



United States – México Border Health Commission*

2006 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: 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 affecting the United States-México border populations.

Promoting Cross-Border Partnerships

The BHC sponsored the 3rd Annual Border Binational Health Week in October 2006, with the theme of “*Families in Action for Health*” and focused on promoting sustainable partnerships. Activities included binational forums on cross-border tuberculosis management, tobacco policy, substance abuse issues, and health promotion policy. The BHC collaborated with the ten Border State health departments, State Offices of Border Health, BHC Outreach Offices, local health departments, and other grass-roots community-based organizations to support an array of local and regional events.

Border Health Information and Promotion

The BHC in July 2006 introduced *E-Border Health*, an electronic weekly bulletin intended to promote border health research, programs and health information.

Lead in Candy and Ceramic Ware

The BHC joined with the California Department of Health Services to conduct the first-ever federal-state binational meeting on lead in San Diego, California in September 2006. Facilitated by the California Office of Binational Border Health, the forum’s purpose was to foster communication and raise awareness on the public health impact of exposure to lead in candy, ceramic ware, and home remedies and to identify priority issues and binational strategies to reduce lead exposures from these sources. Outcomes included the creation of a Binational Border Lead Work Group. Future actions will lead to publication of a binational technical report and development of a Binational Lead Outreach Project.

Cross-Border Telemedicine Initiative

The BHC initiated the Cross-Border Telemedicine Initiative under the leadership of the State of Nuevo León and the Autonomous University of Nuevo León that will work to expand binational access to health care and health information connectivity with local health facilities and hospitals, academic institutions, and other public and private entities. Future actions will lead to the development of a tri-state collaborative among the University of Arizona, and the Mexican States of Nuevo León and Sonora, among others.

Border Health Information Platform

The BHC partnered with the International Statistics Program of the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the México Secretariat of Health to initiate the México component of the web-based information platform. The information platform will provide improved mechanisms for data gathering and sharing, assessment, and research of border health problems.

Border Health Research

The BHC held the first of a series of forums on border health research in Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, in October 2006 focused on the development of a comprehensive border health research agenda. The forum brought together health researchers and experts from academic institutions of both countries to address a variety of issues impacting the application, implication, funding and types of border health research.

Healthy Border 2010 Mid-Course Review

The BHC partnered with the International Statistics Program of the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a mid-course review of the Healthy Border 2010 health objectives.

Infectious Disease Coordination

The BHC brought together the U.S. – México Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) programs in Tijuana, Baja California, México, in October 2006 that focused on the cross-border coordination of infectious disease activities.

Pandemic Influenza Planning

The BHC sponsored the first-ever federal-state binational forum on pandemic influenza: *Border Pandemic Influenza Forum: Challenges and Opportunities* in Hermosillo, Sonora, México, in November 2006. The U.S. and México signed an agreement to boost cooperation on binational pandemic influenza preparedness. The agreement will enhance the health and quality of life among residents along both sides of the border.

Public Health Preparedness

The BHC joined with the Association of State and Territorial State Health Officers (ASTHO) and the Border Governors' Conference Health Work Table to support the ASTHO-hosted binational forum on *Crossing Borders: Improving Public Health Preparedness in the U.S.-México Border Region* in August 2006 in Austin, Texas. Initial results of the forum indicate wide interest in having the BHC serve as a focal point for facilitating horizontal integration on public health preparedness among the ten Border States.

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.