



NEWSLETTER

International Federation of Environmental Health

October 2008 Edition

WELCOME TO OUR OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Thank you to colleagues who took the time to contact me following the publication of our first Newsletter back in July. It is always good to get feedback from members, particularly when this was so positive. Many of you have also sent me news for inclusion in this issue which is very helpful.

News of future IFEH Council meetings

The next IFEH Council meeting and Annual General Meeting will take place in Singapore at the kind invitation of our colleagues in the Society of Environmental Health – Singapore. The meetings will take place on the 18th and 19th July 2009. Information concerning the venue for meetings and other arrangements will appear in a future Newsletter. The IFEH Council hopes for a good turnout at these meetings particularly from colleagues in the Asia/Pacific Region.

News from Regional Groups

The Asia/Pacific Group recently met and elected Peter Davey from Environmental Health Australia as their new Chairman.

The current Chairman of the European Regional Group is Peter Archer of the CIEH and Hadrian Bonello of the Malta Association of Environmental Health Officers acts as Secretary. The next meeting of this group will be held in Malta on the 25 and 26 October 2008.

Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors/ L'Institut canadien des inspecteurs en santé publique (CIPHI)

Our colleagues in CIPHI recently held their 74th Annual Educational Conference in St John's, Newfoundland at the end of July this year. The new President of CIPHI is Adam Grant. Adam has been a member of the Ontario Branch since 2002 and will be President of CIPHI until 2010.

Association of Public Health Inspectors – Cyprus (APHI)

The APHI celebrate the 20th anniversary of their formation with a special Conference which will take place in the Columbia Hotel, Pissouri, Limassol on Saturday 22 November, 2008. For further details of this event contact eevaggelou@mphs.moh.gov.cy.

South African Institute of Environmental Health (SAIEH)

The SAIEH is in the process of arranging its 5th Biennial National Conference. The conference will take place from the 12 – 14 January 2009 and will be held in the Sandton Convention Center, Sandton, Johannesburg. The theme of the Conference, 'Municipal health services, 2010 and beyond...' is aimed at ensuring that challenges of environmental health before, during and after the 2010 World Cup will be addressed at this conference.

Topics to be addressed cover all environmental health service disciplines and the SAIEH are now in the process of calling for papers from their colleagues globally. The closing date for abstracts is the 15 October 2008. All abstracts are to be sent to Jerry Chaka at Jerry@ekurhuleni.com. Abstracts are to be submitted in the following format: Microsoft Word, Arial font size 10, email subject to indicate Platform or poster Abstract as well as the author's name. Authors will be advised of acceptance of papers on 30 October 2008 and the submission of final papers to be made by 15 November 2008.



Malta Association of Environmental Health Officers (MAEHO)

Our colleagues in Malta have had a full programme of events over the last few months. Every year the MAEHO present the Joe E Spiteri Award to members who, during their working life, have contributed significantly to Public Health. This year's recipient was Joseph Gerada.

In May the Association held a seminar for members on Waste Management in the Waterfront Hotel in Sliema. This seminar, which was open to the general public, was well attended by stakeholders. The seminar was opened by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Dr Joe Cassar and presentations were delivered by speakers directly involved in the Waste Management industry.

The August heat wave signals the arrival of one of the highlights of the MAEHO social calendar...the Annual Summer BBQ which is free for all members. This year's event was held at Bahar ic-Caghaq next to the Mediterranean Sea. This is one of a number of events hosted by the Association that successfully brings together members and their families in an informal setting.

The Association are in the process of considering whether to make another bid to host an IFEH World Congress. Malta previously made an unsuccessful bid to host the 2012 Congress which will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania.

As reported earlier MAEHO are hosting the next EFEH meeting which will take place on the 25 and 26 October 2008. This Association is kept very busy serving their own members and playing an increasing role within the IFEH.

Mike Halls

The Council of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) recognised the significant contribution to environmental health made by Mike Halls by awarding him an Honorary membership when it met on Saturday 6 September. Mike is a former President of REHIS and the IFEH and recently decided to stand down from the Council at the AGM on 20 November. As most readers will know Mike was also Honorary Secretary of the IFEH for many years prior to handing over to Ray Ellard in 2006.

