



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

NOV 13 2001

Matthew Cartter, M.D., M.P.H.
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Thank you for sharing with us the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist's (CSTE) position statement entitled "*Support for the Development of the National Action Agenda for Building Data Capacity for Maternal and Child Health.*" As you may know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one of the four core partner organizations that initiated the National Action Agenda three years ago, working closely with the Health Resources and Services Administration, CityMatCH and the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs. From the moment the agenda was launched, we have actively sought closer working relationships with other national organizations including CSTE. In pursuit of this closer collaboration, CDC and CSTE have jointly developed and implemented the Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Fellowship/Capacity Building Program.

We are delighted that CSTE has resolved to promote and support broader national efforts under the National Action Agenda. We welcome your invitation for closer collaboration between CDC and CSTE and support your agency's position statement which calls for CSTE to be an active organizational partner in the planning and implementation of the National Action Agenda. I look forward to this opportunity for working together to promote the health of all mothers and infants in the United States. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Lynne Wilcox at (770) 488-5191, email lwilcox@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,

James S. Marks, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Surgeon General
Director
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention
and Health Promotion

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services Administration

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Rockville, Maryland 2084

Matthew Cartter, M.D., M.P.H.
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015

NOV 30 2001

Dear Dr. Cartter:

Thank you for your July 20 letter concerning the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists' position statement on "Support for the Development of the National Action Agenda for Building Data Capacity for Maternal and Child Health." The Bureau has supported the National Action Alliance since its inception and will continue to support the National Action Agenda.

While the position statement "Support for the Development of the National Action Agenda for Building Data Capacity for Maternal and Child Health" makes many important points, staff and I believe that the "Statement of the Problem (s)" is not stated as accurately as it could be. The final sentence states "...success has been limited due to a lack of shared vision and communication among public health partners in MCH..." In fact, in the area of maternal and child health (MCH) epidemiology, almost all our efforts have been closely coordinated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Bureau has been working with CDC to provide training courses and distance learning and to build data systems. Perhaps, it would be more accurate to state "With the proliferation of professional organizations that have joined in this effort, there is a need and benefit to forge a partnership for advancing capacity building efforts."

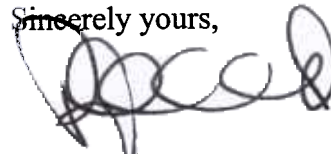
In addition to coordinating efforts with CDC, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) has also supported the development of data capacity in the States for a number of years through various venues. Activities have included the following: training opportunities for State MCH personnel and masters and doctoral students; the State Systems Development Initiatives; data capacity building grants to the States; and the development of surveys which will provide state-level data on child health. MCHB is continuing to devote staff time and resources to this area, because the development of data capacity through a well-trained workforce is a prerequisite for the effective assessment of public health programs.

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Staff and I believe that cooperation is imperative if we are to make the best use of limited funds. Therefore, the Bureau will continue to support the goals of the National Action Agenda in coordination with organizations such as the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter C. van Dyck', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Peter C. van Dyck, M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Administrator for Maternal
and Child Health