

President's Message

Time flies when you're having fun.

And it's been great fun presiding over CSTE this past year. No, really! I suppose a cynic, aware only of the salary scale and travel "benefits" of the position, might ask how this could be possible. My response would be that partly it's the issues our organization is confronting. It's easy to spend time when problems are important and broad ranging, and solutions seem possible. And partly it's that we're living in a time of opportunity. In an increasingly wider range of circles, CSTE is successfully filling a growing need for a broad-based articulate voice representing the vision and knowledge of state-based epidemiologists. But mostly it's the people. We have been blessed with a staff who are uniformly talented, competent, and resourceful; an Executive Committee and team of consultants who are smart, dedicated, and creative; and almost 400 members who comprise the best peer-based organization going.

So, thanks for the opportunity and honor of the past year. As for advice for our incoming president, Dr. Gus Birkhead? Well, clearly the organization will be in *very* capable hands so I'll only make one suggestion. Have fun, Gus!

David W. Fleming

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EIS Pizza Party

CSTE was pleased to sponsor the traditional pizza party Thursday, April 17, 1997, during the EIS Conference week. The pizza party was a success due not only to the endless supply of pizza, beer and dessert but also it provided an informal opportunity for state representatives to meet the graduating EIS officers and Preventive Medicine Residents.

CDC's SCG Forms Steering Committee to Guide Development of Case Definitions for Surveillance of Non-Infectious Conditions

At its February 1997 meeting, CDC's Surveillance Coordination Group (SCG) established the Case Definitions for Non-Infectious Conditions Steering Committee (CDNICSC). The SCG, chaired by EPO's Scott Wetterhall, charged the Steering Committee with developing case definitions for surveillance of the entire range of non-infectious conditions. Two CSTE members have been appointed to CDNICSC: Henry Anderson from Wisconsin, and Nancy Stroup from Georgia.

The Steering Committee will oversee the process, and develop common formats for case definitions and case classification. The Committee has established five task forces, each with a CSTE consultant: chronic disease (Stroup), environmental health (Anderson), injury (Richard Hoffman, Colorado), MCH/reproductive health (Rebecca Meriwether, Louisiana), and occupational health (Ana Maria Osorio, California). The task forces will form separate workgroups for each case definition.

At its May 1997 meeting, the CDNICSC adopted a timeline aiming for the case definitions to be complete by May of 1998, in order for approval to occur at the CSTE annual meeting in June 1998. CDNICSC is chaired by Steven Macdonald, from the University of Washington School of Public Health and CDC National Center for Environmental Health.

CSTE-CDC-ASPH Survey of States on Environmental Public Health Surveillance Systems Trends

With the assistance of an Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) summer intern based at the CDC National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), CSTE will conduct a survey of the status of state-based environmental public health surveillance systems.

Background: *Healthy People 2000* national health objective 11.16 aims to “establish and monitor in at least 35 states plans to define and track sentinel environmental diseases.” In 1992-93, the Public Health Foundation (PHF) conducted a mail-back survey of state health agencies, which included items about surveillance in environmental health; results were published in 1995 in their newsletter *Macroview*. With the assistance of an ASPH summer intern based at NCEH, the PHF conducted a telephone survey of state epidemiologists in 1996. The results are summarized here .

	Data collected, reviewed, and case investigation	Data collected and reviewed	Data collected
Childhood lead	31	17	3
Pesticide	6	4	9
Mercury	0	4	7
Arsenic	0	4	6
Cadmium	0	3	6
Carbon monoxide	0	3	3
Heatstroke	0	2	0
Hypothermia	0	2	0
Methemoglobin	0	3	6
Asthma	0	2	4

Number of states with environmental public health surveillance systems, 1996. Results of PHF-CDC-ASPH summer intern survey of 50 states plus DC.

1997 Survey: The focus of the 1997 survey is on trends. Data will be available for comparison from the 1992-93 survey, the 1996 survey (which also asked states about future plans), and the 1997 survey. CSTE will provide project guidance. Staff from CDC NCEH will supervise the ASPH summer intern with survey instrument development, implementation, data analysis and interpretation. For more information, please contact ASPH intern Perri Alissa Zeitz (770-488-7531), or Steven Macdonald (770-488-7086).

Year 2000 and Computers

The computer industry is about 50 years old. During this time, computer professionals tried to balance user community needs versus the cost of providing computer resources. Using two characters to represent a four character year (96 for 1996) helped accomplish this balance. Two character dates made sense because they: (1) saved time since data entry required half the number of key strokes, (2) saved two characters on limited punch cards and later on formatted input screens, (3) saved space on expensive magnetic tape and disk drives, (4) saved space on computer reports and (5) simplified expensive hardware circuits.

