


AOEC NEWS

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PRESIDENTIAL COLUMN


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Although I've officially been AOEC President since November, this is my first Presidential column for the newsletter. Under normal circumstances, the AOEC staff would have compiled a newsletter long before this, and I would have been able to introduce myself. However, the staff has been busy with more important things - such as getting new grants and keeping the old grants going. I feel I can safely tell you that the efforts of the staff in this direction far outweigh the lack of a newsletter. Space limits may not suffice to let you know of their accomplishments, but I'll try and give you a picture of what the staff has accomplished and what lies in store for the organization.

There has been a dramatic change at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). AOEC has had a cooperative agreement with the Division of Health Education and Promotion (DHEP) for the past seventeen years. Due to the shakeup at CDC and the resultant push for consolidation, DHEP has been officially dissolved, with the Division of Toxicology renamed the Division of Toxicology and Environmental Medicine (DTEM). At the moment, the AOEC cooperative agreement has shifted to DTEM. This shake-up has, however, affected neither the extent, nor the quality of work that the AOEC has been performing on behalf of ATSDR. The Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs) remain funded by ATSDR and are doing extremely well. The project received one of fifteen of the first *Excellence in Pediatric Environmental Health Awards* presented this year by the EPA. Lest you think such a large number of awardees diminishes the significance of the accomplishment, I should mention that there were 107 'honorable mentions' and an unknown number of not-mentioned projects. The AOEC staff has submitted for continuing funding for this project under a non-competitive proposal.

While the focus of the ATSDR cooperative agreement remains targeted on the PEHSU project, it still has a great deal to offer for the rest of the AOEC membership. Funds remaining in the older agreement

have been made available for a variety of educational development projects. RFPs were issued to member clinics for two Department of Energy (DoE) related projects, as well as for numerous educational projects, among them the long-awaited peer-review and revisions of many of the *Case Studies in Environmental Medicine*. The first DoE project for a community health education module on environmental health was awarded to the Division of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology Clinic at the George Washington University. The other DoE site related grants have been awarded to both the University of Rochester and Division of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology Clinic at the George Washington University. The National Jewish Medical and Research Center was awarded the grant to develop a pair of modules on Beryllium. Other grants are still under review.

We do have a new and substantial non-federal grant that meshes perfectly with the AOEC mission and the expertise of our clinics. Unfortunately ...because of the granting agency's wishes, until the project is "officially" announced sometime in June, we can't put it in the newsletter! Suffice it to say that there is good news for AOEC, and the Board, which has been privy to the contract, is delighted. And you have my word that - the moment we can officially announce it - you will hear the details from Kathy and the staff.

In line with new CDC directives that grants be more research-based, NIOSH has been reducing its existing cooperative agreements; this includes the one that has helped fund the AOEC's work across the past several years. Because of this change, AOEC applied for both a training program grant and an educational grant, following NIOSH guidance to put the work on a footing where activities and outcomes can be measured and assessed.

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