

## **History of the Kansas Public Health Association**

On July 9, 1920, a charter for the Kansas Public Health Association was filed in the Office of the Secretary of State in Topeka, Kansas/ The charter declared the purpose of the Association was to “Unite all persons and societies engaged in the promotion of public health in the State of Kansas in one administrative body to the end that duplication of effort might be avoided’ that effort expended might produce the fullest possible results; and that the development of public health may progress in the greatest harmony and most effectively’ to encourage and promote the organization of public health societies in appropriate townships, municipalities, counties, and districts, and will exercise general supervision over all extra-governmental public health work performed by this Association and the societies which form its sections, conducted in the State of Kansas; to raise funds for the performance of such work by collecting membership fees and by other methods, and to supervise the expenditure of the funds.”

Among the in-corporaters were W.A. White - editor of the Emporia Gazette, S.J.Crumbine, M.D. - executive secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health, Earl G. Brown - health officer of the City of Topeka, and C.H. Lerrigo, M.D. – director of the Kansas Tuberculosis Association. There were no further records of any activity of the Association until 1940, although mention is made of semi-annual meetings of the health officers during this 20 year period to discuss programs and policies of the State Board of Health.

At the semi-annual health officers meeting at Salina on April 1, 1940, the first steps were taken to establish a Kansas Public Health Association aw know it today. At the fall meeting of the health officers on October 20, 1940, a constitution was submitted and adopted, with a preamble reading as follows:

“This organization of public health workers is formed in order to bring into closer association interested persons and organizations for the purpose of aiding in the promotion of public health, to provide for scientific advancement of members, and to extend and develop the public health movement. Any person professionally engaged or interested in any branch of public health work in Kansas shall be eligible for active membership”.

At this meeting, Dr. J.E. Wolf, city health officer of Wichita, also gave a report on the steps needed to be taken in order that the Association might become an affiliate of the American Public Health Association.

The first official meeting of the newly revitalized Kansas Public Health Association was held April 14, 1941 with 34 public health workers in attendance. It was decided that

public health nurses working for state and local agencies should be invited to attend the autumn meeting of the Association. On September 17 and 18, 1941, the Kansas Public Health Association met jointly with the Kansas Tuberculosis and Health Association. Fifty health officers, fifty-eight public health nurses, nine sanitarians, and six other public health workers were in attendance. All persons attending the meeting were voted into membership in the Association, and Mary McAuliffe, a public health nurse, was elected to the Executive Board of the Association. In electing Miss McAuliffe to the Executive Board, the Kansas Public Health Association gave recognition to the important role of public health nurses in promoting public health work in the state. Public health nurses have continued to have an active part in the life of the Association since that time.

In 1942, mobilization of troops for World War II was in full swing in the state and was creating new and serious public health problems. The program for the Kansas Public Health Association meeting in 1942 was focused on these war-related problems. There were 205 persons in attendance which showed a huge growth in membership of the Association. A committee was appointed to prepare another constitution and by-laws to meet the requirements of the American Public Health Association for affiliation.

The first annual meeting of the Association was held on June 2, 1943. A new constitution was presented and adopted and the old one declared void. Changes were made in the types of memberships to comply with the requirements of the American Public Health Association for affiliation. The program for the 1943 meeting provided for sectional meetings for the first time. In a new constitution, recognition was given to the three existing sections, health officers, sanitarians, and public health nurses. On October 1, 1943, the following telegram was sent to the American Public Health Association:

“Desire approval of affiliation at coming KPHA meeting. Letter with details follows.”

Approval of the Kansas Public Health Association as an APHA affiliate was granted on October 13, 1943. The first meeting of the Association as an affiliate of APHA was held in Topeka on June 6 and 7, 1944. At this time, the Association had approximately 300 members, 90 of whom were members of APHA including 10 Fellows. Representatives from the U.S. Public Health Service, Children's' Bureau, and Dr. Felix Underwood, president of APHA attended the meeting.

In 1946, Dr. Samuel Crumbine, known as “Father of Public Health in Kansas” was honored by the Kansas Public Health Association. He was executive secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health from 1904 until 1923. During his term in office, he instituted many innovations, among them, the abolishment of the common drinking cup and roller towel. Dr. Crumbine did not blindly believe the old theories, made his own investigations to prove or disprove them. He believed in health education of the public and slogans such as “Swat the Fly, Bat the Rat, and Don't Spit on the Sidewalk” were widely published. A Kansas brick company made bricks which had an imprint of “Don't Spit on the Sidewalk” on each brick. They are now collector's items. Dr. Crumbine

gave an inspiring address at the banquet held in his honor at which time he was presented with an inscribed watch. The Resolutions Committee introduced a resolution providing for a Crumbine Banquet to be held at each annual meeting of the Association at which time a Crumbine Medal would be awarded to the outstanding public health leader. The medals have been presented each year and a framed bust of Dr. Crumbine and large plaque with each awardee's name hangs in the KPHA office in Topeka.

