

SEPTEMBER 2023

ANCBH NEWSLETTER

Association of North Carolina Boards of Health E-Newsletter

THOUGHTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are knee-deep in summer! The summer of '23 has been hot in many ways. High school students were dismissed for the summer to pursue "hot" challenges at camps and summer jobs. College students spent their first summer days preparing for internships or for their "hot" career-starts. The public health workforce managed "hot" issues ranging from Medicaid expansion to federal funding increases. Some of these hot issues are still "burning" as we speak while our NC legislature is yet to pass the new 2023-24 state budget.

Our institution received correspondence from several health-science students who were nervous that their "hot" career take-off might be slow; we assured them that these feelings of insecurity are normal, and soon they will be securely nestled into their chosen professions.

During this hot summer, we have also witnessed public health department leaders prioritizing their options for program expansions or dissolutions; for financial management ideas; for workforce development strategies; and for environmental air quality during the obvious global warming trend.

There's probably no such thing as the wrong time to address the hot issues in public health; our health departments and healthcare workforce are charged with handling the present while they prepare for the future, and that is a tremendous responsibility!

In public health leadership, we know that our work fills a large part of our life, and we wouldn't have it any other way because we love what you do; but as we strive to avoid burnout from tackling all of the "hot" issues we face, we become better at determining the right allocation of time, talent, and resources for each issue, and accepting that there will be waves where our priorities will shift every single day.

A question that we could ask ourselves every day is: "Am I doing the most important thing that needs to be done right now?" When we feel as if we are working on the most important problem at the time, then we can feel good that the "hot" issues will be addressed with the urgency with which they deserve. We often find that public health requires us to do things today that we are not quite ready to do, but that is part of the expected readiness of public health, and that is how we prove to ourselves that we can truly tackle the "hot" issues and solve them victoriously for the benefit of our populations.

There is a feeling of *OMG* when we push through those moments to a successful end.

So for the remainder of this hot summer, we will expect that great things will continue to happen, and we will learn and grow along with our communities. We will not limit ourselves regardless of how hard Mr. Sunshine glows on us....we will not be a hot-mess, we will become a hot-success! 😊 .

**WE CAN TRULY
TACKLE THE "HOT"
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THE BENEFIT OF
OUR POPULATIONS.**

Merle C. Green

What is ANCBH?

JEAN B. DOUGLAS, BS PHARM,
PHARM.D, RPH
2023 PRESIDENT, ANCBH

The Association of North Carolina Boards of Health (ANCBH) has been working to improve public health for 42 years. Our purposes include promoting high standards of comprehensive public health services, providing consultation and education for facilitating exchange of ideas, supporting health policy and financial issues, promoting close working relationships between local Boards of Health, and supporting public awareness of public health issues and dangers. A simple way to understand how ANCBH fits in is: each county has a health department with Health Director and an appointed Board of Health or Advisory Committee to focus on public health at the county level.

ANCBH focuses on public health on the state level, supporting each county unit across the state.

The ANCBH Board members are currently in a reinvention process to reestablish our visibility and collaboration with local boards of health in our state. With a part-time Executive Director and 13 board members from across the state and in and from several health-related disciplines, we are on the right track to set and meet our goals for the year.



**"WORKING TO IMPROVE
PUBLIC HEALTH FOR 42
YEARS"**

Jean B. Douglas

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

- Increase visibility to local Boards of Health in NC by attending conferences, building a list of Board Chairs to get to know, networking with Health Directors, updating our website (ANCBH.org), sharing useful information in our newsletter, and offering training meetings.
- Recruit 3 to 5 new ANCBH board members who currently serve on a local board of health.
- Provide assistance to help with decision making of key topics.
- Advocate for and support needed legislation to advance initiatives.
- Support the working relationship with the local Boards of Health and the Health Directors.
- Present our 3 awards annually (Carl Dunham, Robert 'Ed' Strother, and Outstanding Board of Health) and scholarships for education and learning to public health professionals.

WHY HAVE A LIST OF GOALS THIS LONG?

That is a very good question. Our board members want to emerge from the past few years and to get back to our mission. We believe the above goals are robust and value-added; and these are things we should do. By adding new board members, we get experience and new ideas to help in doing our work. Setting up an electronic list serve to communicate things that might be of interest to you is needed for efficiency. For example, this list serve would allow us to share questions we have answered for Board Members/Health Directors. We want to address the new issues that come up in a timely manner.

WHAT CAN YOU AS A LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBER OR CONSOLIDATED BOARD MEMBER EXPECT FROM ANCBH?

You can expect us to work diligently to form a relationship with you and to provide training and consultative opportunities. You can also expect us to keep you informed of trends and new issues (and successes) in public health. Our volunteer board members are watchful every day to remain abreast of current topics in public health that may affect your work as a board member, and may affect your local community.

Please take a moment to review our website (ANCBH.org) and contact our Board President, Dr. Jean Douglas to learn more about ANCBH at jjmdouglas@aol.com.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to increased levels of PFAS, PFOS, and other known carcinogens in selected eastern North Carolina water sources, a new **Water Advisory Board** has been developed for eastern North Carolina. [Fish consumption advisories and other advisories are in effect](#). Women, women of childbearing age, pregnant and nursing women and children in eastern NC are being advised to avoid eating fish from affected waters at this time.

