

MOVING FORWARD



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED STATES-MÉXICO BORDER HEALTH COMMISSION

MISSION

To provide international leadership that optimizes health and quality of life along the U.S.-México border.



GOALS

Institutionalize a domestic focus on border health that can transcend political changes.

Create an effective venue for binational discussion to address public health issues and problems affecting the U.S.-México border.

The United States-México Border Health Commission (BHC) is pleased to present its 2011 Annual Report, marking another year of health promotion and service to border communities throughout the 10 U.S. and México border states. In recognition of the need for an international commission to provide leadership that can optimize health and quality of life along the U.S.-México border, the Governments of the United States of America and the United Mexican States signed the binational agreement to establish the Commission in July of 2000. Since that time, the BHC's vision and direction have assisted binational efforts at the local, state, and federal levels to improve the health of people along the border.

Through the promotion of border health initiatives that address infectious and chronic disease, the Commission has continued to promote awareness of public health issues impacting border communities as well as sustainable binational partnerships that can lead to improved outcomes. Initiatives such as the *U.S.-México Border Binational Infectious Disease Conference*, the *U.S.-México Border Tuberculosis Consortium*, *Healthy Border 2010/2020*, and binational obesity and diabetes prevention and awareness campaigns launched during *Border Binational Health Week* all served to bring together local and binational communities to enhance public health.

The Commission recognizes the efforts of numerous individuals, organizations, the research community, and other binational public and private stakeholders whose continued work, dedication, and commitment have strengthened the foundations established 11 years ago. Their contributions exemplify the spirit of binational communication, coordination, and collaboration that is critical to address public health challenges unique to U.S.-México border communities.

The BHC remains committed to providing leadership, bringing focus on the issues, and serving as a venue for action to improve the overall quality of life along our shared border.



The Honorable
Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Health and Human Services
United States of America

The Honorable
Salomón Chertorivski Woldenberg
Secretary
México Secretariat of Health
United Mexican States



2011

ANNUAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY >

Moving forward into the second decade of the 21st century, the United States-México Border Health Commission (BHC) has achieved significant progress in improving public health and quality of life across the border region. In 2011, the BHC continued to advance initiatives and programs that address local public health issues and cross-border health strategies that can enhance regional health and wellness for all border residents.

Since 2000, the BHC has promoted open communication, binational coordination, and close collaboration between the United States and México at the federal level and among the 10 border states, their counties and municipalities, and various local and binational stakeholders. These binational alliances enable the BHC to raise awareness about public health issues and challenges faced by border populations and to create necessary venues and partnerships that can mobilize actions needed to improve the border's health status. Furthermore, the BHC develops leaders who can effectively execute its work and serves as a reliable information portal regarding border health issues.

This report reviews BHC 2011 accomplishments and demonstrates its continued capacity to inform and prepare local communities to effectively respond to border health issues. During 2011, the BHC focused on the following priority areas: access to care; strategic planning; research, data collection, and academic alliances; tuberculosis; obesity and diabetes; and infectious disease and public health emergencies.

The BHC acknowledges the indispensable cross-border partnerships among the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the México Secretariat of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pan American Health Organization, policymakers, academic institutions, and other borderwide stakeholders who help advance the BHC's mission to provide international leadership that optimizes health



and quality of life along the U.S.-México border. These partners have contributed to addressing border health challenges in effective and sustainable ways by providing technical assistance and support to BHC programs and activities.

In the years to come, the BHC will continue to provide a venue to raise awareness of border public health issues by building essential partnerships, serving as an essential border health information portal, and preparing its current and future leaders to advance the BHC's goals and objectives.



BHC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL INFANT IMMUNIZATION WEEK/BORDER BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK—weeklong community health promotion initiatives that unite communities throughout the border and both nations in promotion of borderwide, sustainable partnerships that can address border health challenges.

HEALTHY BORDER 2010/2020—an ambitious health promotion and disease prevention initiative established in March 2001 to improve the health of border residents and eliminate health disparities. The initiative focuses attention on regional health issues through the development of bilateral, borderwide, and community health improvement plans.

BINATIONAL HEALTH COUNCILS' STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING—a workshop that assembled community health leaders from the 10 border states and 15 binational health councils to obtain binational community input on health area improvements, determine approaches to promote existing BHC initiatives/priorities, and identify proposed interventions that can address those priorities.

U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER HEALTH RESEARCH FORUM—a binational public forum that connects U.S. and México academic and research institutions to initiate cross-border research that can be replicated as well as promote resource sharing and collaborative partnerships.

