



UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER HEALTH COMMISSION MILESTONES YEARS 2002-2003

Mission: to provide international leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the United States-Mexico border.

“Two sovereign countries, 10 Border States, 44 counties and 80 municipalities, 14 pairs of sister cities and 26 Commission members.”

Healthy Border 2010 Agenda

This is the Commission’s flagship program. It is a binational health agenda for the border region. It identifies some of the most significant threats to health along the United States-Mexico border and sets measurable goals to facilitate and support community-based solutions for health promotion, disease prevention and increase access to health services.

The focus areas are:

- Access to Health Care
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Environmental health
- HIV/AIDS
- Immunizations and Infectious Diseases
- Injury Prevention
- Maternal, Infant and Child Health
- Mental Health
- Oral Health
- Respiratory Disease

The Commission has been funding Healthy Border 2010 pilot projects in the four U.S.-Mexico border states for the past year. Additionally, funding has been allocated to the regional offices in Mexico to begin carrying out Healthy Border activities.

In New Mexico Healthy Border-Healthy *Gente* projects include:

Espejo Assessment Project-A binational project to reduce the incidence of HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Mosquito-borne Binational Surveillance System

Support for the permanent establishment of a binational vector-control (mosquito-borne disease) plan.

Nuestros Niños (Our Children) Immunization Campaign

This campaign promotes improved vaccination rates among children of this tri-state region of Southern New Mexico, Western Texas and Northern Chihuahua.

Border Information and Education Network (BIEN)

This is a technology system that provides linkages between health care providers and patients in Dona Ana County.

In Texas Healthy Border projects include:

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Surveys (BRFSS) in El Paso, Presidio, Maverick, Webb, Val Verde, Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron

The BRFSS telephone-based surveillance is used to monitor the year 2010 objectives for tobacco, obesity, hypertension, physical fitness, flu/pneumonia vaccination, cholesterol, seat belt use, fruit/vegetable consumption, and other risk factors.

Sister-City Tuberculosis (TB) Projects (A Partnership with CDC)

The goal of this program is to coordinate activities, authority, resources and TB programs on both sides of the border.

Mosquito Control in Laredo and El Paso County

Integrated mosquito abatement and surveillance programs with a community education campaign.

Diabetes Education in El Paso County

A diabetes education/promotion program that can be implemented through school system activities such as Scout and YWCA after school programs.

Behavioral Health/Chronic Disease in Laredo

This project will utilize a multifaceted, two-tiered approach to educate high-risk Hispanic youth and their family members about risky health behaviors and chronic diseases.

In California Healthy Border projects include:

Ventanilla de Salud (Health Station) Project

Working with the Mexican Consulates in California, health educators and case managers educate and inform people visiting the local Mexican consulate about disease prevention, health promotion and access to health services.

Directly Observed TB Project in Tijuana

The Ministry of Health staff in Directly Observed Therapy, Short-course (DOTS), has trained community health workers (promotoras) in Tijuana. Currently six *promotoras* from *Medicina Social Comunitaria, S.A.* are using this training to observe patients' intake of TB medications and compliance has scientifically increased.

Asthma Project in Imperial County

The Imperial County Public Health Department is addressing its high rates of asthma hospitalization by utilizing Community Health Workers/*promotoras* to raise awareness about asthma within the community and with local physicians.

Binational Health Committees

The California Outreach Office organized meetings with the co-chairs of the nine active binational committees of the California and Baja California border region. As a result of these meetings, specific funding was allocated to support their infrastructure needs. A consultant was hired to document the needs, structure and challenges of the active binational health committees in the California and Baja California region. A directory and calendar of activities of these committees were also prepared.

Tijuana General Hospital Auxiliary

The California Outreach Office assisted in the development of an auxiliary (*Patronato*) for the Tijuana General Hospital. The auxiliary has been conducting fundraising activities to improve the current trauma and neonatal units and capacity of the hospital.

In Arizona Healthy Border projects include:

Triage and Stabilization Unit in Nogales, Sonora

This program has reduced the number of critically ill persons crossing the border to seek medical care in the U.S. The also unit provides support for the transfer of patients to institutions with a higher level of care.

Paso a Paso (Step by Step) Walking Clubs in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora

This is a neighborhood-based diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention program for rural community members in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora.

Maternal & Child Health Initiative in Partnership with Hospital General de San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora

This activity increases access to quality care and reduces infant mortality and morbidity due to lack of available emergency medical equipment.

Improvement of Access and Quality of Care for Women

A clinic was established to address women's health in San Luis Rio Colorado and Nogales, Sonora by providing necessary equipment and training existing staff.

Commission Bilateral Developments include:

Border Health Information Network

Currently under development, this website offers an array of tools to assist in the exchange and dissemination of information. It provides registered users with a Workgroup Manager, Geographic Information System, Forums, and Interactive Calendar to encourage border-wide dialog to solutions to the health problems that are encountered in the border region. Find us at www.borderhealth.org or www.saludfronteriza.org (in Spanish).

Partnerships and Collaborations

The Commission has fostered working relationships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health Resources and Services Administration; U.S. Department of Energy; Pan American Health Organization; *Fundación de Beneficiencia* (Public Welfare Foundation) and *Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública* (National Institute of Public Health).

TB Binational Referral and Case Management Pilot Project

Over 42 organizations collaborated to make this project a reality. Designed to be portable in nature, it allows for:

- Greater continuity of care;
- Improving the completion of treatment for TB patients; and
- Better coordination for the referral of patients between the health systems of both countries.

These pilot areas include the sister city regions of San Diego, California/Tijuana, Baja California; and El Paso, Texas, Las Cruces, New Mexico/Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas. In Mexico, pilot sites also include one district in (Sonora, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Michoacán, Jalisco, Veracruz, and Oaxaca).

Border Models of Excellence

This initiative is designed to recognize community-based projects and models that are making strides to improve the health and quality of life of the border populations. It focuses on projects that utilize the *promotora* (community health worker) model. The first phase of this initiative has been completed and sixteen applicants from Mexico and the U.S. received awards. The awards will allow winners to transfer experiences and successful strategies across states and throughout the border region. A compendium of all applicants is available on www.borderhealth.org

Commission State Outreach Offices

State Outreach Offices currently operating in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas allows for a greater degree of binational work to take place. The Mexico Section has inaugurated outreach offices in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas; Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua; and in Tijuana, Baja California. A binational office in Nogales, Sonora is already in existence. A total of \$2.18 million was allocated to outreach offices for FY03, to carry out activities addressing the Healthy Border objectives.

Terrorism and Public Health Preparedness and Response Planning Forums

With the recent approval of the Commission's 2003 budget, monies were approved and allocated to implement a binational terrorism and public health preparedness plan. Currently, in its first phase, the U.S. border states working in partnership with the Mexico border states and municipalities, are holding strategic planning meeting to assess the needs, identify the gaps and resources needed to develop such a plan.

Central Office

In the area of Information Technology, new servers are now available to handle the demands of a website and associated tools. Databases have been created of various legislative groups to assist in advocacy work. The Commission publishes a quarterly newsletter, which provides a forum for border partners, state Offices of Binational Border Health and Outreach Offices. The Commission approved its Bylaws and Financial Policies and Procedures.

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