New Public Health Prevention Agenda Launched in New York State

O

n April 7, 2008, the New York State Department of Health, in partnership with federal, state, and local organizations, unveiled a new “Public Health Prevention Agenda for the Healthiest State,” and then conducted a week-long tour of community and public health activities in recognition of National Public Health Week.

At a press conference at the Capitol, the new Prevention Agenda was showcased by State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., who was joined by Julie L. Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H., Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; State Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Health Committee; and Sue Ellen Wagner, Vice President for Community Health for the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) at the April 7 press conference.

Also attending were Brian Marchetti of the American Lung Association, Kate Breslin of the Primary Care Coalition and Community Health Care Association of New York State (CHCANYS), Elie Ward of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Lara Kassel of Medicaid Matters New York, Nancy Huehnergarth of NYS Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance, Julianne Canfield of the American Heart Association, Linda Lambert of the American College of Physicians, Martha Poit of the NYS Public Health Association, Catherine Marschilok of the American Diabetes Association, Karen Schimke and Bridget Walsh of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, and JoAnn Bennison from the NYS Association of County Health Officials.

“Too many New Yorkers experience poor health as a result of obesity, tobacco use, and lack of preventive health services,” said Commissioner Daines. “The Prevention Agenda is a call to action to local health departments, health care providers, health plans, schools, employers, and businesses to collaborate at the community level to improve the health status of New Yorkers through increased emphasis on prevention.”

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The Prevention Agenda consists of 10 priority areas, with specific goals for improving outcomes in each area (see page 1). For example, one of the goals in the priority area of Tobacco Prevention is to reduce the percentage of adolescents and adults who smoke to 12 percent. Currently, the prevalence of smoking in adults is 18.2 percent.

The State Health Department will assist community partners in achieving Prevention Agenda goals by providing community health data, offering assistance with community health planning, and issuing periodic report cards to assess progress toward the goals. The New York State Public Health Council plans to appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to support activities of the Prevention Agenda.

“New York’s Prevention Agenda will help residents improve their health in the places where they live, learn, and work,” said Dr. Gerberding. “This agenda is consistent with the CDC’s Health Protection Goals and our mission to make the United States the healthiest nation.”

Following the announcement of the new Prevention Agenda, Commissioner Daines and Dr. Gerberding visited the Watervliet Elementary School and viewed its dental program, nutrition education, and physical activity efforts, and Dr. Gerberding presented the CDC’s public health protection goals and the public health efforts of climate change at two forums in the Capital District. During the remainder of the week, Commissioner Daines:

- gave presentations on New York’s public health and health reform agenda, environmental health priorities including the public health effects of climate change, and efforts to increase access to health insurance;
- attended a demonstration on telemedicine and heard about a five-county health assessment being conducted in the Adirondacks;
- visited an agricultural injury prevention program in Fly Creek with State Agriculture and Market Commissioner Pat Hooker;
- accompanied a physician and public health nurse on a house call in the Lake George area and joined a public health nurse on a home visit connected with the Home Health/Nursing Home Without Walls program in Sullivan County;
- visited a childhood obesity prevention program in Johnson City and an employer-based obesity prevention program in Binghamton, and then recognized, during a press conference, the community efforts to reduce obesity and prevent chronic disease being done in Binghamton and Broome County through the CDC-funded Steps to a Healthier New York program;
- viewed tobacco control efforts being conducted by a local youth coalition in Binghamton;
- observed an asthma education and care coordination program for children in the Southern Tier and a diabetes chronic disease management model in Monticello;
- toured a neonatal intensive care unit at Vassar Brothers Hospital in Poughkeepsie and presented the Hospital with an excellence award for their Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program;
- visited a WIC Program and participated in a healthy food demonstration for WIC clients in Yonkers; and
- met with Latino Services Provider Coalition in Sullivan County and HIV/AIDS clients in Yonkers.

Details about some of these sites and programs visited by the Commissioner are included in Community Snapshots, which begin on page 4.

