



United States-Mexico Border Health Commission

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Border Binational Health Week — a Great Success!

A total of 201 events, including 59 health fairs, 43 lectures and 28 policy meetings, took place at 14 sister cities along the U.S.-Mexico border during the first-ever Border Binational Health Week, which took place on October 11-17, 2004.

The U.S.- Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC) granted 13 organizations a total of \$326,035 in the form of one-time awards to support health activities during this momentous week.

To celebrate the week, border communities organized health and wellness fairs, health forums and binational health walks. All activities were related to the Border Binational Health Week theme of “Families in Action for Health,” which was an effort aimed at improving health status and eliminating health disparities along the border.

Mexico’s National Health Week and the 4th Binational Health Week were officially kicked off on October 11 in León, Guanajuato, Mexico, by Mexico President Vicente Fox, Julio Frenk Mora, Mexico Secretary of Health and



At an inauguration ceremony, held on October 11 at the Vicente Guerrero School in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, health care workers provided the students with a dose of oral polio vaccine.

Tommy G. Thompson, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The border-wide celebration commenced on October 12, which included inaugural events in Ambos Nogales (Arizona and Sonora) that included the participation of U.S. and Mexican health officials. Mora and Thompson delivered

(See BBHW on page 3)

U.S. Surgeon General Promotes Childhood Immunizations

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona visited San Diego to participate in the second Border Immunization Week in the Americas and to raise awareness about the importance of protecting children living along the U.S.-Mexico border region by getting them immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

During a luncheon, Dr. Carmona addressed nearly 300 health care workers and *promotoras* about the importance of childhood immunizations along the border region.

The week-long series of events, which took place July 31 to August 6, included a two-hour training session for community health work-

(See Immunization on page 4)



Surgeon General Richard Carmona (right) with the Sisters from the Missionaries of Charity and California Commission member Dr. Lawrence Kline (left) at Scripps Hospital.

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Commission Holds its 5th Annual Meeting

The Commission held its 5th Annual Meeting in Rio Rico, Arizona, on October 12 amidst the inaugurable events of the first Border Binational Health Week. Health Secretaries and Commissioners Tommy G. Thompson and Dr. Julio Frenk Mora chaired the meeting.



Commissioners Tommy G. Thompson (left) and Julio Frenk Mora (right) at the USMBHC's 5th Annual Meeting.

U.S. Commissioner Thompson thanked the Commission members for their participation and the success of the Border Binational Health Week (BBHW). He also acknowledged that the health week engendered positive feelings toward the Commission, in that they are working together to improve the quality of health care along the border. Thompson made the following recommendations:

- United States and Mexico Section should declare a concurrent National Health Week during the second week in October and said he will allocate money in the budget to accomplish this;
- Organize annual "Race for the Border" competitions, such as bicycle and walk races along the U.S.-Mexico border, sponsored alternately by the various cities in the border states, which should highlight physical exercise, prevention and good health;
- Invite elected officials along the U.S.-Mexico border, e.g., governors, representatives, senators, to participate in these events and forums;
- Hold a binational meeting in Washington, D.C. and in Mexico City and request to have a designated border health day on Capitol Hill.



During the Border Binational Health Week Celebration in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico Secretary of Health Julio Frenk Mora gets his blood pressure checked.

Highlights of the meeting included the presentation of the Border Models of Excellence Transfer and Dessimination Guides, which are available for download on the Commission's website at www.borderhealth.net/breng.pdf (English version) and www.borderhealth.net/brspa.pdf (Spanish version).

The USMBHC's fourth annual report was also presented. Secretary Thompson commended the Commission for their unified effort in producing the Commission's first binational and bilingual annual report.

Howard Zucker, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, presented an interactive health book that was developed to aid the Afghani people. The book contains 19 health subjects and 350 health messages in multiple languages. Commission members are looking into the possibility of developing a similar book to address the multicultural and multilingual health needs of the border region.

In an open discussion, Secretary Frenk stated that it is important to remember that the Senates in both countries created the Commission and as such, it should be able to go back to the legislative bodies to voice the Commission's position on border health issues.

Secretary Frenk gave the closing remarks and he acknowledged Ms. Ana Nevarez, coordinator for the Arizona Outreach Office, and Dra. Mercedes Gameros, regional coordinator of Health Programs for the State of Sonora, for their tenure. A BBHW celebration luncheon was held following the meeting.

BBHW (from page 1)

welcome addresses. Multiple binational community activities took place in the 14 border sister cities during the week.

To conclude the week, a series of border-wide closure celebrations were held from October 14th to the 15th in the El Paso del Norte Region. The event, hosted by Chihuahua, New Mexico and Texas, was attended by Dr. Elizabeth Duke, administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), along with senior staff from Mexico and the United States.



Dr. Elizabeth Duke addresses the audience at a policy forum on Access to Health Care in the U.S.-Mexico Border on October 14.

