

Report of the President to the Governing Council

It has been a wonderful experience to serve as the APHA President this past year. I cannot believe how quickly the year has passed. I am so grateful for having the opportunity to represent APHA at a variety of meetings and conferences, both virtually and in person, during the past twelve months. I started out the year thinking that it would be a year in which I would be traveling around the country, encouraging our members and the many affiliate members to reaffirm their commitment to public health in a post-pandemic world. What I found, however, was that our volunteers all across the US encouraged ME instead. And for that ongoing dedication, I say thank you!

Over this past year, I traveled or spoke virtually with fourteen of our affiliates and their members. My primary talks included support for our public health workforce and the systems in which they work, as well as our collective commitment to health equity. Besides the encouragement that I felt from all of these states, I was also heartened by the number of young public health professionals and students who are so excited about the future of public health. I leave this year feeling that public health is in good hands!

I represented APHA on a number of committees and task forces, including the Alliance for Disease Prevention and Response; the Bi-Partisan Policy Center's Committee who published the report "Public Health Forward: Modernizing the US Public Health System"; the National Academies of Health's Forum to Address Attacks on Health Professionals; various CDC and CDC Foundation discussions about strengthening the public health workforce; and a nursing-oriented discussion with the Commonwealth Commission about their report on Recommendations for Building a National Public Health System. I met a few times with the ISC Task Force on Rural Health, and I remain committed to their work to address the inequities in rural public health. I attended the APHA Executive Board and assigned committee meetings and loved working with my colleagues to advance APHA and public health.

I wrote monthly President columns for the Nation's Health and an invited commentary for the American Journal of Public Health which will be published in December 2022. I fielded several press interviews about the next steps post-pandemic; the nursing shortage; rural health; and during National Public Health Week. I was pleased to be a small part of the membership engagement initiative now called APHA Your Way!

While this has been one of the most memorable years in my public health career, I was devastated about the Supreme Court decision to limit women's access to comprehensive reproductive health services. Since the court case that triggered that decision initiated in my home state, it was especially painful. I appreciate all of the affiliate leaders who reached out to me to acknowledge their frustration in their home states. We still have much work to do in this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN
APHA President 2021-2022

