

Strategies for Addressing Needs and Gaps

**from CHE-Washington Membership Interviews and Survey
April through July 2007**

Please see the document titled “Identified Gaps and Needs” for a description of the survey and a summary of the findings.

Training Needs and Gaps

A perceived need for training has been identified in a few key topic areas:

- communicating the connections between environmental and human health
- effectively using technology and media
- translating science for use by policymakers and/or consumers
- understanding and implementing ethics issues in public health, including human rights and social factors affecting health

While not achieving the widespread selection of the skills above, these skills topics were also frequently cited as needing training:

- data analysis and interpretation
- problem solving, including incorporating economic and political issues
- evaluating effectiveness of procedures, interventions and programs
- using risk assessment tools
- building and enhancing collaborations across organizations and/or sectors
- utilizing conflict resolution tools both internally and externally
- negotiating to achieve goals
- social marketing and behavior change
- all the content areas relating to the science of environmental health

Strategies

The following strategies are recommended by the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE-WA) to meet these needs:

1. Determine the likely audience for each topic.
2. Determine which of the available training formats would be suited to these audiences and topics. Possible formats include lectures, small-group training, large-group training, conference call, webcast, self-study materials, online communications (listservs and/or blogging) and combinations of these.
3. Identify organizations or individuals who are qualified to provide training opportunities for each of these topics, either singly or in combination.
4. Contact these groups or individuals to determine the feasibility of providing training and to offer assistance in preparing materials and distributing them through the CHE-WA website if appropriate.
5. Publicize trainings through our online calendar, listservs, announcements, submissions to appropriate organizational newsletters and other media.

Communications

CHE-WA can increase its effectiveness by increasing the number of organizations that publicize events and trainings through its regular bulletin, supplemented by the online calendar.

Strategies

CHE-WA can increase communications about environmental health (EH) events :

1. Outreach to specific organizations that hold events, inviting them to publicize through CHE-WA's calendar and listserv. Organizations to target include the Washington Department of Health, the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, Breast Cancer Fund, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Washington Toxics Coalition.
2. Search existing EH-related calendars and websites for events to list, including teleconferences and webcasts from throughout the country that residents can attend from anywhere in the state. Organizations to target include hospitals and other health-care providers, colleges and universities, government agencies, and advocacy groups for diseases and conditions with an environmental component.
3. Publicize the online calendar through a link in the regular bulletins and via websites of related organizations. Encouraging reciprocal links with other organizations may raise awareness of EH events and trainings among individuals for whom EH is a secondary but still relevant focus, such as school nurses, health-care providers, local government officials (especially those involved with public health), parents, caregivers and health advocates. Organizations to target include public health groups, physician and nursing groups, teacher groups, health-advocacy groups, childcare provider groups and parent groups. CHE-WA will solicit advice and assistance on best approaches and specific groups from interested individuals in our membership.

Outreach to and Inclusion of Underserved Individuals and Group

Because travel to Seattle for meetings, lectures and trainings is not always an option for those living in areas remote from Seattle, CHE-WA can work to make access to events, or at least information provided at these events, easier. CHE-WA can also query distant participants regarding topics of interest in their communities. Some population groups, such as members of tribal groups, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants or migrant agricultural workers, do not appear to be well connected to EH events and resources. CHE-WA can evaluate our services and determine how and whether we can better bring value to members of these populations.

Strategies

1. Provide an option to call in to meetings when feasible. Handouts, presentations and other materials should be distributed to "distance" participants before an event or made available on a website before the start of the event.
2. Work with the existing network of environmental justice and other community-based organizations to gain feedback on possible topics of interest as well as language translation needed.
3. Provide a self-study option for trainings whenever appropriate, with materials posted on a website if possible.
4. Facilitate distant members' contact with upcoming speakers to explore options to present a lecture or training in a remote area before or after a presentation in the Seattle area.
5. Explore creating audio or video recordings of events to be made available to remote members. Review opportunities to offer these in non-English languages most useful to the communities most interested in specific topics.

Clearinghouse of Materials

Having a searchable online database of materials would complement and support some of the needs and gaps identified in this project. Self-study or supplemental training materials could be

available to those who need training between scheduled events, as well as members in remote areas or those who have limited or no budgets for formal EH training events. Sharing of training materials such as PowerPoint files, handouts or audio/video files can address some of these needs. Other uses for the clearinghouse include assisting CHE-WA members in writing letters to editors or news releases for local media, preparing legislative briefings, writing grant proposals and developing educational programs for audiences/communities with a specific need.

Strategies

1. CHE-WA will catalog the resources that have been submitted through the interview and survey process. Requests for additional materials will be made to the CHE-WA membership through email bulletins and announcements at meetings.
2. The materials will be made accessible on the CHE-WA website in a searchable online database with links to websites and contact information for the materials.
3. CHE-WA will actively encourage other groups and resources to link to or otherwise utilize the information in the clearinghouse in their own outreach efforts – to increase the distribution diversity and scope.

CHE-WA will look for funding opportunities to enable acting on these strategies in the next one to three years.