These community efforts reached approximately 62,000 participants and were made possible thanks to the work and resources of more than 300 community-based organizations and agencies and several partners, including the U.S. and Mexican governments, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Secretaría de Salud de Mexico, the Pan-American Health Organization, the California-Mexico Health Initiative, the ten border states, Commission outreach offices and local communities.

Another success of the health week was the development of the online Border Virtual Health Library (BVHL). The Commission collaborated with the Pan American Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HRSA and the Office of Minority Health to launch this tool designed to improve information sharing amongst health professionals working along the border.

The site may be accessed at www.borderinfo.com.

Top Left: Honorary Chair Josefina Carbonell (left), Assistant Secretary for Aging, joined senior citizens as they practiced Tai Chi at an Aging to Perfection/Healthy Expo at the El Paso Convention Center on Thursday, October 14.

Left: The community participated in a one-mile non-competitive walk in Downtown El Paso on October 17.

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Upcoming Events

December 1
World AIDS Day

December 1-3
HRSA Border Grantees
All Programs meeting
- Dallas, Texas "Moving
forward
together on the United
States-Mexico Border"

January 28-30, 2005
Western Migrant Stream
Forum, San Diego,
California, Northwest
Regional Primary Care
Association
(206) 783-3004



Thank you Border Binational Health Week Partners

U.S. Department of
Health and
Human Services

Secretaría de Salud
de Mexico

Health Resources
and Services
Administration

Centers for Disease
Control and
Prevention

Office of Minority
Health

Commission
Outreach Offices

U.S. Offices of
Border Health

Arizona
Department of
Health Services

Servicios de Salud
Pública del Estado
de Sonora

California
Department of
Health

Instituto de Servicios
de Salud Pública del
Estado de Baja
California

Commission Pursues Advocacy Efforts in Washington, D.C.

Eva M. Moya, Executive Director of the U.S. Section, Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez, Executive Director of the Mexico Section, and Lic. Hilda Dávila, from Mexico's Secretaría de Salud, visited Washington, D.C. from July 19th to the 20th.

The team attended multiple meetings with Department of Health and Human Services officials in an effort to pursue Public International Organization (IO) status for the Commission. Moya and Martínez both expressed concerns regarding the cross-border transport of public health goods. Department of Health members agreed to revisit the issue.

The group also attended an Inter-Agency Action Team on Border Health meeting. The team provided updates on the Commission's activities, especially about the upcoming Border Binational Health Week and the Early Warning Infectious

Disease Surveillance Project (EWIDS).

The team also met with Dr. William Steiger, Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Health and Rear Admiral Richard Walling, Director of the Office of the Americas and Middle East.

On October 18, Commission members Emma Torres, Dr. Rosemarie Johnson, Dr. Ramundo López Vucovich, Moya and Martínez were present at the National Press Club and the Mexico Embassy in Washington, D.C. They presented the activities and contributions of the Border Binational Health Week to Carlos de Icaza, the Ambassador of Mexico to the United States. The event, hosted by the California-Mexico Health Initiative, Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior and the Secretaría de Salud, was the national closing event for the BBHW.

Immunization *(from page 1)*

Imperial County/Mexicali region to emphasize the importance of collaboration between the two countries to promote childhood immunizations.

Hosted by the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC), Scripps Health and the San Diego County Health Department Immunization Program, the Border Immunization Week in the Americas' events were focused on raising awareness of the importance of childhood immunizations in border communities, and mak-

ing parents, caregivers and health care providers aware of the need to protect children from birth against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases. During the initiative, several awareness campaigns took place along the U.S.-Mexico border and vaccinations were provided at some local health care clinics in Dona Ana County, New Mexico, Laredo, Texas, and the Presidio, Texas/Ojinaga, Chihuahua region.

This was the second of three border immunization weeks, which is uniting international, national, regional, state and local partners to promote the benefits of childhood immunizations.

Under the theme "Vaccination an Act of Love: Love Them, Protect Them, Immunize Them," local, county and state departments of health, immunization coalitions, family and community clinics, and multiple partners are working together to increase immunization awareness and vaccination coverage in the border region.



Surgeon General Carmona with promotoras from San Diego and Tijuana.

EWIDS Project Makes Steady Progress with Forums, Workshops

The Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance (EWIDS) Project has made good progress. Vertical Binational Forums were held in the following regions:

- Texas-Mexico Public Health Preparedness and Response Forum in Ojinaga, Chihuahua, from Aug. 11-13.
- Paso Del Norte Emergency Preparedness Training, federal and state representatives, in Sunland Park, New Mexico, from Aug. 26-27.
- Paso Del Norte Emergency Preparedness Training, local representatives, Sunland Park, New Mexico, from Aug. 30-31.

The Commission also established two committees to assist with the EWIDS Project. An Advisory Committee was formed to seek consultation and to advise the Commission regarding the course of the project and to promote coordinated activities between and among border communities.

The Technical Committee will assist in reviewing grant applications from the seven Mexican entities and assessing their progress in relationship to the goals and milestones for the project.

