Mission

Provide international leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the United States-México border

Goals

Institutionalize a domestic focus on border health that can transcend political changes

Create an effective venue for binational discussion to address public health issues and challenges affecting the United States-México border populations

Strategic Priorities

- Strategic planning
- Access to care
- Research, data collection & academic alliances
- Tuberculosis
- Obesity/diabetes
- Infectious disease & public health emergencies

About the U.S.-México Border Health Commission

The United States-México Border Health Commission (BHC) was established in July of 2000 with the signing of an agreement by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of the United States and the Secretary of Health of México to optimize health and quality of life along the U.S.-México border. The BHC was designated as a Public International Organization by Executive Order of the President in 2004.

The United States-México border is approximately 2,000 miles long and includes four U.S. states (Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas), and six Mexican states (Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas).

The BHC, comprised of the federal secretaries of health, the chief health officers of the ten border states, and prominent community health professionals from both nations, brings together the two countries and its border states to address border health challenges, improve the health of border residents, and reduce health disparities.
Leadership

Annual Binational BHC Meeting—The BHC held its 2011 annual meeting in Ensenada, Baja California, co-chaired by Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator for the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (representative for Secretary Kathleen Sebelius), and Victor Hugo López Aranda, General Director of Affiliation and Operations at the National Commission of Social Health Protection, México (representative for Secretary Salomón Chertorivski). The meeting provided updates on the Healthy Border 2010/2020 Initiative, the Border Governors Conference Health Work Table, and the Mexican health initiatives Seguro Popular, Camino a la Salud, and Cinco Pasos. BHC members confirmed strategic priorities and laid the groundwork for the BHC’s work in the coming year.

Healthy Border 2010/2020 Initiative—Development of the Healthy Border (HB) 2010/2020 strategic plan represents the first time that a set of border-specific health indicators are available for the U.S.-México border region. These indicators will help organizations and communities prioritize health issues and design regional community health programs. In 2011, the BHC supported the HB 2010/2020 work group, which includes U.S. and México public and academic officials, in implementing the strategic plan.

Binational Health Councils’ Strategic Planning Workshop III: Organizing for Success—At this workshop, held in El Paso, Texas, the BHC assembled community health leaders from the ten border states and fifteen binational health councils to obtain binational community input on health areas for improvement and determine approaches to promote activities focused on disease prevention and health promotion along the border.

Access to Care

National Infant Immunization Week/Vaccination Week in the Americas—2011 BHC Accomplishments

Vaccination Week in the Americas

National Infant Immunization Week/
Access to Care

health promotion along the border.

determine approaches to promote activi-

cities on topics including cross-border

Focus

Venue

Tuberculosis

National Vaccine Plan Border Health Stakeholders’ Meetings—This Stakeholders’ Meeting took place during Border Binational Health Week in Brownsville, Texas, in October 2011. The concurrent meetings were a collaborative effort between the BHC, the National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO), and the Association of State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO) to identify best practices, challenges, and opportunities for implementing the 2010 NVPO-developed National Vaccine Plan, which includes a comprehensive 10-year blueprint for improving immunization rates among border communities and migrant populations.

Tuberculosis

United States-México Border Tuberculosis (TB) Consortium and the TB Legal Forum—To reinforce binational and border-wide responses to binational TB issues, the BHC assembled over 60 public health and legal experts for the Second Annual Consortium and Forum in San Diego, California.

United States-México Border Tuberculosis (TB) Consortium and the TB Legal Forum—This BHC initiative celebrated a milestone in 2011 when representatives from the two border states signed a joint statement of cooperation establishing processes for cross-border data exchange to ensure continuity of care for TB patients travelling between both countries and to decrease TB transmission across the U.S.-México border.

Obesity/Diabetes

U.S.-México Border Binational Childhood Obesity Forum—The BHC sponsored a childhood obesity forum that took place concurrently in El Paso, Texas, and Eagle Pass, Texas, in October 2011. This forum brought together federal, state, and local health professionals to promote childhood and adolescent obesity prevention programming, strategies, and policy recommendations for border communities.

Infectious Disease and Public Health Emergencies

United States-México Border Binational Infectious Disease Conference—This BHC-sponsored event in El Paso, Texas, brought together over 130 participants from federal, state, county, and city health departments representing all ten U.S. and México border states and from numerous other U.S. and Mexican institutions, organizations, and hospitals. This 2nd annual meeting reviewed bilateral activities on topics including cross-border and global partnerships, global health security, and efforts to prevent and control biological threats.
Border Binational Obesity Prevention Summit—Address critical obesity prevention issues affecting the U.S.-México border region.

United States-México Tuberculosis (TB) Consortium and Legal Forum—Promote continuity of care of all TB patients along the U.S.-México border; to facilitate coordination of TB patient management across multi-level legal frameworks; to establish uniform Meet and Greet Standards and Guidelines applicable to all TB patients facing deportation; and to support and facilitate the work of the U.S.-México Border TB Continuity of Care and TB Legal Issues Work Groups and MDR-TB Expert Consultation Network.

Leaders across Borders—Sponsor the third iteration of Leaders across Borders to advance binational leadership development for public health and health care professionals working to improve community health across and along the border region.

Binational Border Health Research (BHR) Forum—Identify processes for collaborative cross-border research that can be replicated and promote resource sharing and collaborative partnerships.

Healthy Border 2010/2020 Strategic Plan—Implement the Healthy Border Strategic Plan to improve quality of life and to eliminate health disparities along the U.S.-México border.

Border Binational Health Week (BBHW)—Sponsor the 9th annual Border Binational Health Week (BBHW) to promote borderwide sustainable partnerships that can address border health problems.

Prevention and Health Promotion among Vulnerable Populations Initiative—Improve health outcomes among vulnerable populations living in the U.S.-México border by increasing health-seeking behavior and strengthening the delivery of health referral services and primary health care.

The United States-México Border Health Commission raises awareness about public health issues and challenges faced by border populations; creates venues and partnerships to mobilize actions to improve health status; serves as an effective portal for border health information; and promotes the development of community leaders to address border health issues and carry out the mission of the BHC into the next decade.

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