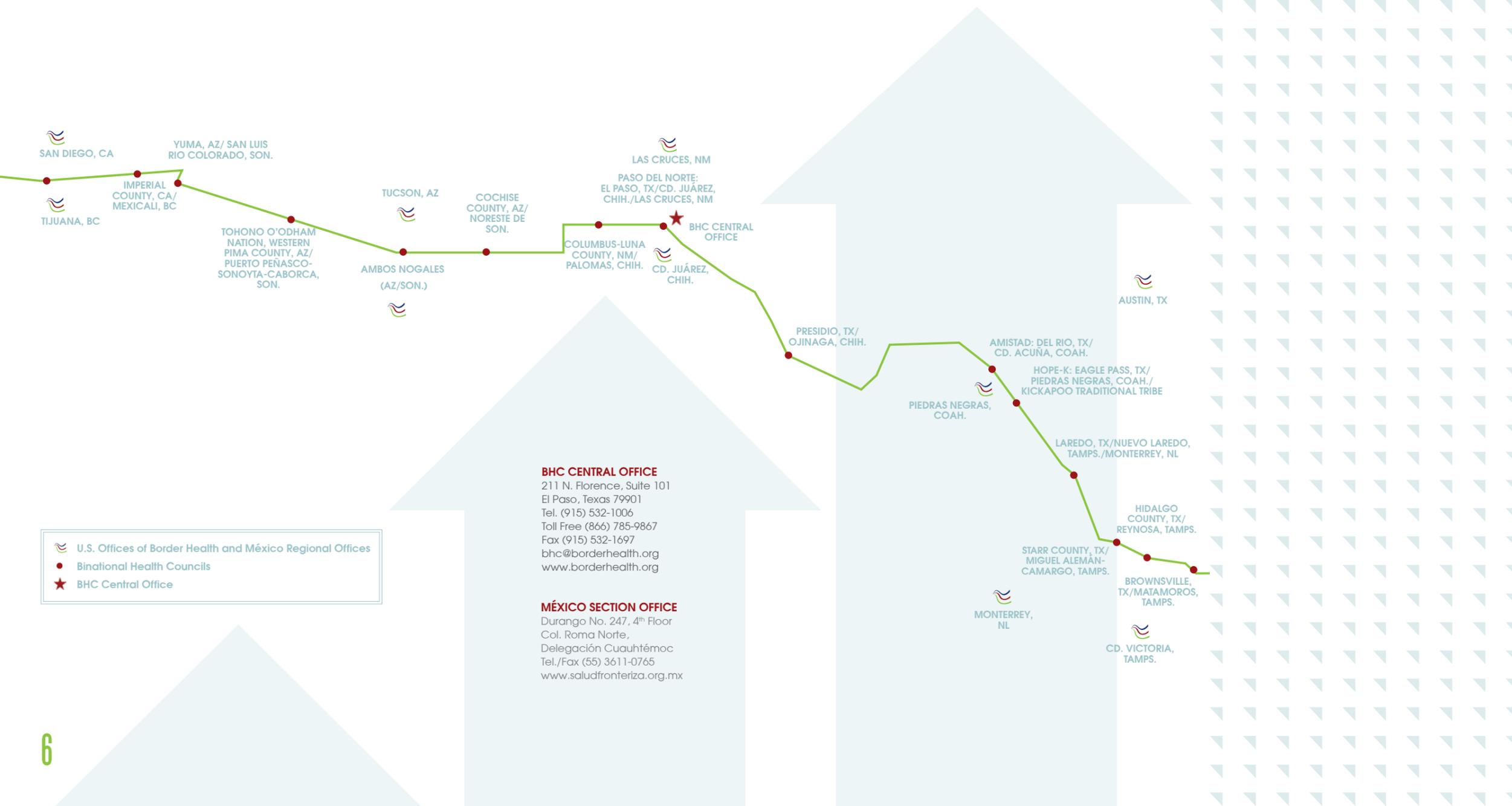
LEADERS ACROSS BORDERS—a program designed to advance binational leadership development for public health and health care professionals working to improve the health of U.S.-México border regional communities. In 2011, the second class of graduates included 18 participants representing eight U.S.-México border states.

U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER TUBERCULOSIS (TB) CONSORTIUM—a meeting that gathered over 60 public health and legal experts from binational federal, state, academic, government, and non-governmental organizations to reinforce binational and borderwide responses to TB issues and incidence rates.

