

Summary

Consensus Conference on Undergraduate Public Health Education

The Consensus Conference on Undergraduate Public Health Education funded by the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, took place on November 7 and 8, 2006. This historic conference for the first time brought together leaders in public health, arts and sciences, and health professions education. The conference developed plans to fulfill the Institute of Medicine's recommendation that "...all undergraduates should have access to education in public health."

Participants agreed that undergraduate public health education should result in an "educated citizenry" prepared to address public health challenges from AIDS to aging and avian flu to the cost of health care. It can also prepare students to pursue professional education in the health professions, public health and other disciplines from law to business to international affairs.

Consensus Conference Working Groups presented the following recommendations including curriculum frameworks and learning outcomes for:

Public Health 101

- An introductory course in Public Health ("Public Health 101") should be offered by all colleges and universities. The course should be organized using a "big picture" population health framework integrated into the goals of general and liberal education. The course should be structured to enable it to fulfill a social science distribution requirement.

Epidemiology 101

- An introductory course in Epidemiology ("Epidemiology 101") should be offered by all colleges and universities. It should be organized using a curriculum framework designed to achieve critical thinking as part of the goals of general and liberal education. The course should be structured to enable it to fulfill a science distribution requirement.

Minors and Administrative Issues

- High quality coordinated minors in Public Health should be encouraged for institutions with and without schools or programs in public health. Minors in Public Health should require "Public Health 101", "Epidemiology 101" and a focus area such as global health.

Methods for integrating the recommendations of the Consensus Conference into the nation's long term strategy for public health were discussed including:

- Web sites should be developed to provide information on undergraduate public health and to share curriculum materials
- Faculty development efforts should assist colleges and universities in developing new introductory public health courses
- Health professions education and graduate public health degree programs should encourage their applicants to enroll in introductory undergraduate public health courses
- Discussions should continue on approaches for developing minors in public health and global health in institutions with and without schools or programs in public health

The Consensus Conference was co-sponsored by the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR), the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), and the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as well as the seven clinical professions that make up the Healthy People Curriculum Task Force participated in the conference and in the Working Groups. Draft reports and recommendations of the Consensus Conference are available at www.teachprevention.org (see "recent uploads") and at www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=976 and are open for comment until December 11.

