

# 2007 Connecticut Association of Public Health Nurses (CAPHN)

## Annual Meeting

### President's Message – CAPHN In Action

Please allow me to express my gratitude for the honor and privilege of serving for the past year as the Connecticut Association of Public Health Nurses (CAPHN) President. I take the challenge of serving in this capacity very seriously and pledge to continue the work of the Association during the second half of my term. As President, I am most fortunate to be supported by talented board members. These individuals are dedicated to CAPHN as well as public health nursing in general. Together, we are working hard to strengthen the association and advance the profession. I hope you will agree that we have made significant progress in a few short years!

As we move forward, it seems important to first look back at our origins. At various times over the past decades, public health nurses in Connecticut got together to share best practices and to network. Challenges that public health nurses faced, including the restructuring of roles and activities, were also discussed. During these meetings, it became increasingly apparent that a statewide association for public health nurses would help address current trends and provide a unified voice for the profession. In the late 1990s's, a small group of nurses from local and state public health agencies as well as academia met to discuss how best to proceed.

Officially established in 2002, the organizational mission of CAPHN is to strengthen the leadership role of the public health nurse in Connecticut. In order to fulfill this mission, strategic planning sessions have been held to generate activities in keeping with our guiding principles. At the most recent strategic planning session in December 2006, the Board identified the following goals: 1) strengthen the Association; 2) build professional capacity; 3) support activities that improve the competency of the public health workforce; 4) foster partnerships at the local, state and regional levels; and 5) advocate for important and necessary public health issues. Over the past few months, the Board has developed action items in each of these areas.

The CAPHN by-laws and mission statement are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed. The fiduciary status of the Association is becoming stable. A comprehensive financial report was generated this past year to determine the current income and expenses of the Association and to make projections for the future. We are now discussing how best to seek funding opportunities to support programmatic and community partnership efforts.

Membership has grown to include nurses from across the state. The CAPHN Brochure was updated and additional marketing materials were developed. New members have been recruited as a result of these and other promotional activities. In addition to the CAPHN specific documents, the Association created a display board about the Intervention Wheel, a population-based model introduced in 1998 by the Minnesota Department of Health, Public Health Nursing Section. Articles describing the model have also been disseminated to interested groups.

CAPHN had an exhibit table at the 2006 Annual Flu Update, the 2006 Connecticut Public Health Association Annual Meeting, a Parish Nurse conference and the first and second Annual Influenza Roundtables. It is important to note that CAPHN initiated the first Influenza Roundtable that highlighted the issues and best practices of the 2005 influenza vaccine delivery process. Due to the success of the first event, the Roundtable was held again this year in April 2007.

We are strengthening relationships and forming new linkages with other professional associations, advocacy groups, schools of nursing and public health, and local and state health departments/districts. The current CAPHN Board is comprised of members from all these sectors. CAPHN has taken an active role in assuring the involvement of public health nurses in a number of collaborations in the state. Members of the Board currently serve on the Connecticut Influenza and Pneumococcal Coalition, the Connecticut Partnership for Workforce Development, the Connecticut Public Health Association, the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut, the Quarantine and Isolation Planning Committee, the Connecticut Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee and the Connecticut Health Care Workforce Coalition. CAPHN also participated in the first "Distinguish Public

Health Nurses Forum” sponsored by the Local Health Administration of the CT Department of Public Health ( DPH ). This past year, the Association also wrote letters of support for grant applications and provided feedback on an epidemiological investigation form developed by the CT DPH .

The CAPHN Education Committee has been extremely active this year. They coordinated quarterly networking meetings and educational forums as well as the 2006 and 2007 Annual Meetings. The October 2006 quarterly meeting session featuring a speaker who discussed her three-month volunteer trip to Africa with the CDC Stop Polio Program was especially well received.

To learn more about public health nursing services in Connecticut, CAPHN adapted a survey developed by the Massachusetts Association of Public Health Nurses to articulate workforce responsibilities and issues. This data is being analyzed and will be used to inform policy makers, administrators, and local and state agency staff about public health nursing services.

Strategic priorities of the CAPHN Board for the upcoming year include: 1) designing additional recruitment strategies to attract new members and keep them engaged in the association; 2) continuing to improve public health nursing practice through education and professional development activities; 3) exploring academic initiatives that support students and new professionals; 4) improving organizational effectiveness and financial stability; and 5) expanding our impact through partnerships at the local, state and regional level.

This is a very exciting and challenging time for public health nurses in our state and beyond. The needs are great and the resources are scarce. As the nursing shortage continues to grow nationally and in Connecticut, it is essential that we strengthen our public health nursing leadership structures for effective collaboration and problem solving. Each of us can play a key role by becoming active in CAPHN so we can continue to provide relevant services, devise innovative approaches, and impact public health policy. Our success, our future – and the quality and health of our communities – depends on continuing the progress that has been made by our professional colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynn S. Abrahamson* , MPH , RN / May 3, 2007