

# PHANYC NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

[www.phanyc.org](http://www.phanyc.org)



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## Letter From The President

Marta I. Baez, MS, RD, CDN

Dear Public Health Colleague:

As PHANYC's current President, it is a pleasure to address you through our Spring Newsletter. During our Annual Membership Meeting at Hunter College Dr. Linda Ray Murray, APHA President, will be speaking on Urban Health, APHA's efforts to assure that the Federal Health Reform Legislation is implemented and what can we do as an APHA Affiliate to make sure that this legislation works at the local level.

During the past few months, we have had some very exciting programs. The Policy Committee has been hard at work. In March, they organized PHANYC'S annual legislative breakfast, which provided the opportunity to meet with the newly appointed New York State Health Department Health Commissioner and other city and state officials. They are working on a number of policy issues including reproductive rights, nutrition, and the scope of practice for pharmacist.

Make sure to read the Program and Student and New Professional Committee sections. On April 26, they had a very successful student career forum and on May 21, over 70 students and faculty met for the Sixth Annual Student Conference at NYU Medical School. The Program Committee will hold the Inner Leader Conference on June 24 at Kingsborough Community Health.

At this time there are many challenges facing us including the high rates of obesity, the challenge of providing health care to those who lack health insurance, the continuing issues of poverty and the growing concern over the high rates of Healthcare Associated Infections.

Everyone's expertise and assistance are needed to continue addressing these issues. I look forward to our continuing to work together.

Sincerely,

Marta I. Baez, MS, RD, CDN

PHANYC, President

## Annual Legislative Breakfast

PHANYC's annual legislative breakfast took place on the morning of March 4 at the Interchurch Center in Morningside Heights. More than 120 public health professionals, advocates, professors and students came out to listen to our featured speakers: Dr. Nirav Shah, M.D., M.P.H, the new NYS Health Commissioner; Richard Gottfried, Chair of the NYS Assembly Health Committee; NYC Councilmember Gale Brewer and Sam Miller, Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Dr. Shah took questions from the audience following his formal remarks covering topics such as protecting funding for family planning services and NY State plans to implement legislation for health reform. Dr. Shah and Assembly member Gottfried also discussed the process and outcome of the recently concluded Medicaid Redesign Team work. We are grateful to PHANYC

board member Nadia Islam for arranging Dr. Shah's participation and introducing him at the event.



NYS Health Commissioner Nirav Shah, M.D., M.P.H, speaks at PHANYC's 2011 Legislative

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### "Leading Across Communities" - 6th Annual Health Leadership "Aha!" Conference

Join us for this PHANYC co-sponsored event on Friday,

**June 24, 2011 at**

**Kingsborough Community College, CUNY.**

For more details:

[www.PHANYC.org/events](http://www.PHANYC.org/events)

### Save the Date

Annual Awards Ceremony

**Date: November 7, 2011**

**Time: 6 pm**

**Location: Interchurch Center  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY**

Spring/Summer 2011

[www.phanyc.org](http://www.phanyc.org)

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# Helping All New Yorkers to Understand Prescription Instructions

## Seth Cohen

That feeling of confusion upon returning home from the pharmacy and not fully understanding how to take the medication is universal. With dozens of ways for a pharmacist to write a seemingly simple direction such as “take two pills twice a day,” though, it is often challenging for patients to understand and act correctly on just one prescription instruction: How many pills to take over the course of the day? When exactly to take the pills?

For millions of elderly consumers on multiple medications, those with low health literacy, as well as limited English proficient (LEP), this confusion is only compounded: Older adults who take multiple medications and get confused about the proper way to take each one because the directions are unclear and it is difficult to read and understand small print or cluttered labels.

These stories from the community highlight the critical need to ensure that every New Yorker has the opportunity to understand his or her prescription medication labels. Indeed, the consequences of misunderstanding prescription labels can be dire and costly. Every year, unintended misuse of prescription medications causes over one million “adverse drug events,” resulting in expensive visits to the emergency room, hospitalization, and even death.

Providing easy-to-understand, standardized prescription label information, as well as providing that information in a patient’s language, can significantly improve health outcomes.



Since 2007, our office, in collaboration with our community partner, Make the Road New York, have been championing the issue of safe access to prescription medications in New York State, particularly with regard to language access. We also worked with the New York City Council to pass the Language Access in Pharmacies Act, which similarly requires all chain pharmacies in the city to provide translation and interpretation services for LEP consumers filling prescriptions.