As our state health department continues to experience position vacancies at a high rate, a new TV/radio ad has been developed entitled "[We Are NC Public Health](#)", and it drives people to the [Recruitment](#) page on the **NCDHHS** website.

In recent **NC Medical Journal** online, please note the information on Firearm Safety. **Firearm injuries and deaths have become a public health issue as defined by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**. North Carolina has created an Office of Violence Prevention, and the Executive Director is Gerard Tate. His job is to lead the state's Office of Violence Prevention. Mr. Tate serves as the first director of an office established by Governor Cooper in March 2023 to help the state reduce violence and firearm misuse. From the website: Injury and violence are significant and largely preventable public health problems. Each year, injuries and violence keep millions of adults and children from achieving their goals.

The N.C. Injury and Violence Prevention Branch envisions North Carolina free from injuries and violence where lives are lived to their full potential. The work of the branch includes:

- Collecting and analyzing injury data to better understand the problem.
- Implementing programs to prevent injuries and violence.
- Coordinating and assisting groups working to prevent injury and violence to address the problem comprehensively.

Since January 2, 2010, nearly all restaurants and bars in North Carolina, and many lodging establishments, have been smoke-free, thanks to N.C. General Statute 130A-497, otherwise known as North Carolina's Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law. The purposes of the law included to eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke; to set a social norm for youth to not start smoking; and to help smokers who wanted to quit to be able to by reducing their constant reminders from people who still smoke. The law was made prior to the big increase in vaping, but the law does allow for any establishment to add vaping prohibitions. Businesses reported they preferred the "all or none" rule where all restaurants and bars had to prohibit smoking at the same time because this leveled the playing field. A webinar is now being planned to refresh memories and to teach new Health Directors and BOH members about the law.

The newest division in NC DHHS, The Division of Child and Family Well-Being (DCFW), works to meet the health, social and emotional needs of children, youth, and families in North Carolina. Their current focus is on child nutrition and access to nutritious and plentiful foods for children. The division director is Yvonne Copeland.

ANCBH AWARD RECIPIENTS

2023-2024

The Outstanding Board of Health award will go to **Stanly County Consolidated Health and Human Services Board**. The write-up outlined the board's successful efforts to "support opioid overdose and death prevention programs in Stanly County."

The Carl Durham award will be awarded to **Mr. Eddie Jordan, Chair of the Surry County Board of Health**. The write-up states that Mr. Jordan "has leveraged unprecedented advocacy for Public Health...and for public health initiatives across the local level." One of the examples cited was the Medication Assistance Program that is managed jointly by the health department and the EMS service. He was also instrumental in passing several public health ordinances in Surry County.

Surry County will also receive the Robert "Ed" Strother Partnership award, which will recognize **Mr. Mark Willis, the Director of the Surry County Office of Substance Abuse and Recovery**. SCOSAR has effectively partnered with the health department to recruit, train, and deploy Certified Peer Support Specialists to create community interventions and provide treatment to those with opioid use disorder. This volunteer group has recently applied to become a 501(c)3 nonprofit due to its huge successes.

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

There has been a lot of activity in the NC state legislature that will be impacting Environmental Health.

(House Bill 190) now Session Law 2023-65 includes a provision in Section 9.1 of the current statute that modifies the educational requirements for Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS). The amendments ease the educational requirements, allowing for more eligible REHS candidates, and are more consistent with the National Environmental Health Association's REHS credential requirements. This provision is effective on October 1, 2023.

(House Bill 628) now Session Law 2023-90 provides that an individual with an Associate's degree and 15 hours of sciences is eligible to become a Registered Environmental Health Associate (REHA). A REHA must be registered by the REHS Board, successfully complete Centralized Intern Training, and be authorized by the Department to carry out limited environmental health duties. A REHA is also required to complete continuing education requirements, which will be determined in REHS Board rule amendments. The REHA section is effective **May 1, 2024**. The limited list of duties are:

- Permitting and inspections of private wells.
- Inspections of Category I and II food establishments.
- Inspections of lodging establishments.
- Permitting and inspections of Type II or III wastewater systems, including system layouts and existing wastewater systems.
- Inspections of migrant housing.
- Inspections of schools.
- Inspections of local confinement facilities.



(House Bill 628) now Session Law 2023-90 also makes changes and additions to privatization of permitting and inspection of onsite waste disposal systems. Fees are capped depending on the type of application packet submitted by the applicant or the applicant's authorized professional agent. This section is effective September 1, 2023.

(House Bill 627) now Session Law 2023-77 On-Site Wastewater Rules
Implementation: The provisions in this bill make changes to 15A NCAC 18E (On-Site Wastewater Rules) which will take effect January 1, 2024. The state will be sending position statements and training sessions for the new onsite water protection rules.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO

Location: Atlanta, GA

Start Date: 11/12/2023

End Date: 11/15/2023



ENGAGE,
COLLABORATE,
GROW

[REGISTER NOW](#)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST IN THE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH CAROLINA BOARDS OF HEALTH

2023-2024 ANCBH Officers and Board Members

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STAFF AND ANCBH OFFICIAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Merle C. Green, MPH, MBA (Executive Director)

Retired Guilford County Health Director

730 Trollinger Road,

Graham, NC 27253

C (336) 639.4376

mgreen4@triad.rr.com; Merle.Greene@alamance-nc.com

ANCBH Mailing Address

Association of North Carolina Boards of Health

c/o Merle Green, MPH, MBA Executive Director

730 Trollinger Road

Graham, NC 27253