Creating the Healthiest Nation:
ENSURING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

Annual Report 2016
Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends, members and supporters,

By now, you’ve probably heard the good news: According to the latest numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. uninsured rate has hit a record low. It’s another sign that we’re a giant step closer to ensuring the right to health.

But creating the healthiest nation requires much more than health insurance. Throughout the run-up to the Affordable Care Act’s passage and during its implementation, APHA has been steadfast in its position that greater access to medical care in no way lessens the need for a strong, resilient and well-funded public health system. After all, medicine and public health are partners, not interchangeable substitutes. Unfortunately, the Zika funding crisis showed us that among some policymakers, there remains a real lack of understanding and disheartening disregard for the essential role of public health.

In late September 2016, Congress finally approved emergency funding for Zika response. But as I write this in the days following — many months into mosquito season, nearly seven months after the White House first requested emergency funding, and with more than 25,000 reported Zika cases in U.S. states and territories — public health workers have once again had to confront a dangerous disease threat without adequate funding or resources.

Sure, it’s difficult to get just about anything accomplished in the current political climate. But the stalemate on Zika funding and the resulting reprogramming of funds away from other public health priorities is a dangerous new low that must never become precedent. It is truly shameful that our nation’s dedicated public health workforce — a workforce that always rises to the occasion no matter the challenge and hardship — must battle a life-altering infection without the full and unencumbered support of Congress. Our communities deserve better.

But back to more hopeful news. Over the past year, APHA has redoubled its efforts toward reaching our overarching goal of creating the healthiest nation in one generation. We believe that in addition to sustaining and strengthening public health’s more traditional roles, it’s also time to firmly set our sights on entering a new era. That era, commonly dubbed Public Health 3.0, is one in which public health serves not only as health protector and promoter, but as a conduit for creating the social, economic and environmental conditions that offer everyone a fair chance at good health.

‘Public health has the ability to help others see themselves as powerful agents of healthy change and equity, and that ability is our greatest asset as we head into this new era.’
health and longevity. I see public health as the chief architect of a healthy community, bringing its unique lens to stakeholders throughout public and private sectors. Public health has the ability to help others see themselves as powerful agents of healthy change and equity, and that ability is our greatest asset as we head into this new era.

As such, I’m proud to report that APHA continues its commitment to preparing public health workers for a new and challenging future, to advocating for evidence-based public health policy, and to strengthening essential public health services, such as responding to and containing health threats. For example, in the last year: we helped launch the $1.5 million Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge, which inspires communities to zero in on social determinants and improve health equity; we championed women’s access to comprehensive reproductive care at the Supreme Court; and we sounded the national alarm over the Flint drinking water crisis.

In the following pages, you’ll learn more about the past year’s accomplishments as divided into four buckets: Partner, Policy, Proactive and Professional. The four titles represent some of the core components required to sustain public health’s more traditional roles as health protector and promoter as well as facilitate its emerging role as the architect of healthy, thriving communities.

If the last year of preparing for and responding to Zika has taught us anything, it’s that public health workers will not be deterred from their commitment to protect and serve their communities. With that in mind, I look forward to continuing our work together in creating the healthiest nation and building a better future for all.

Best and healthy wishes,

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If the next era of public health is about going upstream, we’re going to need a lot of friends to help us row. That’s why partnership building — though a longtime cornerstone of public health — may now be our greatest asset in tackling the root causes of poor health and disease burden.

At APHA, we’re committed to the practice of building partnerships toward better health and to helping our members do the same.

In the previous year, APHA embarked on a number of new partnerships aimed at improving the nation’s health, including one with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to explore the impact of environmental public health systems on children’s health. The project will include a scan of environmental public health systems in all 50 states to gain a better understanding of potential gaps, with the ultimate goal of providing recommendations and best practices to improve children’s health.

Also in the environmental public health arena, we continue our work to facilitate new partnerships with the Tribal Public and Environmental Health Think Tank, which is focused on engaging tribal communities and non-Native partners to improve environmental health. This year, the think tank gathered in Barrow, Alaska, to develop its guiding priorities and met with local residents to learn how climate change and industrial resource extraction are impacting Inupiat communities. APHA is also a member of the National Environmental Health Partnership Council, which this year issued a new report on the economic value of environmental health interventions.