NEW MEXICO-CHIHUAHUA TB PILOT PROJECT—a binational collaborative initiative to decrease TB in the New Mexico-Chihuahua border region through enhanced surveillance and treatment efforts of all patients diagnosed with active and latent TB and to prevent multi-drug resistant TB.

U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER BINATIONAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONFERENCE—an event that convened over 130 participants from binational federal, state, and local, county, and city health departments to address bilateral activities regarding cross-border and global partnerships, global health security, and efforts to prevent and control biological threats.

BORDER REGION AT A GLANCE >



▶ BORDER AREA

The border area, defined in U.S. Public Law § 103-400 (22 U.S. Code, 290 n-5) and the La Paz Agreement of 1983 as the area 62 miles (100 kilometers) north and south of the U.S.-México border, includes 44 counties in the four U.S. border states and 80 municipalities in the six México border states.

▶ BORDER STATES

The U.S. border states include California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The México border states include Baja California Norte, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas.

▶ BINATIONAL HEALTH COUNCILS

A *binational health council* is a community health organization that examines the health needs, problems, and available programs associated with the council's cross-border geographical area. Approximately 15 binational health councils stretch along the border region, to include associated binational sister-cities and two Native-American tribes.

Binational health councils are critical to the BHC because they form an essential framework for acting on binational health issues and priorities by positioning themselves as the local and regional voices for public health.

▶ U.S. OFFICES OF BORDER HEALTH AND MÉXICO REGIONAL OFFICES

The four U.S. Offices of Border Health (OBH) and six México regional offices work closely with their respective state health departments. The U.S. OBHs receive funding support through U.S. Department of Health and Human Services cooperative agreements provided to each of the U.S. state health departments. The México regional offices receive funding support through the México Secretariat of Health.

The overall role of the U.S. OBHs and México regional offices is to support and extend the BHC's work along the border. They are strategically located in each of the 10 border states and serve as a binational resource for border communities by offering binational public health activities, disseminating information, and providing critical links to other public and private partners.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES >

The BHC elevates public health standards within U.S.-México border communities by engaging binational local, state, federal, and international leaders to collaborate with health professionals in strategic ways. To determine priority areas along the border, the BHC solicited community input from leadership and participants of the 15 binational health councils, community partners, and numerous stakeholders, including the Health Work Table component of the Border Governors Conference, which provides recommendations on health issues affecting border populations.

As a result of this process, the BHC has identified the following six strategic priorities as critical areas of concern:

- a. Access to care**
- b. Strategic planning**
- c. Research, data collection, and academic alliances**
- d. Tuberculosis**
- e. Obesity and diabetes**
- f. Infectious disease and public health emergencies**

a. Access to care ▶▶▶

NATIONAL INFANT IMMUNIZATION WEEK

The BHC sponsored the border component of the 8th Annual National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), April 23-30, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). This weeklong event unites border communities throughout both nations to ensure all children are healthy and protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

NIIW offers federal, state, and local border health organizations the opportunity to coordinate their efforts to eradicate preventable diseases in infants through increased vaccinations. Since 2004, the BHC has worked closely with CDC and PAHO to promote immunization in the U.S.-México border region. This celebration brings together the efforts of the U.S. National Infant Immunization Week, the México National Health Weeks, and Vaccination Week in the Americas, a PAHO campaign that promotes immunizations throughout the Americas.

Promoting the NIIW campaign theme of “Love them. Protect them. Immunize them,” local border community members collaborated to sponsor and/or participate in training events, health fairs, and other immunization-related activities to engage parents and caregivers as partners in immunization.

To launch NIIW, the Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Border Health (ADHS OBH) sponsored an inaugural event in Tucson, Arizona, in partnership with the Sonora State Secretariat of Public Health; CDC; PAHO; the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health; the El Rio Community Health Center; the International Mariachi Conference; and many other federal, state, and local binational organizations.

The event showcased notable health experts from CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, and PAHO, among others. Attendees took part in



**Love them.
Protect them.
Immunize them.**

health fairs and other activities, including infant/youth immunization clinics and the *Surround Your Baby with a Vaccinated Family* event, an activity initiated by the ADHS and the Arizona Partnership for Immunization to reinforce adult pertussis vaccinations in response to increased binational pertussis cases.

Additional borderwide events included vaccine clinics; health fairs; professional workshops and trainings; various health-related games, contests, and exhibits; immunization campaigns; and community press conferences.

