

Dear Colleagues:

The beautiful fall foliage and the cooler temperatures indicate that fall is here and winter will follow close behind. While Mother Nature may be entering a resting dormant period, the MCHB is busy as always.

The Training Branch Grantee Meeting in April was a resounding success by all accounts. The theme of “65 Years and Counting: The Legacy and Future of MCH Leadership” allowed us to both reflect on our past and to take an intense look into the future. Many new ideas were generated. The enthusiasm of seeing colleagues and meeting new colleagues was very evident throughout the entire meeting.

The Combating Autism Act Initiative (CAAI) is now vigorously underway in the MCHB. The entire MCHB is working across Divisions to implement the CAAI with activity centered in four major areas. First, the Training Programs were affected by the following expansions and new programs. The LEND program had seventeen expansions and four new programs were added (\$5,600,000). There were expansions to the Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics training programs (\$450,000). The following new resource center was added - the National Interdisciplinary Training Resource Center was awarded to AUCD (\$487,000). Two new Research projects were added: One in physical health was awarded to the General Hospital Corporation of Boston, (\$4 million) and another in behavioral health was awarded to the University of California at Los Angeles (\$2 million). The following State Demonstration and Policy Programs were also added. Six State demonstration grants to implement state autism plans for the purpose of improving systems of services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other DD—\$1.8 million. The six states are WA, AK, MO, IL, WI, and UT. A State Public Health Coordinating Center was awarded to AMCHP. Lastly, an Evaluation project is being planned. This National Evaluation is required in the legislation and will take the form of a HHS Secretary’s Report to Congress on progress related to ASD and other developmental disabilities as required by the “Combating Autism Act of 2006.” The entire MCHB is working across Division to implement the CAAI. All of these occurred over the summer months and made for an intense summer for everyone.

There is much activity centering around the MCHB Performance Measures (PMs). The current PMs are currently being reviewed, revised, and new ones created in preparation for the submission of a package to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This process is required and occurs every three years. The Training Branch has the largest number of PMs. Within the Training Branch there are two Workgroups undertaking this effort. A level one group comprised of representatives across the grant programs has worked intensively all summer to review, revise, and develop of PMs. A level two group similarly comprised of representatives across the grant programs is currently working to critique the work products of the level one group. The final product will be compiled with all the other Divisions PMs.

The Training Branch is initiating a new Diversity Workgroup. This workgroup will be taking a look at several important areas surrounding diversity in the training grant

programs. Another initiative that will be occurring in the coming year is the revamping of the Training Branch website. Several webcasts will be offered in 2008-2009 and the Training Branch is encouraging grantees to submit ideas for topics of interest. There will be at least one new grant competition this coming year for the MCH Leadership Certificate in Public Health. Other grant competitions that occurred this past year were in the following grant programs:

- Nursing - 5 grants awarded
- Communications Disorders – 3 grants awarded
- DBP – 10 grants awarded (4 new)
- Nutrition – 6 grants awarded
- Distance Learning – 3 grants awarded (total of 6)
- Social Work – 3 grants awarded

The annual Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) meeting is earlier than usual this year. Please note the dates of February 21-25, 2009. The theme of the meeting is “Launching MCH: Opportunities for a new ERA.” Some of you will be attending this meeting and I hope to see you there.

I wish you and your families a happy and healthy upcoming Holiday Seasons.

Sincerely,

Peter C. van Dyck, MD, MPH
Associate Administrator
for Maternal and Child Health