APHA Section creates task force to revise public health code of ethics

More than a decade has passed since APHA adopted its first Public Health Code of Ethics, but as issues such as access to care and climate change evolve, Section members say it is time for an update.

The Ethics Section has created an APHA Ethics Code Task Force whose members will spend the next few years revising the code, which APHA adopted in 2002.

The task force will hold an open meeting for all APHA members interested in the revision 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, as business meeting 341.1 during APHA’s 143rd Annual Meeting and Exposition in Chicago.

The first code of ethics was meant to be a living document that would be updated with the latest research in the field. While a focus in the first code was on professional ethics in public health, the field has expanded in the past 15 years to include organizational ethics and the role it plays in decisions society makes about public health issues, said Dan Swartzman, JD, MPH, chair-elect of the Ethics Section.

“If you’re a state or local health department director, you’re going to be making decisions about allocations of resources that have ethical dimensions, such as who ought to be taken care of first,” Swartzman said. “On the larger public policy realm, the realm of social ethics...now that the Affordable Care Act is being implemented we’re starting to see that we didn’t solve all our ethical problems. We’re going to see a larger focus of people who have not (Affordable Care Act) is being implemented we’re starting to see that we didn’t solve all our ethical problems. We’re going to see a larger focus of people who have not...”

MEMBER GROUPS IN BRIEF

Pediatric partnership funds new students

More than 100 pediatric students will know the benefits of an APHA membership for free, thanks to a partnership between the Podiatric Health Section and the American Podiatric Medical Association.

The American Podiatric Medical Association is funding 135 APHA student memberships for nine podiatric medical colleges — 15 from each school — following a resolution passed by the medical association’s board of trustees.

Knowing that fees are often a barrier to student memberships, the Section began a student scholarship fund five years ago that the medical association administers with the help of Section member donations. The groups previously funded about 12 students annually, but this year were able to fund more, said Janet Simon, DPM, the Podiatric Health Section’s Governing Councilor and chair of the medical association’s Public Health Preventative Podiatric Medicine Committee.

“Our students get a glimpse of public health in their college curriculum, but the opportunity to present their research that has public health connections is often limited with other professional organizations that focus on clinical medicine,” Simon said. “APHA is the venue for our students to present to a multitude of topics that reaches a diverse group of professionals who are representatives of the world’s populations.”

Homelessness Caucus begins mentoring

The Caucus on Homelessness launched a mentorship program this summer to give professional guidance to young health professionals.

The Caucus started the program because a limited number of organizations focus on homelessness and even fewer have mentorship opportunities, said Jack Tsai, PhD, one of the program co-founders.

“Mentees who are interested in research, practice and career opportunities in the field of homeless services can apply,” Tsai told The Nation’s Health. “We are looking for mentors interested in lending their time and energy in helping students, trainees and junior investigators develop their career interests.”

As of mid-August there were seven mentors and five mentees. The Caucus encourages at least a monthly phone call, Tsai said. Tsai said they hope to have a bank of mentors they can reach out to counsel future young health professionals.

“We hope the mentoring program will encourage participation in our Caucus and APHA at large,” Tsai said. “The field of homeless research and services for homeless populations remains an important area in public health and we want to foster the development of future generations working to solve the problem of homelessness.”

For more information about the program or to apply, visit bit.ly/COHMentorProgram.

Member groups to enjoy anniversaries

Three APHA Sections will be celebrating anniversaries this fall at the Association’s 143rd Annual Meeting and Exposition in Chicago.

The Chiropractic Health Section will be celebrating its 20th anniversary, while the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Section will turn 30 and the Population, Reproductive and Sexual Health Section will mark 40 years.

The Chiropractic Health Section was born out of the Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health Section in 1975, said Lea Dooley, MPH, MCHES, the Section’s chair-elect. It was formerly the Population, Family Planning and Reproductive Health Section.

Sections, SPIGs hold membership contest

APHA Sections and Special Primary Interest Groups spent this summer in a friendly competition to boost their ranks.

The competition, which began in August, challenged the member groups to increase APHA membership. The top five groups will win public health giveaways for their Annual Meeting booths such as mugs, bags and buttons, said Cassidy White, APHA component affairs coordinator. Winners will be announced this month.

Some Section leaders have challenged their current membership to ‘friend-raise’ by starting discussions in their...networks about the benefits of Section-SPIG involvement and APHA membership in general,” White said. “Another popular tactic is reaching out to individuals with lapsed memberships, hoping to reignite interest in the important work done by APHA Sections and SPIGs.”

Recruiting members into APHA helps build the Association and support its work to build the healthiest nation in one generation.”

— Natalie McGill

News about APHA’s Sections, SPIGs, Student Assembly, Forums & Caucuses

MEMBER GROUPS