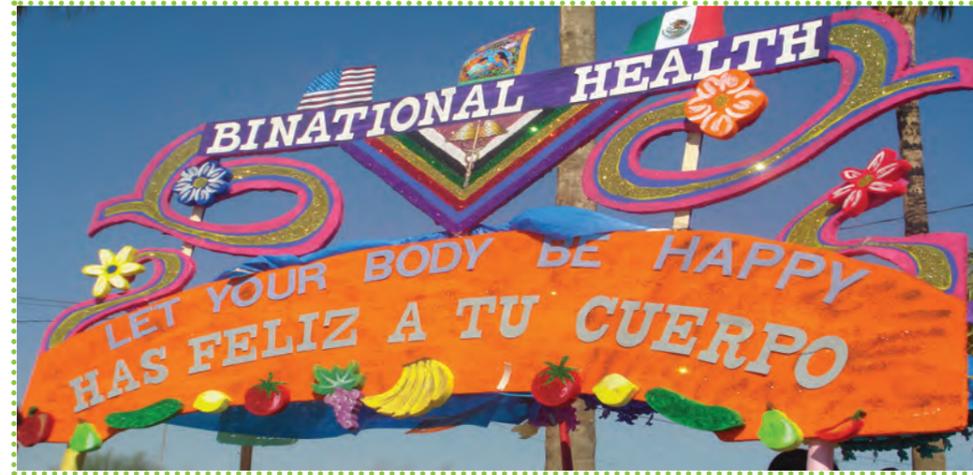
In total, over 70 borderwide events reached more than 9,000 residents and resulted in increased vaccination coverage and health promotion, especially in rural areas and among at-risk populations, such as teen parents and migrants.



BORDER BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

The BHC sponsored the 8th Annual Border Binational Health Week (BBHW) during the first week of October, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the México Secretariat of Health, the Health Initiative of the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization, and the 10 U.S.-México border states. BBHW increased border binational community partnerships by providing a venue for federal, state, and local organizations, private and non-profit partners, academic institutions, and key U.S. and México leaders to collaborate with binational border community members through the theme “Families in Action for Health” and adjoining focus “Preventing Obesity and Diabetes.”

BBHW provided over 38,000 binational border residents with more than 150 health promotion and disease prevention activities, including health fairs, fora, training events, and programs highlighting obesity and diabetes prevention.



NATIONAL VACCINE PLAN BORDER HEALTH STAKEHOLDERS' MEETINGS

This year, as part of BBHW, *National Vaccine Plan Border Health Stakeholders' Meetings* were held concurrently on October 5 in Brownsville, Texas, and in San Diego, California, to discuss approaches to improving border and migrant community immunization rates. Organized by the National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO), in partnership with the Association of State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO) and the BHC, the meetings identified best practices, challenges, and opportunities for implementing the 2010 *National Vaccine Plan*, a comprehensive 10-year blueprint containing innovative approaches to improve immunization rates among border communities and migrant populations.

Public health partners and consumers gathered to provide feedback and techniques to achieve the strategies identified in the National Vaccine Plan. Participants specifically addressed implementation barriers including communication, vaccine safety, measurement, and funding challenges.

This collaborative effort between the BHC, NVPO, and ASTHO served to promote preventative vaccinations for all U.S. residents.

BBHW HIGHLIGHTS

- Organized the BBHW inaugural ceremony in San Diego, California, on October 3, hosted by the California Department of Public Health Office of Binational Border Health, to promote community education and prevention efforts through various initiatives, including San Diego County's *Let's Move!* campaign and the *Healthy Works* initiative as well as México's federal *Cinco Pasos (Five Steps)* initiative.
- Convened local and state U.S. and México health professionals to promote childhood and adolescent obesity prevention programming, strategies, and policy recommendations at concurrent childhood obesity fora in El Paso and Eagle Pass, Texas, on October 5.
- Celebrated the second *Leaders across Borders (LaB)* graduating class at the BBHW closing ceremony on October 7 in Tucson, Arizona. Hosted by the Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Border Health and the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, the LaB program is designed to advance binational leadership development for public health and health care professionals and improve the health of U.S.-México border communities.



MOVING FORWARD

The BHC will continue promoting borderwide sustainable partnerships and optimal regional health by sponsoring the 9th Annual BBHW in October 2012.



MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH EPIDEMIOLOGY PROGRAM

The Border Maternal and Child Health (BorderMACH) initiative, which aims to strengthen U.S.-México collaboration in maternal and child health (MCH), completed its second full year at the BHC in 2011.

