

New York State Conference of Environmental Health Directors

The New York State Conference of Environmental Health Directors (CEHD) since its inception more than 35 years ago strives to improve environmental health programs and services across New York State.

The stated purpose of the CEHD in its bylaws is to:

- Promote improved environmental health services practices
- Coordinate and improve administrative procedures
- Collect and make information and data accessible to all of its members
- Support the development and maintenance of adequate and proper communications, cooperation and working relationships among conference members and other agencies.

(The agencies referred to in the bylaws include not only the New York State Department of Health, but also the New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets and Environmental Conservation. The latter two agencies are of importance because of the crossover between the regulatory activities that each agency carries out).

Membership in the CEHD is open to senior level staff with direct responsibility for administration of environmental health services in:

- The 36 county health departments with environmental health programs
- The New York City Division of Environmental Health
- The 9 district offices of the New York State Health Department

While there may be some local differences in the administration of programs, when it comes to core environmental health programs, the same basic activities are conducted by each of these offices in accordance with guidelines of the New York State Health Department. This commonality has formed the basis, throughout its history for including both county/city offices and state district offices in the CEHD. In addition, the CEHD recognizes the importance of balancing the needs of counties both large and small as well as the needs of the district offices in the implementation of environmental health mandates throughout New York State.

The CEHD structure provides the mechanism for speaking as one environmental health voice to evaluate, promote and implement changes to required procedures, standardized forms, data entry requirements, etc. associated with the day-to-day operation of mandated state programs. The CEHD also provides an opportunity for interaction that allows for information sharing that assists members in carrying out these programs.

On a broader basis, the CEHD provides an avenue for coordinated review of proposed *regulatory* changes. This has resulted in successful reshaping of regulatory proposals during the development stage by providing unified comments directly to the Division of

State Health Department. The conference participates through the NYSACHO Environmental Health Committee to provide commentary on proposed legislative changes, and on those regulatory changes that have an impact beyond the scope of environmental health.

The conference officers include a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary who serve two-year terms. Leadership is provided by an Executive Committee, which includes the four officers and four other elected members. The conference has established a number of committees both to assist with tasks such as programs and training, and to monitor current issues and provide feedback to the Executive Committee on topics such as regulatory review, data management, and on site sewage disposal. The conference holds spring and fall statewide meetings to provide formal technical training and to address current issues of concern. Conference calls are held on a periodic basis for both internal discussion and discussion with representatives of the Division of Environmental Health Protection.

The goal of the conference is to continue to carry out the activities that it has conducted throughout its history in order to enhance environmental health in New York State.

9-18-09