On the topic of climate change, which will be the theme of APHA’s 2017 Annual Meeting and Expo, we continue our work as a founding partner of Climate for Health, a national network of public health and health care leaders working to find climate solutions that protect people’s health. We also joined more than a dozen national health organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, to sign a Declaration on Climate Change and Health that calls for “bold” action to clean up major sources of carbon pollution.
APHA & climate change: A partner approach to an emerging threat

Building on years of environmental public health work, APHA continued to step up its efforts to bring a public health lens to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

With support from ecoAmerica, APHA is working to expand understanding among health professionals about the connections between climate change and public health. Activities include a four-part webinar series on climate change and related issues: mental health, transportation, children’s health and asthma.

APHA’s climate leadership team worked to craft a long-term strategy that pinpoints APHA’s strengths and where they overlap with climate sector needs.

On the policy side, APHA joined fellow health advocates to file an amicus brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan, which would reduce carbon emissions from power plants, the country’s largest source of such pollutants. APHA also submitted comments to EPA in support of the plan, promoted its health benefits in the media and actively opposed congressional attempts to block, eliminate or delay the plan. In addition, APHA helped implement the first-ever White House National Dialogue on Climate and Health.

In support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Building Resilience Against Climate Effects, or BRACE, framework, APHA developed a webinar featuring two communities that are using BRACE to drive climate adaptation forward. APHA’s Center for Public Health Policy launched its “Health Equity in a Changing Climate” newsletter, and APHA released a new infographic on “How Climate Change Affects Your Health” to complement a 2016 report from the U.S. Global Change Research Program.
In the new era of public health, knowing how to influence policy will be essential to ensuring the right to health and creating the healthiest nation. Indeed, compassionate and evidence-based policy has the power to save lives, lift families out of poor health and poverty, and create a level playing field for all. At APHA, we’re committed to engaging policymakers and creating opportunities to help our members make their voices heard.

APHA’s advocacy muscles got quite the workout in the last year, with the Association speaking out and delivering on a wide variety of issues.

After months of advocacy by APHA and partners, Congress approved a bipartisan measure in September 2016 allocating $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus. This necessary and long-overdue infusion of public health funding will support our public health workforce, strengthen prevention efforts, enhance laboratory capacity and meet the needs of affected families.

Other long-advocated APHA victories this year include new public health protections from the Food and Drug Administration and Occupational Safety and Health Administration. FDA announced a new rule in May 2016 that extends the agency’s authority to cover previously unregulated tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes. OSHA finalized a rule in March 2016 to reduce occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica, which protects an estimated 2.2 million U.S. workers whose jobs expose them to silica, a carcinogen.

APHA strongly supported the Drinking Water Safety and Infrastructure Act, which would provide funding to communities to improve their drinking water systems, including Flint, Michigan. While a final outcome was pending at press time, congressional leaders opened the door to approve funding after the elections. APHA also continued its advocacy to end restrictions on gun violence research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At the Supreme Court, APHA’s voice and expertise helped win decisions in two notable cases. In Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt, which challenged a Texas law that effectively restricted abortion access, APHA submitted its own friend-of-the-court brief arguing that “meaningful access to safe, legal abortion is essential to women’s health and a necessary component of any public health system.” APHA also signed onto a Supreme Court amicus brief in support of the University of Texas-Austin in Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, which challenged the university’s affirmative action policy. The court’s ruling in both cases supported APHA’s position.

APHA’s Center for Public Health Policy developed and released new resources to help members better navigate the policy world. For example, the center released two reports, with input from APHA members, on how public health workers can get involved in ACA State Innovation Models, which aim to improve health care quality and performance while reducing costs. Also this year, the center submitted written comments to federal officials on fully implementing the ACA’s civil rights protections and on including electronic cigarettes in public housing smoking prohibitions.