BorderMACH is a major focus of the Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Program (MCHEP), a collaborative effort between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration/Maternal Child Health Bureau, which helps promote improved health and well-being for women, children, and families at state, local, and tribal levels.

Institutions collaborating with the BHC include the México Secretariat of Health, México's National Institute of Public Health, the Mexican Social Security Institute, the National Center for Health Statistics/CDC, CityMatCH, and U.S. and México local and state health departments and academic institutions.

2009

In May 2009, the Office of Global Affairs and the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at CDC signed a memorandum of understanding to support the enhancement of epidemiologic capacity in maternal and child health and health promotion in the border region. BorderMACH supports binational sister-city teams of public health program directors, policy experts, epidemiologists, and other health officials in sister-city communities working to better use existing reproductive health data in the border region.

2011

In May 2011, the second BorderMACH workshop was held in El Paso, Texas. Four BorderMACH teams participated, including teams from Tijuana-San Diego County, Nogales-Santa Cruz County, Juárez-El Paso-Doña Ana County, and Cameron County-Matamoros communities. The workshop curriculum focused on project proposal and logic model development and emphasized the role of local data in these activities through practical team exercises. Proposals the teams drafted during the workshop currently serve as templates for further binational collaboration in MCH.

A recently completed evaluation of BorderMACH Workshop II collected information from team members, faculty members, and impartial observers to identify workshop strengths and provide guidance for future workshops. The evaluation results are scheduled for release in 2013.

In addition to BorderMACH activities, MCHEP staff also conducts collaborative binational research in MCH and related topics, disseminates their findings at national meetings and in peer-reviewed journals, and provides technical assistance to local and state health departments in the region.

HEALTHY BORDER 2010/2020

In 2011, the BHC advanced Phase II of a five-phase strategic plan in support of the *Healthy Border (HB)* initiative, an ambitious health promotion and disease prevention initiative established in March 2001 to improve the health of border residents and eliminate health disparities through an effort that focuses attention on major health issues in the region.

Since the initial launch of *HB 2010* and publication of *Healthy Border 2010: An Agenda for Improving Health on the U.S.-México Border* in 2003, the BHC has completed two midterm reports: a U.S. component midterm report, *Healthy Border 2010 Midterm Review: U.S. Border Area*, published in July 2009, and a México component midterm report, *Frontera Saludable 2010, Reporte de Medio Plazo, Frontera Norte de México*, published in July 2010.

The BHC also published the *HB 2010/2020 Strategic Framework Report* in November 2010. The report describes the framework and identifies the timeline for completing the *HB 2010 Joint Closeout Report* and the *HB 2020 Rollout Plan*, which included establishing the Border Binational Technical Work Group, composed of group members from U.S. and México federal agencies, state health departments, the Pan American Health Organization, and the University of South Carolina.

HEALTHY BORDER HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed the *HB 2010/2020 Strategic Plan*, providing regional researchers, organizations, and communities the first set of border-specific health indicators to assist them in prioritizing health issues and designing regional health programs.
- Supported the *HB 2010/2020 Binational Technical Work Group*, comprised of U.S. and México public and academic officials, in implementing the strategic plan.

MOVING FORWARD

- Draft the *HB 2010 Joint Closeout Report*.
- Finalize the *HB 2020 Rollout Plan*.



b. Strategic planning

2011 BHC ANNUAL MEETING

The BHC held its 2011 Annual Meeting in Ensenada, Baja California, co-chaired by Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator for the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (representing Secretary Kathleen Sebelius), and by Víctor Hugo López Aranda, General Director of Affiliation and Operations at the National Commission of Social Health Protection, México (representing Secretary Salomón Chertorivski).

The meeting highlighted progress achieved and defined forthcoming aims to improve the state of health along the border for future generations of binational residents. The meeting also provided updates on *Healthy Border 2010/2020*, the *Border Governors Conference Health Work Table*, México's universal health coverage *Seguro Popular*, and the México's *Camino a la Salud (Walk for Health)* and *Cinco Pasos (Five Steps)* initiatives. Program updates were also provided on other key BHC activities, including the successful coordination of more than 150 borderwide events targeting health promotion during the *8th Annual Border Binational Health Week* and the *Binational Health Councils' Strategic Planning Workshop III*.

The annual meeting confirmed strategic priorities and laid the groundwork for the BHC's work in the coming year.



