WFPHA participation at the 139th APHA Conference

By James Chauvin, Workneh Kassie, Worknesh Kereta and Vina HuLamm

The Federation was delighted once again to participate actively in this year’s 139th APHA Conference (October 28 – Nov 2, 2011: Washington, DC). Besides featuring the 13th World Congress of Public Health at the WFPHA booth in the huge and well-attended exhibit section, WFPHA also hosted, co-chaired and participated as presenters and discussants at several concurrent sessions.

The first of these was a session on Developing community competence for public health to achieve the MDGs and Health for All. It included presentations by Liam Hughes (Royal Society of Public Health - UK) on “Healthy Communities: Theory, evidence, and experience in English public health”, another by Dr. Lindsey Davies of the UK Faculty of Health entitled “Get Real! – Making reality of the “social determinants” rhetoric”, and a third presentation by Workneh Kassie (Ethiopia Public Health Association) on “Building community competence: the Ethiopia experience”. The fourth presentation at this session was made by Jim Chauvin (WFPHA) about the “Role of public health associations to move forward action towards health equity through a “social determinants of health” lens”.

Alex Gatherer of the RSPH-UK and Carol Easley of APHA organized two WFPHA-sponsored sessions the following day on the challenges of equal access to health for marginalized/particularly vulnerable populations. Much of the discussion during both sessions related to prison/justice health, the subject of the resolution approved by WFPHA last May at its annual General Assembly.

At Tuesday evening’s Public Health Awards Reception & Ceremony, the Federation presented to APHA President Dr. Linda Rae Murray and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Georges Benjamin a statuette. This award was made in recognition of the sustained and considerable support provided by APHA since the Federation’s founding in 1967.

A WFPHA Breakfast was held the morning of the Conference’s final day. It brought together over 30 people to learn about and hear first-hand the experiences of the WFPHA. This event was attended by representatives from several WFPHA member associations (Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Ethiopia, the UK, Canada and the USA), as well as representatives from several US-based universities, several members of the APHA’s International Health section, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the AETNA Foundation, the FIA Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Pan American Health Organization, and the World Health Organization. The WFPHA presentations included an oral briefing by Worknesh Kereta of EPHA about the status of preparations for next April’s World Congress and an invitation to all to attend, as well as a Jim’s presentation about the role and successes of national public health associations in public health policy advocacy and the achievements of the CPHA’s Strengthening of Public Health Associations (SOPHA) Program.

WFPHA thanks very much the APHA for providing an opportunity for the WFPHA to participate actively in what is the world’s largest annual gathering of public health people from around the world. We also express our thanks and acknowledgement for the warm hospitality accorded to WFPHA and its representatives by APHA and its members. We look forward to participating in next year’s 140th Annual Conference in San Francisco.