LGBT Caucus kicks off mentorship program

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Caucus of Public Health Professionals will kick off its first student mentorship program at APHA’s 142nd Annual Meeting and Exposition in New Orleans in November.

Caucus members introduced the idea of a mentorship program as part of presenting the group’s strategic plan at the Annual Meeting in Boston in 2013, said Derrick Matthews, PhD, MPH, the Caucus chair. While the Caucus has a large number of students, many attend schools where they do not have access to faculty who pursue LGBT health research, Matthews said.

“LGBT health is concentrated at a few universities and this was one way to help students where they don’t have a lot of faculty expertise to help implement their own education,” Matthews told The Nation’s Health.

Because members are spread throughout the country, it will be up to the mentors and mentees on how often and in what way they will keep in touch, Matthews said. He said he hopes many of them will get to meet face-to-face in New Orleans at the Caucus’ business meeting.

“When we have mentors and mentees sign up, we inquire the level of involvement they are looking for and we want to provide a match with respect to that,” Matthews said.

Community health worker to be defined

Members of APHA’s Community Health Workers Section hope to see at least one federal agency adopt APHA’s definition of a community health worker for its standard occupational classification system to classify workers by certain occupations to calculate and collect data, according to the U.S. Department of Labor website.

The application to adopt APHA’s definition was accepted by the Department of Labor in the first round of public comments this spring and revisions to the system will be made in 2018, prior to the 2020 Census.

Sergio Matos, CHW, a section member, said the current federal definition of a community health worker is more health care-focused and does not include the wide range of work in housing, environmental justice and violence prevention.

Section members conducted outreach to community health workers, advocates and other APHA Sections asking them to send letters to the Department of Labor in favor of adopting APHA’s definition.

Homelessness Caucus launches new website

To increase engagement and keep members connected, the Caucus on Homelessness launched a new website in July.

The website, http://caucusonhomelessness.wordpress.com, features blog posts that keep members up to date on upcoming Caucus-related events and sessions for APHA’s 142nd Annual Meeting and Exposition, said Molly Meinbresse, MPH, the Caucus program chair.

There are also links to Caucus background information, newsletters, information on how to become a member and Internet links to data and agencies focused on the health of people who are homeless. There is also a membership form that asks members to identify how they would like to participate in the Caucus, such as helping review abstracts, being a Student Assembly liaison or helping with Caucus website content development, she said.

“We wanted a website but because we don’t require membership dues or have funding, we didn’t have the capacity to create one,” Meinbresse told The Nation’s Health. “Also, we weren’t able to identify a volunteer who could build one for us. Then in my job with the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, I was trained on how to make changes to our website, I just used the same skills to create the Caucus on Homelessness website.”

In the future, Meinbresse wants the website to let members share best public health practices and foster mentoring between experienced public health practitioners and young professionals.

APHA member group election results in

New leadership is coming among APHA’s member groups, following a summer election by the Association’s Sections and Student Assembly.

APHA members were voted into elected positions such as chair-elect, secretary-elect, Section councilor and Governing Councilor. The elections were held July 8 through Aug. 5, and voting was open to APHA members.

The newly elected leaders will assume their new positions at the end of APHA’s 142nd Annual Meeting and Exposition in November in New Orleans.

For more information, email Nathan Bhatti at nathan.bhatti@apha.org or call 202-777-2485.

— Natalie McGill

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Sunday, November 16, 2:30PM-3:30PM
(While supplies last)

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
The Quest for Health Reform: A Satirical History
Sunday, November 16, 4:00PM-5:00PM

Michael Patrick MacDonald
All Souls: A Family Story for Southeh
Monday, November 17, 12:00PM-1:00PM

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Sunday 9:30AM-12:00PM