THIRD BINATIONAL HEALTH COUNCILS' STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

The BHC assembled community health leaders from the 10 border states and 15 binational health councils at the *Binational Health Councils' Strategic Planning Workshop III: Organizing for Success* on April 6-7 in El Paso, Texas. Coordinated by the Texas Office of Border Health and Chihuahua Regional Office, workshop participants obtained binational community input on disease prevention and health promotion activities along the border.

Key action steps included aligning individual health councils' strategies, operational plans, and objectives with BHC priorities; performing necessary institutional interventions to improve binational health council operations; and implementing organizational mechanisms to facilitate funding opportunities for border public health projects.

The binational health councils are critical to the BHC because they serve as the essential framework for acting on binational health issues and priorities and are positioned as the local and regional voices of public health along the border region. The BHC will work with the councils to implement the action steps.

BHC-PAHO ALIGNMENT

The BHC shares a common goal with the U.S.-México Border Office (USMBO) of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): to improve the quality of life and health of border residents. In 2008, a joint statement was signed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

the México Secretariat of Health, and PAHO to facilitate technical cooperation that addresses border health priorities. To this end, the U.S. and México Secretaries of Health and the director of PAHO have collaborated on binational activities to increase information sharing, improve resource availability, and promote awareness of border health priorities and initiatives.

During 2011, PAHO's USMBO continued to work with the BHC on various initiatives to improve the health of border communities, including *National Infant Immunization Week*, *Border Binational Health Week*, and *Healthy Border 2010/2020*.



C. Research, data collection, and academic alliances



Continuing the focus of improving overall research and data collection efforts and initiatives, the BHC sponsored the *Third U.S.-México Border Health Research (BHR) Forum* on May 16-17 in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The forum, hosted by the New Mexico Office of Border Health, provided an opportunity for U.S. and México academic and research institutions to initiate cross-border research and establish policy.

Research topics included binational institutional review boards (IRBs); the proposed border health journal; *Healthy Border (HB) 2010/2020* initiative updates; and binational Centers of Excellence support, among others.

In 2012, the BHC will continue to promote binational research by sponsoring the next BHR Forum in June.

Forum attendees compiled a number of actions and next steps, to include—

- Creating a web-based tool intended to help researchers and the general public provide input on the HB 2010 closeout report and launch of HB 2020.
- Collaborating with the Health Resources and Services Administration to ensure the comprehensive distribution of the University of South Carolina Rural Health Research Center's *Borderline Health: A Chartbook of U.S. Rural Health Indicators at the Mexico Border*.
- Collaborating with the IRB subcommittee on *Institutional Review Boards in the U.S.-México Border* report recommendations.
- Convening a subcommittee to prepare and present a proposal to the BHR Work Group and Expert Panel on the feasibility of publishing a border health journal.

Building on earlier border research publications, the BHC published a 2011 white paper entitled *Binational*

Collaboration and Infectious Disease Surveillance along the U.S.-México Border that reviews the challenges and advances made toward binational collaboration in infectious disease surveillance along the U.S.-México border. The report informs local, state, and federal public health officials in their efforts to improve binational and cross-border collaboration and also presents a number of cross-cutting issues that support the need for binational collaboration, including recommending the need for the signing of the *Guidelines for U.S.-México Coordination on Public Health Events of Mutual Interest*.

The BHC continues to identify strategies towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive border health research agenda intended to lead toward long-term coordinated dialogues and actions focused on understanding the border health research environment.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sponsored the *Third U.S.-México Border Health Research Forum*, connecting U.S. and México academic and research institutions to initiate cross-border research, promote the *HB 2010/2020* initiative, and discuss binational IRBs and the binational Centers of Excellence.
- Published a white paper entitled *Binational Collaboration and Infectious Disease Surveillance along the U.S.-México Border* that reviews the challenges and advances made toward binational collaboration in infectious disease surveillance along the U.S.-México border.

MOVING FORWARD

- Identify processes for collaborative cross-border research that can be replicated and promote resource sharing and collaborative partnerships.
- Identify strategies to develop and implement a comprehensive border health research agenda that leads to long-term coordinated dialogues and actions regarding the border health research environment.

LEADERS ACROSS BORDERS

Improved health and quality of life in the border region require dedicated binational public health leaders who can respond effectively to binational and transborder health concerns. To enhance public health leadership and cultivate a dynamic network of public health professionals situated along the U.S.-México border, the BHC completed its second iteration of *Leaders across Borders (LaB)*, a nine-month binational professional and leadership development program.