To address this important health and safety concern, we have been working on statewide legislation. The bill builds on the city law and settlement agreements to ensure language access services for prescription filling purposes at chain and mail order pharmacies across New York. Existing translation and interpretation services are available that enable pharmacies to fill the language gap seamlessly and in a way that is consistent with a pharmacist’s natural workflow. Importantly, these services are reasonably priced—some for as little as \$2 a day—particularly since large chain and mail order pharmacies can negotiate bulk discounts.

The bill would also establish a set of standardized and simplified prescription labels, with a particular focus on elements that will improve understanding such as font size and syntax. As a result, that label instructions will be clearer, unambiguous, and better-understood consumers. In addition, the bill would also create bridge between prescribers and pharmacists by modifying prescription forms to include a section for prescribers to indicate whether a patient is LEP, and if so, what their preferred language is. To learn more about how you or your organization can get involved or to sign on in support, please contact us at: scohen@nylpi.org or 212-244-4664.

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) is a non-profit civil rights law firm based in New York City. In collaboration with community-based organizations and coalitions across the city.

## PHANYC 2011 Policy Priorities City and State

1. **Minimizing damage to vital public health programs from city and state budget cuts.**
2. **Implementing health reform in New York in a manner that promotes individual, family and public health.** Enact enabling legislation for a consumer-friendly state insurance exchange to open in 2014.
3.  **Prohibiting smoking in public parks, pedestrian plazas and on city beaches:** This new city law will help to eliminate the public’s exposure to second-hand smoke and further discourage smoking.
4. **Improving public health by enacting city legislation ensuring workers can earn and use paid sick days.**
5. **Promoting healthy eating:** Many different approaches are needed to address obesity and diabetes, including public education and improving the affordability and availability of healthy foods.
6.  **Requiring disclosure by “crisis pregnancy centers” that they do not provide abortions or referrals for abortions, and do not have licensed medical personnel on the premises.**
7. **Prohibiting “hydrofracking” by gas drilling companies until after a federal EPA study is completed in September 2012.**
8. **Modernizing New York’s outdated abortion law by adopting the state Reproductive Health Act.**
9. **Legislation barring police from using condoms as evidence in prosecution of prostitution.**
10. **Renew state law that allows pharmacists to act as immunizers, increasing community access to flu shots.\***

\* PHANYC supported the pharmacist immunization bill when it was first proposed and subsequently became law

## Program Committee Brief

### Nate Boucher

The Program Committee reports great success with several programs this past fall—the Public Health Credentialing Forum and a collaborative event (with the Policy Committee) on Health Reform. Most recently, the dedicated members of the Committee delivered a well-attended Public Health Career Forum highlighting the public health career opportunities in local, state, national, not-for-profit and hospital sectors.

Featured speakers included: Brooklyn Deputy Borough President Yvonne Graham, RN, MPH; Steven Auerbach, MD, MPH, FAAP, Medical Epidemiologist, U. S. Department of Health & Human Services; Marta Baez, RD, MS, CDN, PHANYC President; Diana Romero, PhD, MA, Associate Professor of Urban Public Health, Hunter College School of Public Health; Dan Forsberg, PA-C, MPH, CPH, Administrative Director of Surgery, Forrest Hills Hospital; Sharon Jaycox Daitz, MS, Regional VP, Arthritis Foundation; and Bonnie Kerker, PhD, MPH, Assistant Commissioner, NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene.

About 100 young professionals, students and others made the evening trip to lower Manhattan. The Committee, given the success of this and past similar events, plans to bring Career Forums to other parts of the city in order to inform people about the exciting opportunities in public health service, research, and delivery.

## Interview Workshop

### Christina A. Poopatana, MPH

PHANYC Student & New Professionals Committee, along with the Program Planning Committee, held an Interview Workshop on Thursday, September 16, 2010 at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY). Despite the tornado, a crowd of about 60 people gathered for this free event. The purpose of this event was to provide attendees with the skills necessary to land their dream job. Andrew Wise, SPHR, Manager of Organizational Development at VNSNY presented at the evening's workshop. Andrew is an adjunct instructor at Columbia University's Business School, where he teaches interview skills training to first- and second-year MBA students. He also works with OD professionals who specialize in change management, communication strategy, coaching, and leadership and talent development. He provided an interactive presentation that addressed how to make a first impression, develop a "pitch," and prepare for the different types of questions interviewers typically ask.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Health Literacy Conference