APHA’s Center for School, Health and Education took a lead role this year in ensuring health was considered during implementation of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, and submitted comments to federal education officials on the role of health in academic success. With support from the Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation, the center is also developing guidance on opportunities for policymakers and school-based health care to utilize the opportunities in the ACA and ESSA.
During National Public Health Week in April, APHA, along with the Aetna Foundation and the National Association of Counties, launched the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge, an effort to empower small to mid-size U.S. cities and counties and federally recognized tribes to create positive health change by zeroing in on health equity and the social determinants of health. And what makes the challenge especially appealing is that it comes with more than $1.5 million in prize money for communities that generate the most measurable changes.

Defining a healthy city, county or tribe as “economically competitive, inclusive and equitable,” the multi-year challenge also has a specific goal of collecting and disseminating promising, evidence-based strategies for sustainable change. The final HealthyCommunity50 participants span the entire country and have committed to focusing on at least one of the following health improvement areas: healthy behaviors, built environment, community safety, social/economic factors and environmental exposure.

APHA put the “active” in proactive with its 1 Billion Steps Challenge, also announced during National Public Health Week. With a tagline of “Taking Small Steps for Big Change,” the challenge encouraged members and the public to register their steps with APHA for the chance to win prizes and get healthier along the way. Nearly 3,500 people participated in the challenge and walked a total of 681 million steps. APHA organizers plan to relaunch the challenge in 2017.

APHA continues to build on its successful Get Ready campaign to help Americans prepare themselves, their families and their communities for all hazards and disasters. In the last year, Get Ready released a new consumer-friendly calendar with timely and seasonal preparedness tips, a new fact sheet on Zika preparedness in both English and Spanish, a new fact sheet on seasonal influenza, as well as new infographics on proper hand hygiene and a new animated video on staying safe during a disaster.

The Association is proactive in supporting public health internationally as well. In the last year, APHA met with leaders of other public health associations to help strengthen the Alliance of Public Health Associations of the Americas.

proactive

In the new era of public health, we must talk the talk and walk the walk. That means acting on behalf of health-promoting efforts outside the public health sector, such as supporting a minimum wage increase through data and new research or testifying to the physical activity benefits of public transit. It also means actively internalizing philosophies of equity and community-driven transformation, which often begin with simply listening to the people we serve. At APHA, we’re committed to leading the journey upstream and building a movement toward the healthiest nation as we March forward.

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Zika virus:
Speaking out for public health funding
APHA Executive Director Georges C. Benjamin, MD, joins congressional leaders, including, from left, Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Nancy Pelosi, at a September 2016 Capitol Hill News conference to call for funding to fight Zika.
In the new era of public health, staying abreast of the latest innovations in science, practice and quality improvement is essential to ensuring the right to health, creating the healthiest nation, and clearly defining public health’s role in a post-health reform world. Plus, impacting the social determinants and ultimately achieving health equity will require new skills, competencies and understanding. At APHA, we’re committed to providing our members with the resources and opportunities to help today’s public health workforce move confidently into the future.

Being an APHA member got even better in the last year. The Association has expanded its benefits for early-career professionals, jump-started a new member orientation series and offered new perks, such as a discount on the online Certified in Public Health exam. Speaking of the CPH exam, APHA continues to partner with the National Board of Public Health Examiners to offer the credentialing exam, as well as an exam review, during the APHA Annual Meeting. After receiving their new credential, members can visit Public Health CareerMart, which posted over 4,500 job openings in the last year and gave employers access to more than 75,000 resumes.

APHA remained committed to excellence in public health publishing. Among its new offerings in 2016, APHA Press released the “Compendium of Methods for the Microbiological Examination of Foods, Fifth Edition” as well as “Our Communities, Our Sexual Health: Awareness and Prevention for African Americans” and launched an e-book version of the indispensable “Control of Communicable Diseases Manual,” which included a new chapter on Zika virus.

The American Journal of Public Health, APHA’s peer-reviewed journal, continued its publishing excellence with groundbreaking research on Zika, blood-lead levels in Flint, Michigan, the opioid epidemic and the impacts of the ACA. The journal continues to rank in the top 3 percent of journals globally with an impact factor above 4.0. This year, the journal was rebranded to AJPH with a complete publication redesign.