LaB offers a multifaceted programmatic approach that assists participants with enhancing personal, team, and transborder leadership skills that can strengthen binational diplomacy and health infrastructure in the border region. In October 2011, LaB graduated 18 U.S. and México public health and health care professionals who will join other binational health providers to improve the health of underserved communities across the border region.

LaB is a collaborative effort between the BHC, the Arizona Department of Health Services, México's National Institute of Public Health, México's College of the Northern Border, the Pan American Health Organization, and other public health partners and academic institutions coordinated through the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health's Southwest Public Health Leadership Institute. The BHC will sponsor the third LaB iteration in 2012-2013.



LAB HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued its support of this multifaceted leadership program designed to develop personal, team, and transborder leadership skills that can strengthen binational diplomacy and health infrastructure in the border region.
- Celebrated the second class of graduates, including 18 participants representing 8 U.S.-México border states.

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The BHC will sponsor the third *Leaders across Borders* iteration in advancement of binational leadership development for public health and health care professionals working to improve community health across and along the border region.

U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER TUBERCULOSIS CONSORTIUM

To reinforce binational and borderwide responses to mutual tuberculosis issues, the BHC convened over 60 public health and legal experts to take part in the second annual *U.S.-México Border Tuberculosis (TB) Consortium* in San Diego, California. The TB Consortium took place in conjunction with the *TB Legal Issues Forum*, providing a venue for select participants to discuss and respond to key issues and action items generated during the *2010 Binational TB Legal Issues Forum* and *2010 TB Consortium*.

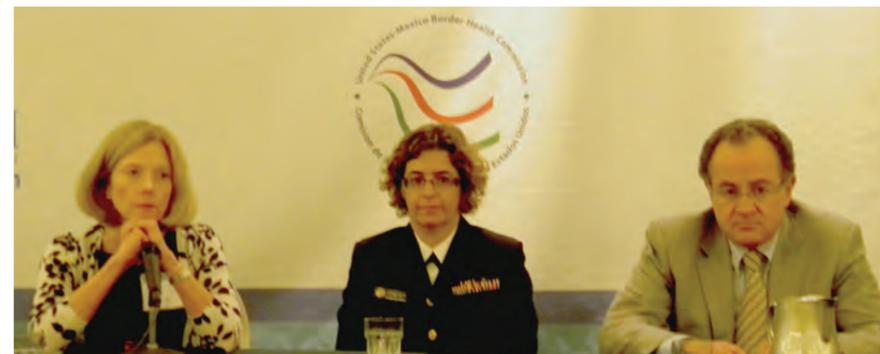
The California Department of Public Health, California Regional Office, and the Nuevo León Regional Office co-hosted the *U.S.-México Border TB Consortium* and the *TB Legal Issues Forum*, which brought together federal, state, and local public and private partners to discuss community education and TB prevention in the border region.

Event activities included presentations by Arizona-Sonora and New Mexico-Chihuahua state health officials who provided *Meet and Greet Program* overviews concerning protocols and case studies instrumental in facilitating continuity of care for difficult-to-serve cross-border patients, discussions regarding epidemiological trends related to TB prevalence and the importance of México's national *Plataforma* database in maintaining cross-border treatment, and keynote speeches by U.S. and México representatives regarding Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities and protocols.

Recommendations included—

- Developing Meet and Greet standards based on current ICE procedures.
- Establishing mechanisms for enrolling and managing TB patients in México ports of entry pilot stations and *Ventanillas de Salud*, México's health referral services.
- Integrating Cure-TB and TBNet patient databases and coordinating patient tracking and continuity of care.
- Encouraging the México Secretariat of Health and U.S. federal and state public health authorities to analyze border-state infrastructure that facilitates continuity of care for TB patients and HIV/AIDS-Diabetes Mellitus-TB comorbidities.

A TB Legal Issues Work Group was also established to ensure adequate collaboration on proposed actions that encourage key U.S. and México policymakers and TB program leaders to take appropriate action where necessary.



TB CONSORTIUM AND LEGAL FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Assembled over 60 public health and legal experts to reinforce binational and borderwide responses to binational TB issues.
- Established a TB Legal Issues Work Group to ensure adequate collaboration on proposed actions that encourage key U.S. and México policymakers and TB program leaders to take appropriate action where necessary.

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- Promote the continuity of care of all TB patients along the U.S.-México border.
- Facilitate the coordination of TB patient management across multi-level legal frameworks.
- Establish uniform Meet and Greet standards and guidelines applicable to all TB patients facing deportation.