On October 18-19, 2010, Board member and co-chair of the Student & New Professionals Committee, Christina A. Poopatana, attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Health Literacy Annual Research Conference (HARC) in Bethesda, MD, an interdisciplinary meeting dedicated to health literacy research. About 250 people attended the event from all over the United States and parts of Europe. The presentations touched on various healthcare topics, including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and health disparities. Christina presented her poster, "The impact of TV show cartoons and animated movies on the health attitudes and behaviors of young elementary school children," a literature review. Christina plans to expand the poster presentation into a paper for publication.

## Activity on PHANYC Policy and Legislative Priorities

### Michael Hernandez

The Mayor signed legislation to prohibit smoking in city parks, beaches and pedestrian plazas. The law goes into effect just prior to opening of city beaches for the summer.

The bill requiring so-called Crisis Pregnancy Centers to disclose that they do not provide abortion services is expected to be signed into law by the Mayor.

We are supporting the renewal of the state law that allows pharmacists to provide influenza immunizations. We are also reviewing emerging proposals to expand the range of immunizations beyond flu shots.

The committee submitted testimony in favor of the proposed city regulations aimed at reducing the burning of polluting heating oil in the city, on one of last year's successful Legislative Priorities.




# 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Conference

Christina Poopatana

PHANYC Student & New Professionals held their 6th Annual Student Conference on Saturday May 21, 2011 at the New York University (NYU) Langone Medical Center in the Smilow Multipurpose Room. A diverse group of about 70 people gathered for this event in Midtown Manhattan. The purpose of this conference was to bring students, peers and faculty of public health together to present their work and to hear about the work of their colleagues.

The winner of this year's Goldmann Student Merit Award was awarded to Maryann Fiebach, a MPH Candidate from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. She served as this year's keynote speaker for this conference and presented her work entitled "Measuring the Impact of Housing Quality on the Health of New York City Residents: A New Approach". The presenters of this year's conference ranged from researchers to public health students from various schools throughout New York City including Columbia University, New York Medical College, Brooklyn College, St. Francis College, SUNY Downstate, Medgar Evers College, Kingsborough Community College, Hunter College and York College.

The event was co-sponsored by the New York University Langone Medical Center, Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY), HELP PSI, Long Island University - Brooklyn Campus, CUNY School of Public Health and KDG Health Education and Promotion Consulting. We would like to thank Chobani who contributed yogurt at this event



**Public Health Association of NYC**  
1710 First Avenue, Suite 282  
New York, NY 10128  
212.512.1023

**Marta I. Báez, MS., R.D., CDN**  
President


**Vicki Brietbart, Ed.D**  
Immediate Past President

**Lois Uttley, MPP**  
President Elect

**Elizabeth Szaluta, MPH**  
Editor

**Alma Idehen, Ms Ed**  
Chair, Membership/Communications Committee

Newsletter Production by Clinical Directors Network, Inc.  
Staff: **Tatyana Jean, MPH**  
**Jonathan N. Tobin, PhD**  
CDN President/CEO



## Join PHANYC

### Why should I join?

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BENEFITS:

- > Networking and relationship building opportunities
- > Discounts on all PHANYC-sponsored events
- > Cutting edge information on public health issues and best practices
- > Participation in policy development and advocacy
- > Access to Action Alerts
- > Free publications
- > Monthly calendar of public health related activities
- > Input into annual Awards nomination process
- > Career resources
- > On-Line Membership Directory

#### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

##### INDIVIDUAL

Regular: **\$60**  
New career/Low income: **\$40**  
Student/Retiree: **\$25**

##### ORGANIZATIONAL

Budget <\$500k: **\$120**  
Budget \$500k-\$1m: **\$250**  
Budget \$1m-\$5m: **\$450**  
Budget >\$5m: **\$750**

#### PHANYC COMMITTEES

##### Policy & Legislative Committee

Michael Hernandez, BA, Bill Jordan, MPH Co-Chairs

##### Program Committee

Anthony SANTELLA, DrPH, Nate Boucher, PA-C, MPH, Co Chairs

##### Student & New Professionals

Christina Pooptana, MPH, Victor Mosquera, MPA Co Chairs

##### Finance Committee

Paloma Hernandez, MPH

##### Communications & Membership

Alma Idehen, MEd