Using two character dates have introduced any number of problems that can impact information technology in 2000 in a number of ways:

Incorrect Century - Problem can occur when the first two digits of a year are assumed to be "19." The year 2000 is a leap year while 1900 is not. Day-of-the-week calculations will be in error after February 28, 2000.

Dates used as special values - 00 used when no date value has been entered into a dated field will become a problem. Tapes with 12/31/99 being used to indicate "no expiration date" will expire.

Arithmetic Calculations - If you are 40 in 1999 (99 minus 59), you will be -59 (00 minus 59) in 2000. **Sequence** - Reports and calculations requiring dates to be in order will no longer be correct, since 00 comes before 99.

Data Sharing - Even if data problems are corrected in the computer programs you use, data you receive from other programs could present problems. This could happen either by: (1) the data source not correcting the dates, or (2) the source of the data implemented year 2000 corrections differently. For example, your programs and data may be changed to to use four characters. The data source may have chosen to change only their programs based on the idea that date ranges 60 to 99 are 1960 to 1999 and date values 00 to 59 are 2000 to 2059.

Year 2000 Myths

Myth: This is a hardware problem that should be resolved by the computer vendors.

Fact: The problem is mostly in application programs and associated data. Designers, programmers, and users have tried to reduce data entry keystrokes, save space on reports, and reduce the amount of disk space required for data.

Myth: It only effects you in the year 2000.

Fact: The year 2000 effects all dates that use 2000 and beyond. If you have an application that helps you

generate a 3-year plan, you might experience problems this year.

Myth: This only occurs on legacy applications on mainframe systems.

Fact: Any system can be affected if it uses only two digits for year representation; any file; database with two-digit year fields; and any data entry, query, update, and output processing that used a two-digit year.

Interested in more Year 2000 information

The following Web Page is a great place to start

<http://www.year2000.com>

Membership Update

CSTE is proud to announce that the membership has been steadily increasing over the past couple of years. To date, CSTE has almost 400 members from states, territories, CDC and other federal health agencies.

Positions Available

The Missouri Department of Health has an opening for an Epidemiology Specialist within the Office of Epidemiology. For further information please contact the Missouri Department of Health at 573 / 751-6128.

The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is seeking an individual for the position of Chief, Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Branch (APRHB), Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects (EHHE).

For further information, please contact CDC Job Information Center at 1-800-CDC-HIRE.

CSTE National Headquarters Update

The CSTE National Headquarters staff has continued to grow over the past couple of months. Currently CSTE employs 18 full time staff members. Below is a brief description of the newest members to the staff.

Ms. Shundra Clinton, CSTE Secretary has been with CSTE since April 22, 1997.

Rhonda Walker, CSTE Secretary will begin employment effective June 2, 1997.

Annemarie Wasley, CSTE Epidemiologist will begin employment effective June 9, 1997.

Nicole Smith, CSTE Epidemiologist will begin employment effective June 16, 1997.

Margaret Piper, CSTE Epidemiologist will begin employment effective June 30, 1997.

Welcome aboard!

1997 CSTE Annual Meeting

The count down is on as the final touches are being made for the 1997 CSTE Annual Meeting. The agenda once again should prove to be of valuable information. President-elect Dr. Gus Birkhead and his staff as well as Kathy Getz, CSTE national office, have worked very hard to make this meeting a success. We hope to see you there!

CSTE Consultant Reports - 03/97 to 05/97

Tuberculosis

Kathleen F. Gensheimer, Advisory Committee for the Elimination of Tuberculosis (ACET), 03/97

Immunization

Reginald F. Finger, CDC/ASTHO Bi-Weekly Immunization Conference Call, 04/97

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Reginald F. Finger, WIC Immunization Conference Call, 04/97

Patty M. Quinlisk, Annual Meeting of the National Coalition for Adult Immunizations, 05/97

General Surveillance

Diane Dwyer, National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS) Subcommittee Meeting, 04/97

Paul Stehr-Green, Health Information and Surveillance Systems Policy Board (HISSPB) Meeting, 05/97

Ronald W. Voorhees, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Peer Review Committee Meeting in Reference to NHANES, 05/97

HIV/AIDS

Susan J. Klein, HIV Prevention Consultant's Meeting, 03/97

Executive Director Appointed for NAPHSIS and ASTPHLD

The National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) has appointed Michael Hamm as the first Executive Director for the Association. The new national headquarters for NAPHSIS will be temporarily located at:

2996 Glenora Lane
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 301-251-2825
Fax: 301-251-2825
Email: Mhamm90528@aol.com

The Association of State and Territorial Public Health Laboratory Directors (ASTPHLD) has appointed Scott J. Becker as Executive Director for the organization. His appointment is effective June 16, 1997.

ASTPHND has Moved

The Association of Public Health State & Territorial Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND) office has a new location. Their address is:

1275 K Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-4006

Telephone: 202-789-1067

Facsimile: 202-789-1068