NEW MEXICO-CHIHUAHUA TUBERCULOSIS PILOT PROJECT

The BHC continued its support for the *New Mexico-Chihuahua Tuberculosis Pilot Project*, a three-year binational venture initiated in 2010 to address TB in the New Mexico-Chihuahua border region through efforts to enhance surveillance and treatment of all patients diagnosed with active and latent TB and to prevent multi-drug resistant TB.

The TB pilot project was coordinated through the New Mexico Department of Health's Office of Border Health, TB Program, and Public Health Region 5 as well as the Chihuahua State Health Services, the JUNTOS Project, and the Migrant Clinicians Network. In 2011, the project provided education and treatment under Directly Observed Therapy to 27 active TB patients, implemented adherence strategies for at-risk patients, coordinated over 35 contact investigations, and expanded project infrastructure and outreach to include rural areas.

JOINT STATEMENT OF COOPERATION IN THE TEXAS-COAHUILA BORDER TUBERCULOSIS INITIATIVE

The *Texas-Coahuila Border Tuberculosis Initiative* celebrated a milestone this year when Dr. David Lakey, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner, and Dr. Raymundo Verduzco, Coahuila State Health Secretary, signed a joint statement of cooperation certifying a cross-border data exchange to ensure continuity of care for TB patients traveling between both countries.

Facilitated by the BHC, the binational TB initiative aims to reduce TB rates in the sister-cities of Del Rio, Texas, and Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, and Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Coahuila.



Objectives include—

- Work cooperatively to pursue joint opportunities to effectively address cross-border TB prevention and control.
- Form a Bi-State Steering Committee on TB to seek opportunities for state collaboration that can ensure a reduction in the morbidity, mortality, and transmission of TB across the border region.
- Request BHC support to ensure the most effective and efficient use of assigned state resources for the implementation of TB prevention and control activities.

A joint statement between the Texas DSHS and the Coahuila State Secretariat of Health was signed at an event in Del Rio, Texas, on October 6, marking the official beginning of the collaboration.

e. Obesity and diabetes



As childhood obesity rates have increased to epidemic proportions, the BHC and its federal, state, and local binational health partners continue to support education and health-related agencies through community outreach opportunities to promote healthy weight in youth throughout the border region.

The New Mexico Department of Health Office of Border Health (OBH), working with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) OBH and the Chihuahua Regional Office, hosted a childhood obesity forum in El Paso, Texas, during *Border Binational Health Week* on October 5, convening over 100 health professionals from the Paso del Norte Binational Health Council Diabetes Committee, the Pan American Health Organization, the Doña Ana Diabetes Outreach Coalition, the Paso del Norte Health Foundation, the New Mexico OBH's *Healthy Kids Program*, Las Cruces and El Paso school districts, and other selected healthcare providers.

The event promoted childhood and adolescent obesity prevention programming, strategies, and policy recommendations that directly impact youth, parents, and communities in the Southern New Mexico, West Texas/El Paso, Ciudad Juárez, and Nuevo Casas Grandes/Palomas regions.

A simultaneous obesity forum took place in Eagle Pass, Texas, hosted by the Texas DSHS, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the HOPE-K Trinational Health Council, the Amistad Binational Health Council, and the City of Eagle Pass. Forum participants discussed actions to improve health along the U.S.-México border, binational efforts addressing childhood obesity, and other regional priorities, including substance abuse and domestic violence issues affecting the Texas-Coahuila region.

The BHC plans to promote obesity intervention and prevention in 2012 through similar fora scheduled during *Border Binational Health Week* in California and Arizona.



f. Infectious disease and public health emergencies



U.S.-MÉXICO BORDER BINATIONAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONFERENCE

The BHC convened the second *U.S.-México Border Binational Infectious Disease (BBID) Conference*, hosted by the Texas Department of State Health Services Office of Border Health and the Chihuahua Regional Office, on June 7-9 in El Paso, Texas.

The three-day conference brought together over 130 participants from federal, state, and county and city health departments representing all 10 U.S. and México border states and from numerous other U.S. and México institutions, organizations, and hospitals.

Participants addressed strategic objectives, including—

- Strengthening cross-border epidemiological information sharing processes and preparedness training.
- Improving protocols for immediate cross-border notification.
- Advancing electronic information sharing capabilities.
- Enhancing regional surveillance networks to include binational components.
- Assessing migration impact on binational health systems.

The BHC will sponsor the third *BBID Conference* in 2012 to provide a venue for reporting progress on these issues.



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