a project strategy.

For more information contact: Elizabeth Santillanez, Director, COO at esantill@dhs.ca.gov or Dr. Ernesto Ramirez, Coordinator, Healthy Border 2010 Program, México Section at eramirez@borderhealth.org.

The mission of the United States-México Border Health Commission is to provide international leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the U.S.-México border.

Agreement between the México Section of the BHC and the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL)

An agreement was signed at the Monterrey Regional Office of the BHC with the goal to improve health conditions in the State of Nuevo León. "Health unites nations, institutions, and towns," Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez, Executive Secretary of the México Section of the BHC, said in his opening remarks. He further emphasized that health and education are the foundation for the progress of humanity.

The parties agreed to collaborate towards:

- a Binational Public Health Policy Forum on the border during the 2006 Binational Health Week in October;
- joint Health promotion and disease prevention media campaigns;
- additional health promotion activities; and
- the inclusion of all public and private stakeholders to improve health of the people in the State.

Others present at the signing included Dr. Gilberto Montiel Amoroso, Secretary of Health for the State of Nuevo León; Ing. José Antonio González Treviño, UANL President; Dr. Victor Dryere Noriega, Technical Secretary for the Secretariat of Health of Nuevo León; Dr. Jesús Ancer Rodríguez, UANL General Secretary; Dr. Dora Elia Cortés Hernández, General Coordinator of Student Work Groups and Medicine Research and BHC member; Rosa María Mata de García, Operations Coordinator; Dr. Carlos Medina de la Garza, Director of International Relations at UANL; Dr. Thelma Martínez Villarreal, Director of Community Health University Program at UANL; Dr. Abelardo García Cantú, Coordinator of the Regional Office in Monterrey; and Lic. Paola Pliego, Coordinator of Public Relations and Social Communication for the México Section of the BHC.



Contact: Dr. Abelardo García, State Coordinator for Nuevo León via email at agarcia@borderhealth.org for more information.

Visit us at www.borderhealth.org
or www.saludfronteriza.org



U.S.-México Border Health Commission – Members' Profile

In the United States:
 201 East Main Dr., Suite 1616
 El Paso, TX 79901
 Tel: (915) 532-1006
 1-866-785-9867
 Fax: (915) 532-1697

In México:
 Canoa 521 Oficina 502
 Col. Tizapán San Angel
 Delegación Alvaro Obregón
 C.P. 01090 México, D.F.
 Tel./Fax (011-52-55) 5616-2911



Dr. Eduardo Sanchez is the Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), one of the largest agencies in the State of Texas. The Department consists of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the former Texas Department of Health, the mental health component of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and the Texas Health Care Information Council. As Commissioner and chief health officer for the State of Texas, Dr. Sanchez oversees programs ranging from disease prevention, regulatory services, prevention and treatment of substance abuse and mental illness, family and community health services, and bioterrorism preparedness.

Dr. Sanchez is a board-certified family practice physician. He was presented with the 2005 Public Health Award by the American Academy of Family Physicians for his contributions to public health. He also served as the Chief Medical Officer for the Austin-Travis County Health and Human Services Department.

Recently, Dr. Sanchez was at the forefront joining efforts with other state and local government agencies to provide food, shelter, clothing, and medical care to more than 250,000 evacuees from hurricane devastated states of Louisiana and Mississippi. Dr. Sanchez considers this sustained and collective effort to be one of the most outstanding public health chapters in over 100 years.

Dr. Sanchez received his medical degree from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, Texas. He holds a Masters of Public Health degree from the San Antonio Branch of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and a Masters of Biomedical Engineering from Duke University. He is married to Katherine Sanchez and has four children.



Dr. Verduzco Rosan is the Secretary of Health for the State of Coahuila. Previously, he served as Medical Sub-Delegate in the State of Coahuila, and as associate professor for Family Medicine. He held the position of State Delegate and Assistant Director at the *Hospital Universitario de Saltillo* (University Hospital of Saltillo); Chief of the State Public Health Coordinated Services; and Chief of Surgery at the *Centro Hospitalario "La Concepción"* (La Concepción Hospital Center).

In his professional career, Dr. Verduzco Rosan served as the Coordinator for the Arbitration Committee Board of Directors for the Saltillo Medical Association, and as the Commissioner for the Medical Resolution and Arbitration Commission for the State of Coahuila. He was also a delegate of the Mexican Association of Laproscopic Surgery, Secretary for the Coahuila Chapter of the Mexican Association of General Surgeons, Proprietary Board of Directors of the Faculty of Medicine-Saltillo Unit, and a member of the Medical Arbitration Commission of the Mexican Association of General Surgeons.

Dr. Verduzco Rosan received his medical degree from the *Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila* (Autonomous University of Coahuila) School of Medicine in Torreón. His studies include a postgraduate degree in General Surgery from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) and a postgraduate course in Pedagogy at the *Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila*.

Calendar of Upcoming Events April-June 2006

(Please check our website www.borderhealth.org or www.saludfronteriza.org for updated information)

April 5

Kick Butt Day
 Organized by the Texas Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
 Contact: Becky Zima
 Phone: (915) 834-7675

April 9-11

Life Savers Conference
 Organized by the National Highway Safety Administration
 Location: Austin, Texas
 Phone: (703) 922-7944
www.lifesaversconference.org

April 18-19

Thirteenth Binational Meeting of the U.S.-México Border Health Commission
 Location: Las Cruces, New Mexico

Phone: (915) 532-1006
www.borderhealth.org

April 22-29

National Infant Immunization Week/
 Vaccination Week of the Americas
 Location: various sites
<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/events/niiw/default.htm>

April 25-27

2006 Border 2012 National Coordinators' Meeting
 Organized by: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 Location: Ensenada, Baja California, México
 Phone: (800) 862-9020
www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder

May 2-4

64th Meeting of the U.S.-México Border Health Association
 Location: Monterrey, Nuevo León, México
 Contact: Dr. Manuel Robles Linares
 Phone: (915) 833-6450

May 15-19

National Rural Health Association's 2006 Annual Conference
 Location: Reno, Nevada
www.nrhaural.org

June 8

Pandemic Influenza and Public Health Law Satellite Broadcast presented by the California Distance Learning Health Network
www.cdlnh.com/PanFluPHLaw.info