

In Change There Is Opportunity
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President elect Barack Obama as signaled increased emphasis on prevention as a key component of his health services package. This change offers the opportunity to garner increased support for environmental health and protection, the most basic component of the health services continuum. But this will happen only if the Administration and the Congress are made aware of the importance, the scope, the need and the comprehensive benefits of environmental health and protection.

Environmental health and protection has not received its proper emphasis as a basic component of the health services continuum. The time is ripe for promoting major improvements in environmental health and protection by those environmental health and protection practitioners who have:

- Developed a comprehensive vision,
- Demonstrated leadership to, and are known to, public policy leaders,
- Practiced consistent and effective program marketing,

The vision should embrace benefits that contribute substantially to reduced disease and disability, lower health care costs, enhanced community economic vitality, enhanced productivity, enhanced community educational achievement, fewer social problems, and enhanced quality of life in a more livable environment.

Lobbying efforts should best be conducted by individual practitioners who have good relations with members of the appropriate House and/or Senate Committees, specific members of the new administration transition team, and key appointees in the new administration.

Support should be specific and justified, rather than just a generalization that environmental health and protection is desirable.

Particular support should be given to those components of environmental health and protection acknowledged to be federal responsibilities. These components include, but are not limited to, workforce development, air quality, safe drinking water, hazardous wastes,

solid wastes, water pollution control, alternative energy production, pure food control, toxics, radiation, food irradiation, industrial hygiene, and global environmental degradation. Of the foregoing, food irradiation offers major possibilities for disease prevention and reduction in health care costs.

Practitioners must not wait for someone else to lead in this effort. Practitioners have the choice of leading or observing.

Now is the time for action by those who have the right vision, the right information and the right leadership.

“Proactive people rise to success, reactive people get second best.” Oscar Levant

(See Health Services Continuum on following page)

Health Services Continuum

ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AND
PROTECTION

HEALTH
PROMOTION

DISEASE
PREVENTION

HEALTH CARE

Examples of
Issues

Examples of
Issues

Examples of
Issues

Examples of
Issues

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Clean Air | Substance Abuse | Infectious Diseases | Diagnosis |
| Clean Water | Family Planning | Clinical Prevention | Primary Care |
| Toxic Chemicals | Nutrition | PKU Screening | Case Management |
| Safe Food | Health Education | Glaucoma | Outpatient Services |
| Radiation | Violence | Diabetes | Clinics |
| Solid Wastes | Obesity | Osteoporosis | Treatment |
| Occupational Health | Tobacco | Cancer | Surgery |
| Hazardous Wastes | Mental Health | Suicides | Long Term Care |
| Risk Assessment | Physical Activity and Fitness | Oral Health | Acute Care |
| Risk Communication | Access | Heart Disease and Stroke | Rehabilitation |
| Risk Management | | Maternal and Child Health | Cost Containment |
| Global Degradation | | Access | Health Insurance |
| Land Use | | | Mental Health and Treatment |
| Noise | | | Developmental Disabilities |
| Disease Vectors | | | Alcohol and Drug Treatment |
| Housing | | | Access |
| Ecological Dysfunction | | | |
| Unintentional Injuries | | | |
| Access | | | |