



United States – México Border Health Commission*

2007 Accomplishments

The mission of the United States – México Border Health Commission (BHC) is to *provide international leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the United States-México border*. Its primary goals are to do the following: institutionalize a domestic focus on border health that can transcend political changes and to create an effective venue for binational discussion to address the public-health issues and problems that affect the United States-México border populations.

Promoting Cross-Border Partnerships

The Border Health Commission sponsored the **Fourth Annual Border Binational Health Week (BBHW)**, in October 2007, with the theme of “*Families in Action for Health*,” which focused on promoting sustainable partnerships. Activities included binational seminars on *Safety and Health in the Workplace* (Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua), the *Second Annual Tobacco-Policy Forum* (Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua), a *Binational Dengue Prevention and Control Seminar* (Brownsville, Texas), the *Tri-State Red Ribbon Rally* (Sunland Park, New Mexico), and the *Border Philanthropy Partnership Binational Community Health Meeting* (Tijuana, Baja California), among numerous other local and regional activities. During Border Binational Health Week 2007, 11,124 residents in the United States and 142,520 in México received a variety of health screenings or services during sponsored events. Over 300 Federal, State and local private and non-profit partners joined in the celebration of BBHW.

Emphasizing the Importance of Binational Collaboration

The Border Health Commission partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the ten Border States to celebrate the **Fourth Annual National Infant Immunization Week and Vaccination Week in the Americas (NIIW/VWA)**, in April 2007. The Hidalgo County Health Department in Texas was the host for the 2007 inaugural events. Activities for the week included an Education/Awareness fair, with over one-hundred participants; numerous immunization events where over 3,600 doses were administered; a Texas Vaccines for Children Providers’ Conference, with over 460 public and private health-care providers in attendance; and an educational and media campaign that distributed over 3,000 educational materials. This annual event provides an exciting opportunity to unite communities from throughout the border and both nations to ensure all children have a healthy and safe childhood free from vaccine-preventable diseases. The campaign theme, “*Love Them, Protect Them, Immunize Them*,” encourages communities to help increase infant-immunization rates along the U.S.-México Border.

Border Health Research

The Border Health Commission established the **Binational Border Health Research Expert Panel**, and hosted its first meeting in El Paso, Texas, in November 2007. This Expert Panel consisted of fourteen representatives from the ten Border States, who joined a distinguished panel of U.S. and Mexico Federal and non-profit *ex-officio* members, and focused on the development of plans and activities that will lead to a comprehensive border-health research agenda.

Binational Pandemic-Influenza Table Top Workshop

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS), in partnership with the Border Health Commission, sponsored the first-ever Federal-State binational table-top workshop on pandemic influenza, in San Diego California, in February 2007: *Border Pandemic Influenza Workshop: Challenges and Opportunities*. The workshop brought together policy and technical experts from the United States and México to address binational communication issues and actions on a pandemic influenza incident that occurred on the U.S. – México border.

Tuberculosis Legal Issues

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), in partnership with the Arizona Office of Border Health and BHC Outreach Office, hosted the Federal-State Tuberculosis legal-issues forum, in October 2007: *Legal Forum: Cross-Jurisdictional Issues in Tuberculosis Control*. The purpose of the forum was to address the legal issues around the interstate management of tuberculosis patients, and how the individual State legal statutes among the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas affect the management of these cases. Federal Departments and agencies represented included HHS, including HHS/CDC, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The workgroup has compiled a general report of its findings, and will follow with a publication in an associated peer-review journal.

Lead Contamination

The Border Health Commission joined with the California Department of Health Services to support the development of a collaborative, *Borderwide Health Outreach Project on Lead Prevention* with key Federal, State, and local agencies. Facilitated by the California Office of Binational Border Health (COBBH), the effort coordinated with the U.S. – México Lead Work Group and the Border Lead Outreach Project. Future actions will lead to the publication of a binational technical report, and the dissemination of outreach materials to raise awareness and promote behaviors to reduce lead exposure.

Cross-Border Dengue Initiative

The Texas Department of State Health Services-Health Services Region 11, Office of Border Health and Border Health Commission Outreach Office joined with the Tamaulipas State Department of Health to establish the *South Texas México Dengue Prevention and Control Coalition*, whose members, including numerous other public and private partners, conducted an assessment of dengue prevalence on both sides of the border. The Coalition developed binational work plans in the areas of epidemiology, vector control, and health promotion, and hosted an organizing and technical workshop in October 2007, during Border Binational Health Week.

The United States – México Border Health Commission

Providing Leadership on Border Health Issues to –

Facilitate Identification, Study and Research
Be a Catalyst to Raise Awareness
Promote Sustainable Partnerships for Action
Serve as an Information Portal

For additional information please visit our website at www.borderhealth.org.

* On October 22, 1994, Public Law (PL) §103-400 of 1994 established the U.S. Section of the United States-México Border Health Commission (BHC). On July 24, 2000, the *Agreement between the United States of America and the United Mexican States* established the full Commission. The *Agreement* delineates the functions, composition, operation, and legal status of the U.S. and Mexican Sections. With regard to duties and composition, the *Agreement* aligns closely with PL 103-400. U.S. President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order on December 21, 2004, to designate the BHC as a public international organization with limited provisions for the purposes of the International Organizations Immunities Act.