For more information about New York’s Prevention Agenda, visit http://www.nyhealth.gov
This is Public Health

In celebration of National Public Health Week, University at Albany (UAlbany) and Columbia University public health students launched campaigns to raise awareness of the important role public health plays in protecting our health and safeguarding our lives.

The University at Albany School of Public Health campaign specifically targeted UAlbany and Rensselaer High School and Middle School students. UAlbany undergraduate students with a concentration in Public Health were given stickers with the slogan “This is Public Health” and challenged to place them in strategic locations around Albany to build awareness of the many ways in which public health impacts our well-being. Participants submitted digital photos of their strategically placed stickers and were eligible to win first, second, and third place prizes. Winning photos were also enlarged and placed on display at UAlbany during National Public Health Week.

In addition, “This is Public Health” presentations were given to the health classes in Rensselaer High School and Middle School to further educate the community about the role of public health and to inspire them to live healthier lives, not only for themselves, but for generations to come. These students were given the opportunity to participate in a poster contest to help educate their peers about public health. One poster was chosen to be placed in the Albany Times Union during National Public Health Week to illustrate the many ways in which public health touches us all every day. Several posters were also displayed throughout the University at Albany School of Public Health during National Public Health Week.

The Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health campaign was developed by the Public Health Doctoral Students Association to promote and increase awareness of public health by creating a video montage that highlights the work of students and faculty at Mailman. The video focuses on the work of students at the school, and speaks to the future of public health. The video was produced and shown to students, faculty, and community members during National Public Health Week. The video montage is available at http://www.thisispublichealth.org, the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), and the Mailman websites, as well as YouTube.

These campaigns were funded by ASPH as part of a broader effort by public health students at colleges and universities nationwide to focus public attention during National Public Health Week on the important role of public health in an increasingly interconnected world.

“Public health students are tomorrow’s public health champions. As such, they are incredibly powerful spokespeople about the role public health serves in improving the conditions and behaviors that affect our health,” explained Dr. Harrison Spencer, President and CEO, ASPH. “These projects bring that dedication and commitment to life and illustrate clearly why support for the public health infrastructure—including schools of public health—is so critically important.”
**Federal Initiatives**

**CDC Health Protection Goals Address New Challenges**

In March 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced new strategies, innovations, and goals to address the new health and safety challenges—such as emerging infectious diseases, terrorism, environmental threats, an aging population, and lifestyle choices—being faced by Americans. The CDC Health Protection Goals and Objectives now include:

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<th>Healthy People in Every Stage of Life</th>
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<td>All people, and especially those at greater risk of health disparities, will achieve their optimal lifespan with the best possible quality of health in every stage of life.</td>
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<th>Healthy People in Healthy Places</th>
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<td>The places where people live, work, learn, and play will protect and promote their health and safety, especially those at greater risk of health disparities.</td>
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<th>People Prepared for Emerging Health Threats</th>
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<td>People in all communities will be protected from infectious, occupational, environmental, and terrorist threats.</td>
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<th>Healthy People in a Healthy World</th>
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<td>People around the world will live safer, healthier, and longer lives through health promotion, health protection, and health diplomacy.</td>
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CDC is now creating action plans, with measurable objectives and activities, to achieve these goals. Visit www.cdc.gov/goals for more information on the Health Protection Goals.

To provide feedback on CDC’s strategies, objectives, and research that support these health protection goals, send an email to CDCGoals@cdc.gov.

**Community Snapshots**

**Preventing Injuries in New York’s Largest Industry**

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH), established by the New York State Legislature in 1988, was one of the programs visited by New York State Health Commissioner Daines during National Public Health Week. Recognizing the unacceptably high rates of occupational injury and illness in New York’s largest industry, the Legislature charged NYCAMH to provide:

- research into the causes and prevention of agricultural injury and illness,
- education and prevention activities within the farm community,
- education of professionals serving the farm community, and
- clinical help for farm-related health problems.

In addition to its state mandate, NYCAMH has been designated by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as one of nine agricultural centers across the country, the Northeast Center for Agricultural and Occupational Health (NEC). Serving a thirteen-state region from Maine through Virginia, NEC promotes farm health and safety research, education, and prevention activities.