APHA’s award-winning newspaper, The Nation’s Health, received two more national awards in 2016,
both for excellence in newswriting for articles on concussions and nail salon safety. The newspaper’s weekly quiz is now one of the top-visited features on its website, and its consumer-friendly Healthy You tip sheet now has an additional format offered only online. The new format, called Quick Facts, is a shorter, lower-literacy version that readers are encouraged to use in their health promotion activities.

APHA hosted a variety of educational webinars in the past year, including a number on climate change, a three-part series on the Flint water crisis, and a webinar organized by multiple APHA Sections on quantifying racism to address health disparities. The Association has also been actively involved in supporting and promoting the U.S. Department of Transportation’s and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Transportation and Health Tool, an online resource practitioners can use to analyze the impact of transportation systems. In particular, APHA has presented on the tool at four national conferences, hosted a webinar, and provided two Transportation and Health Tool implementation workshops.

Through the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Health Policy Fellowship Program, APHA took a deeper look at the national lead in water crisis. The webinar and accompanying brief highlighted the prevention and treatment policy implications for health and education of vulnerable children.

In the global health arena, APHA co-organized a Google Hangout in December 2015 with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health on “Saving the lives of women, children and adolescents in the U.S. and abroad.” The event featured speakers from academia, nonprofits and the private sector and welcomed more than 500 participants.

Also, on the global stage, APHA worked with members of the World Federation of Public Health Associations to craft its first organizational policy on maternal mortality. The federation formally adopted the policy in May 2016, and public health associations worldwide are expected to use the policy to advance maternal and child health in their own countries.

APHA Annual Meeting and Expo: The ultimate public health professional experience

Of course, there is no better destination for public health learning, networking and sharing than the APHA Annual Meeting and Expo. Last year’s meeting, which had a theme of “Health in All Policies” and convened in Chicago, welcomed more than 13,000 public health practitioners, researchers, leaders, students and advocates from around the world. The 2015 theme inspired a number of scientific sessions and discussions on tackling the social determinants of health and best practices for partnering across sectors.

In 2015, many attendees kicked off their Annual Meeting experience with the Opening General Session, which featured educator Freeman Hrabowski, PhD, MA, president of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County and a national education advocate, as well as environmental advocate and actor Ed Begley Jr. Following the opening session, the Public Health Expo opened, where attendees could browse nearly 500 public health booths. The yearly APHA Film Festival drew record attendance in 2015 and for the third year in a row, the APHA Codeathon brought together programmers and public health professionals to develop health-promoting apps.

APHA TV continued to offer exclusive interviews and recaps of meeting events inside the convention center and in select hotels. Also inside the Chicago convention center, the new APHA Wellness Center gave attendees a chance to take a break, do some yoga and even participate in a choreographed group dance. During the five-day 2015 meeting, APHA and our followers posted more than 25,000 tweets using the hashtag #APHA15.
**Financial Highlights for Fiscal Year 2016**

*For the year ending June 30, 2016*

**Revenues: $16.4 million**

- Advertising 1%
- Fundraising 2%
- Book sales 2%
- Other 3%
- Subscription fees/royalties 11%
- Conventions 35%
- Membership dues 17%
- Private foundations 14%
- Government grants 15%

**Expenses: $16.7 million**

- Conventions 22%
- Membership services 8%
- Books 8%
- Affiliates 5%
- National Public Health Week 1%
- Government relations 8%
- Kellogg 3%
- The Nation’s Health 4%
- American Journal of Public Health 13%
- Health & Developmental Disability Directors
- National University of Health Sciences
- Oregon State University
- Palmer College of Chiropractic
- Patsy and Arnold Palmer Foundation
- Public Health Institute
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The Help Us Help Them campaign allows APHA to give back to our Annual Meeting host city by selecting an organization that is making a real impact. The 2015 host city charity, EverThrive Illinois, works to improve the health of women, children and families over the lifespan through community engagement, partnerships, policy analysis, education and advocacy. Through your generous contributions, APHA was able to donate $13,000 to this worthy organization. Thank you!
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