Why Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Environmental Health Professionals (EHPs) can no longer rely on their initial qualifications to ensure they have the skill, knowledge and practice to tackle the environmental health challenges posed by local and global environmental changes, technological and social change, community expectations and government policy directions, writes Jim Smith, National President, Environmental Health Australia. Public policy processes are fast paced and there is a need to be current in environmental health practices firstly, to inform the policy making processes and secondly, to have the skills to implement new policy and legislation.

EHOs and EHPs can no longer rely on employers to provide everything required to develop skills and experience and must take individual responsibility for lifelong learning, continuing development, and career progression. Importantly, CPD is a strategy that an individual can take to raise the profile of their profession particularly as many EHOs have lamented about the low status that the profession enjoys. What can you do for the EHO profession? Undertake CPD just like all the other professionals, such as, legal and medical practitioners. CPD is one critical way that demonstrates that EHOs are indeed professionals. CPD is an acknowledgement of, and commitment to, professionalism.

CPD is defined as systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skill which are required for the competent execution of professional and technical duties throughout ones career and working life. CPD is about planned self-development which embraces both personal and professional goals and which, in general, is concerned about improving performance. A personal development plan is a mechanism by which needs for enhanced skills and knowledge can be identified and then pursued over the short, medium and longer term thereby creating a framework for achieving satisfaction, career progression and advanced practitioner skills. EHOs and EHPs should be actively considering how they demonstrate their skills and competence to current and future employers, clients, other professionals, and the community at large



There are a number of benefits in undertaking CPD including:

- Promotion of EHOs as a profession
- Improvement of employability with prospective employers
- Reduction of selection risk for employers
- Enhancement of career transitions in various fields of environmental health practice
- Provides for status and recognition with professional peers in local government and the broad public health sector

However, on ethical grounds, EHOs need to undertake CPD as the community that they are employed by and serve is depending on them to protect their health and wellbeing as we have done for a very long time.

21st Century Public Health Act receives Royal Assent.

On 16 July the Public Health etc (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent and the Public Health etc (Scotland) Act 2008 came into being. The purpose of the new act is to create a legal framework for the protection of public health today and for the next 100 years.

The Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers, health boards and local authorities to ensure that provision is made for the protection of public health in Scotland. In reality the responsibilities will rest with the health boards for people and with the local authorities for 'things' and premises and, in order to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to the protection of public health the Act, requires co-operation between health boards and local authorities and the production of joint public health protection plans.

The Act provides an extensive framework to allow both the health boards and the local authorities to undertake thorough public health investigations led by their respective competent person. In order to protect the public from any significant risk the health boards are able to detain individuals that have an infectious disease or are contaminated and there are complimentary powers for the local authority which allow them to deal with, by disinfection or destruction, premises and belongings that may be contaminated or infected.

In addition, the Act makes provision for the regulation for the use of sunbeds. This is the culmination of a great deal of lobbying by REHIS and partners to ensure adequate provision is in place to reduce the health risk to the community from these units.

The key elements of this part of the Act are: the prohibition of the use, sale and hire of sunbeds to under 18s, the prohibition of unsupervised sunbeds, a requirement to provide users of sunbeds with information on the effect to health and a requirement to display an information notice for users of sunbeds. The Act goes on to provide a number of enforcement powers, including the issue of fixed penalty notices.

Finally the opportunity was taken with the Act to improve the statutory nuisance regime. Part 9 of the Act introduces the concepts of insect nuisance, artificial light nuisance, statutory nuisance: land covered with water and sewerage nuisance. Further the Act goes on to improve the enforcement powers available to local authorities by providing for a framework of fixed penalty notices which can be served upon the authors of a nuisance. The legislation also enables Scottish Ministers to implement their obligations under the International Health Regulations. Although the Act has been passed, it is a very complex piece of legislation and the implementation will need to be very carefully planned and implemented. It is proposed that there will be a number of stakeholder meetings which will inform the implementation process and the development of associated guidance for the Act.

Finally the next issue will be published in January 2009. If I could have any news from your organisation by the first week in December that would be appreciated. My thanks go to Jim Smith, Hadrian Bonello, Kevin Freeman, Jerry Chaka, Andrew Forteath and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.

If you wish to feature any news from your organisation in the next IFEH Newsletter, please contact: Bernard Forteath, President, Email: president@ifeh.org