In partnership with other NIOSH centers, state and federal agencies, land grant universities, medical centers, and farm groups, NYCAMH/NEC uses injury and illness research findings to develop preventive teaching, educational health screenings, demonstrations, and activities.

NYCAMH/NEC’s target audience includes farmers and farm families, high school and college agricultural classes, vocational agriculture teachers, agribusiness and farm organizations, health professionals, engineers and safety specialists, members of the media, and policy makers.

NYCAMH offers a variety of farm safety and health services to the agricultural community, including:

- programs to assist with occupational stress and health;
- educational safety programs that teach farm safety practices to children, students, and farm workers of all backgrounds;
- a personal protective equipment catalog that offers a wide range of personal protective equipment, from masks and safety glasses to TYVEK suits and hard hats;
- discounts and tax exemptions for farmers;
- a library and information center for anyone interested in learning about occupational or agricultural topics; and
- HealthWorks, Bassett Healthcare’s Occupational Health Services Program.

**To learn more about NYCAMH programs and resources and NYCAMH/NEC research, visit www.nycamh.com/about/index.shtm.**
Workplace Intervention to Address Obesity and Breast Cancer Risk in Rural Communities

A number of factors contribute to obesity—including genetics, behavior, environment, and culture. Nonetheless, current consensus is that the ongoing epidemic appears to stem from environmental changes that encourage overeating and discourage physical activity. Excess calories consumed but not used ultimately lead to weight gain.

The Cornell Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors (BCERF), Building Capacity to Address Obesity to Reduce Breast Cancer Risk in Rural Communities: An Environmental Approach, provides tools and strategies for communities to use in a comprehensive, integrated approach to obesity prevention. Health professionals, extension educators, community leaders, and the public increase their understanding of the relationship between overweight and obesity and breast cancer risk, and improve their capacity to take an environmental approach to breast cancer risk reduction through obesity prevention in their community.

Professor Carol Devine in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell leads a team of faculty and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Educators in developing and implementing the outreach program, Small Steps are Easier Together. It consists of community worksite-based environmental intervention projects that encourage physical activity and healthy food choices with the goal of preventing excess weight gain and reducing breast cancer risk among adult women.

The research project site http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/bceresearch/obesity.cfm provides a valuable link to Preventing Overweight and Obesity: A Guide for Custom Community Intervention Planning.

Worksites that have been active in the program, which began in 2004, include a community hospital, government office building, Head Start program, schools (all levels) and after-school programs, and four CCE county offices. Volunteer team leaders led 144 participants at four intervention worksites as part of the 2007 Small Steps are Easier Together community environmental intervention. Outcomes from this intervention include:

- a substantial proportion of participants were successful in meeting the walking intervention goal (adding 2000 extra walking steps at least three times a week over 10 weeks);
- an increased proportion of reporting participants met the walking goal during the intervention period;
- for seven of the 10 intervention weeks, a substantial number of reporting participants met the calorie saving goal (choosing 100 fewer calories a day); and
- participants were significantly more likely to recognize the problem of obesity at their worksite and to disagree that obesity is only an individual concern.

The evaluation also revealed some challenges to maintaining participation and reporting. For example, participants reported increased recognition of the difficulty of reaching physical activity goals.

For more information, contact Carol Devine, http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/staff/devine or Barbour Warren, http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/staff/warren or Mary Maley, http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/staff/maley or email at breastcancer@cornell.edu or call (607) 254-2893.
Making Communities Healthier One Step at a Time

Steps To A HealthierNY—part of a national health promotion and disease prevention initiative entitled Steps To A HealthierUS—was launched by the Department of Health and Human Services in 2003, and was one of the programs recognized by Health Commissioner Daines during his week-long tour of public and community health sites. This five-year cooperative agreement program aims to help Americans live healthier, longer, and better lives by reducing the burden of diabetes, obesity and asthma, and addressing three related risk factors—physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use.