The USMBHC also collaborated with the Secretariat of Health of Mexico, to organize two EWIDS workshops during the months of September and October 2004: a workshop to provide guidance to the Mexican border states and the Mexican Secretariat of Health in preparing proposals to enhance and upgrade surveillance and epidemiology capabilities for infectious diseases along the U.S.-Mexico border was held September 7, in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

A followup workshop with the six Mexican states to learn about the needs assessment results and the proposals outcomes was held in Monterrey, Mexico on October 19.

Commission Welcomes New Members and Says Farewell to Past Members

The Commission welcomes Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez, who was named Executive Director for the Mexico Section on October 1.

Martínez, who served as the Mexico Section's interim Executive Director since July 2004, is an economist and served as a consultant to Mexico's Secretary of Health for several years. He is based in the Commission office in Mexico City.

The USMBHC also welcomes a new member to the U.S. Section. Michelle Lujan Grisham, J.D., of New Mexico, has been a leader in the areas of health policy and senior services since she was appointed in 1991 to direct the New Mexico State Agency on Aging. In August 2004, Governor Bill Richardson named her as secretary-designate of the New Mexico Depart-



Lic. Héctor Xavier Martínez

ment of Health. Grisham received both an undergraduate degree and Juris Doctorate from the University of New Mexico.

The USMBHC also welcomes six new members to the Mexico Section: Dr. Raymundo López Vucovich and Dr. Filiberto Pérez Duarte of Sonora, Dr. Giliberto Montiel Amoroso of Nuevo León, Dr. Javier Lozano Herrera and Arq. Carlos Carrera Robles of Chihuahua, and Dr. Rembrandt Reyes Najera of Tamaulipas.

The Commission wishes to extend its thanks and appreciation to the departing members for their service and commitment to the USMBHC: Patricia Montoya of New Mexico; Dr. Zacarías Villarreal Pérez of Nuevo León; Dr. Francisco Javier Muro Dávila and Dr. René Navarro Coronado of Sonora; Dr. Federico Saracho Weber and C.P. José Luis García Mayagoitia of Chihuahua, and Dr. Héctor López González of Tamaulipas.

The Commission wishes them well and the best of luck in the future.

New Mexico
Department of Health

Servicios de Salud
Pública del Estado de
Chihuahua

Texas Department of
State Health Services

Secretaría de Salud del
Estado de
Coahuila

Secretaría de Salud del
Estado de
Nuevo León

Servicios de Salud de
Tamaulipas

California-Mexico
Health Initiative

Pan American Health
Organization

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

Administration
on Aging

Substance Abuse and
Mental Health
Services
Administration

Texas/Oklahoma AIDS
Education and Training
Center

Pacific AIDS
Education and
Training Center

U.S. Department of
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The USMBHC newsletter is also available on our website at: www.borderhealth.org or at www.saludfronteriza.org

Mission Statement

To provide international leadership to optimize health and the quality of life along the United States-Mexico Border.

Quarterly Highlights

• The **Tucson Girl Scout Troop 509** created an education program that provides an interactive dialogue to engage school-aged children in the process of learning about diabetes. They selected the “Diabetes Education and Prevention in Youth” as the theme for their community service projects. These young women have developed a program that includes a play, “The Evil Diana Betes Destroyed by Sir Insulin Monk,” that brings an awareness to young children about the risks of diabetes. The troop has made presentations to several elementary and middle school-aged children. Current educational materials are published in English, Spanish and Tohono O’odham languages. The Tucson Girl Scout Troop presented the play at a luncheon at the 5th Annual Commission meeting and received an award from the Commission. For additional information on this program, contact the Arizona Outreach Office at (520) 770-3114.



Tucson Girl Scout Troop 509

• **Alice Salcido**, from the New Mexico Department of Health, Office of Border Health, retired on October 29. Ms. Salcido served as the acting director for the department last year, and her contributions to the department and to the border community she so diligently served will be long-lasting. Recently Salcido was recognized as a Top Latina in Health by Hispanic Magazine. Salcido played a big role in the creation of the public legislation that created the Commission and Senator Jeff Bingaman has said that without

Alice Salcido the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission would not exist.



D.J. Hensely, left, a car seat program specialist from Marathon, Texas, instructs parents Paulina and Domingo Rios on the proper way to buckle up their daughter Irma, during the Border Binational Health week events held in Presidio in October 2004. (Photo by Jesus Carrera for The International Presidio Paper.)

• The first **Healthy Border 2010 Calendar**, which was widely distributed last year, provides basic health education messages to border residents in English and Spanish. It is a part of a series of health promotion strategies for the border. As a companion to the calendar, eight health cards, or *tarjetas de salud*, have been produced and are being distributed at various clinics along the border. The cards produced thus far focus on childhood vaccination, diabetes, depression and HIV/AIDS. For more information contact the Commission at 1-866-785-9867, or visit the USMBHC website at www.borderhealth.org.

