Proposals for the Theme for the 2021 and 2022 APHA Annual Meetings

The APHA Science Board reviewed suggestions for meeting themes from members for the 2021 annual meeting. Additionally, as 2022 marks APHA’s 150th year, the Board was also asked to review themes for 2022 to allow adequate time to plan this celebration. Four options for 2021 and three options for 2022 are presented based upon this review and efforts to combine similar or related suggestions.

2021

1. Creating the Healthiest Nation in a Generation: Healthy Aging for All Ages

Public health practitioners must employ a multi-generational approach to develop policies, programs, and activities that recognizes diverse population aging and promotes healthy aging across the lifespan. A lifespan approach to public health and aging demands reliable assessment and early interventions to effect positive health outcomes and better social connections at the individual and population levels.

2. Creating the Healthiest Nation: Technological Innovations in Public Health

Advances in technology have opened a new frontier of what it means to be a public health professional. In some ways, the Internet and mobile applications have been deleterious to health, offering new avenues for people to engage in a plethora of risk behaviors (e.g. texting while driving, sedentary activity levels, searching for sex partners/ substances, etc.). However, much progress is being made in the improvement of public health, largely driven by the same technology and advancements (e.g. food consumption trackers, physical activity trackers, stress management applications, etc.). This theme plans to focus on innovative methods used to improve the health of the nation in modern times.

3. Creating the Healthiest Nation: Strengthening Social Cohesion and Connectedness

From increases in substance misuse and suicide, to reduced quality of life amongst seniors, the impacts of widespread social isolation are all around us. Public health policies and practices can exert a positive influence on strengthening social cohesion and connectedness and countering social isolation. There is a thirst for examples and stories that bring attention to hopefulness and restoration of connected communities and families to counteract isolation and despair. The time is ripe to highlight the communities and initiatives across the country that are working to restore belonging, trust, and connectedness and the emerging research and findings of how public health—working alongside other key sectors—can contribute to environments where healing, hopefulness and aspiration can grow.

4. Creating the Healthiest Nation: Public Health’s Greater Return on Investment

The concept that investing in public health, population health strategies, and health-promoting social and economic policies can reduce health care costs deserves broader consideration. Data on return on investment or cost avoidance, the value of upstream investment vs downstream rescue care can inform
how we engage in public health practice and strengthen our ability to more effectively and efficiently advocate for programs that address population needs.

2022

1. Celebrating Our Past & Building Our Future
To demonstrate APHA’s legacy and impact over the past 150 years, while planning for future challenges and opportunities in public health.

2. APHA @ 150: The Bending Arc of Public Health
To capture where APHA has been and where it is going in the future, while demonstrating an arc of progress.

3. APHA @ 150: What’s Next in The Evolution of Public Health
To capture where APHA has been and where it is going in the future, while demonstrating impact and evolution in public health.

4. APHA@150: Purpose and Process
5. APHA@150: Leading the Path Towards Equity
6. APHA@150: Bending Towards Justice