Broome County, part of a four-county project led by the New York State Department of Health through funding from the CDC, is one of only 12 projects in the nation awarded funding in the first year of the Steps initiative to implement school and community-based initiatives that enhance and expand existing, evidence-based efforts in our community to promote policy development, implementation, and environmental change. As a result of this initiative, Broome County residents are making strides in taking personal responsibility for their health and the community is feeling empowered to take social responsibility to adopt healthy lifestyles and reduce the burden of chronic diseases.

The Broome County initiative has numerous partners and is working closely with schools.
Programs offered by the Steps To A HealthierNY are:

B.C. Walks, a unique community walking campaign aimed at communicating a simple but important health message: regular walking can improve energy, help people feel better, and it doesn’t take much time. A new component to B.C. Walks is B.C. Walks Jr., a school-based health promotion activity to engage children in walking as a physical activity.

The Farm to You community intervention relies heavily on a Give Me Five education and awareness campaign that focuses on bringing the National Cancer Institute’s message of five fruits and vegetables a day to Broome County schools, worksites, and grocery stores.

Breathe Better in Broome is a multi-pronged approach to the prevention, education, and management of asthma. This intervention focuses on providing evidence-based education programs in daycare settings, preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools, with parental involvement and opportunity for families to have home visits that will assist with identifying asthma triggers and provide them with a plan to address it.
BC Breastfeeds is a community intervention designed to increase the rates of breastfeeding in Broome County through components of peer counseling; provider education; a nationally adopted breastfeeding media, education, and awareness campaign; and worksite breastfeeding policy guidance and implementation.

Community Gardens is a county-wide mobilization strategy to encourage gardening with a cohesive group of participants at worksites, schools, faith-based organizations, and senior centers that will aid in increasing physical activity levels, consumption of fruits and vegetables, and long-term goals of sustainability through lead gardening sites, stakeholder contributions, community supported agriculture programs and enhancement of local farmer's markets.

Mission Meltaway is a nationally recognized eight-week healthy weight management education session, with a group approach to weight loss led by a trained facilitator. The program incorporates the National Diabetes Prevention Program strategies related to improved nutrition and increased physical activity to initiate and reinforce lifestyle changes.

For additional information on Steps To A HealthierNY, visit www.broomesteps.org/hd/steps

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Calendar of Events

Upcoming programs:

June 19, 2008
“Who, What, When and How: Implementing the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program in Your Community”
This presentation will provide an overview of the Stanford University Chronic Disease Self Management Program, the evidence-base that supports its positive health outcomes, populations that have benefitted, program requirements and implementation strategies. Participants will hear from one county health department that has committed to providing the program to its constituents as well as a Stanford-certified program trainer.
Speakers:
Melanie Shefchik, MA, CHES, Public Health Educator
Rockland County Department of Health
Lisa A. Ferretti, LMSW, Director of Operations
Center for Excellence in Aging Services
University at Albany, School of Social Welfare
For additional information, visit www.albany.edu/sph/coned/t2b2.htm.

Evaluating Our Public Health Efforts
June 6, 2008
New York State Public Health Association 2008 Annual Meeting & Conference
Six Flags Great Escape Lodge & Indoor Water Park, Lake George, NY
For information and registration details, visit www.nyspha.org.

Hot Web Site Links and Resources

- Preventive Services
  Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
  www.ahrq.gov/clinic/prevenix.htm

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  http://www.cdc.gov

- New York State Department of Health
  www.health.state.ny.us

- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  odphp.osophs.dhhs.gov

- MedScape Public Health and Prevention
  www.medscape.com/publichealth

- Cornell NutritionWorks
  Preventing Childhood Obesity: An Ecological Approach
  www.nutritionworks.cornell.edu

- Prevention Institute
  www.preventioninstitute.org
  Look for the report, Reducing Health Care Costs Through Prevention

- Partnership for Prevention
  www.prevent.org/
  Look for the report, Preventive Care: A National Profile on Use, Disparities, and Health Benefits, August 2007