In 1947, a new Laboratory Section was organized giving the Association four sections. Membership of the Association had reached a total of 228.

In 1949, the program for the annual meeting of the Association included a report and discussion of the Great Plains Regional Conference on Local Health Units which was held earlier in Kansas City, Missouri. As a result, the Association recommended that the Kansas State Board of Health call a state-wide health conference to consider the following needs:

1. Formation of a state health council
2. Formation of local health councils
3. Extending public health services to all residents of Kansas
4. Definite plan to get information on the functions and services of full-time local health units into the hands of the general public
5. Plan to help local communities develop public health interests in current and long-range community health problems
6. Legislation to permit proper financing of state and local health services
7. Effective program for recruitment and training of public health personnel for state and local health departments. It was also recommended that an evaluation and study of health needs and facilities in the state be made

Several resolutions adopted at the 1949 meeting of the Association related to legislation, indicating the growing interest of the Association in the legislative process. Establishment of a multi-regional organization was also discussed for the first time.

In 1950, the Association held its first joint session with the Missouri Public Health Association. The joint meeting was held in Kansas City, Missouri, with commercial companies being invited to exhibit literature and equipment for the first time. An interesting procedure for admitting colored members of the two Associations to the dining rooms in the hotels was worked out. They were admitted but sat at separate tables. In 1950 this was considered a major concession, indicating the Association's progressive attitude of the members of the Association in matters of racial discrimination.

At the 1951 meeting, much attention was given to a recently organized state health council; and to a need for an energetic and effective in-service training program for public health personnel in all categories. The following quotation from the presidential address by Dr. Vernon Winkle is indicative of the early interest of the Association in public health training.

“No health agency can give health, the public itself must engage in the pursuit of health. Public interest is far ahead of professional ability to keep up. Public health has its ups and downs. The ‘ups’ give confidence and encouragement. The ‘downs’ cause us to stop and evaluate. Through it all we move steadily forward.”

A resolution urging the Kansa State Board of Health to undertake an evaluation study of health needs and facilities in the state was adopted.

In 1952, the program dealt with the problems of the aging. In 1953, a second joint meeting was held with the Missouri Public Health Association in Topeka, Kansas. The membership of this Association had risen to 443. The theme for the 1954 annual meeting of the Association was health education, with special emphasis on gamma globulin and polio vaccine. There was also considerable discussion of the relationship of the Association the APHA. Many individuals felt they should be given a greater opportunity to participate in activities of APHA. Dr. Thomas Hood, who was served on the APHA governing council, encouraged members to accept various appointments to APHA committees because much of APHA work was done in committees.

A review of the programs of the annual meetings over the years clearly reflects the ever-changing concerns and interests of the Association in public health. Prior to 1960, the papers and discussions at the annual meeting dealt largely with legal and professional aspects of public health programs and concern over control of communicable diseases.

After 1961, as public health itself became more broadly defined, the programs for the annual meeting began to contain more and more discussion of community motivation, legislation, and a search for clearer definition of the real purpose of the Association. Emerging out of these self-searching discussions came a general consensus that the Association must actively concern itself in:

1. Promoting and supporting objective and constructive analyses of public health programs in the state to insure that programs will be improved
2. Improving the administration and delivery of health service in the state, both preventive and curative
3. Developing and supporting needed legislation in the health field
4. Providing a forum for public discussion of health problems and programs in Kansas

In keeping with these convictions, the Association sponsored and actively worked with a 100-member citizen committee in making a statewide study of public health needs and resources. This study generated so much public interest among citizens in the state that a later study by a professional consulting firm was authorized by the state legislature. This professional study produced a three volume report containing some 120 recommendations. The report was filed with the legislature in 1970. The Association has given continuous support to the implementation of numerous major recommendations. In 1969 KPHA was incorporated under a new charter.

As the Association began its second half century it was firmly dedicated to the proposition that the Association should and must become a strong and positive voice for the causes of personal environmental health. To effectively meet this responsibility, the Association enlarged and broadened its base of membership to include social and political leaders from health and environmental services. The members of the Association were determined to make KPHA an effective instrument for developing and molding public opinion on vital issues affecting health and finally, the Association expected to provide opportunity for development of efficient public health leaders – leaders well know and highly respected throughout the state. It is to these goals the members of the Kansas Public Health Association pledge their energies and talents.