

News From the American School Health Association

News Topics

1. Annual conference focuses on crossing boundaries
2. New resource on transportation safety

1. Annual Conference

The theme of American School Health Association's 77th annual conference is School Health: Beyond the Borders. Capitalizing on the conference's location at the historic El Camino Real Hotel in El Paso Texas, just 6 blocks from Juarez Mexico, this year's sessions will feature international school health issues and ways that those involved in school health can break down barriers to collaboration. School administrators and state legislators will share what they need to hear and see in order to support health services and programs in schools. Keynote sessions will be interpreted into Spanish and ASHA will offer one session in Spanish during each time slot. For more information on the conference, including an agenda and registration information, go to or call 800-445-2742.

The opening key noter is Dr Pekka Puska, Director of the Department of Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva. Dr Puska's department carries out work on integrated prevention of Non Communicable Diseases with member countries and especially by introducing and supporting regional networks for intensified activity. The integrated approach targets the main risk factors: tobacco, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity through broad health promotion and policy measures. Increasing attention is being paid on collaboration on global level with a number of partners, especially within the UN Organization. Dr Puska's department works on school health & youth health promotion, ageing and life-course, health behaviour surveillance, oral health, evidence in health promotion etc. Dr Puska comes from Finland where he has, most of his career, worked at the National Public Health Institute as Director of the Department of Epidemiology and Health Promotion, and as Director General before joining WHO in 2001. He was, for 25 years, the Director and Principal Investigator of the North Karelia Project: prevention of cardiovascular diseases in that province and later on in all Finland. Within 25 years, about 75% decline in annual heart disease mortality among working age population took place. The project is widely seen as a model for successful population based prevention of cardiovascular and other noncommunicable diseases.

2. Transportation safety resource

This past year the American School Health Association (ASHA) launched a new publication called Health in Action. In contrast to its research-oriented Journal of School Health, ASHA made Health in Action specifically for the lay person concerned about the health of students in grades 5-12. Each issue addresses a single health topic. The topics for the 2003-2004 school year will be transportation safety, asthma, ADD/ADHD, and prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. The transportation safety issue will be available in August. To see a sample and for information about ordering, see or call 800-4445-2742.

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