



## First National Public Health Services Research Forum Convened at APHA - October 23, 2001

The Public Health Services Research Forum emerged from the growing desire of those in the public health arena to embrace stronger relationships between the academic and practice communities to build the science-base in public health practice and improve health outcomes. To this end, public health supporters, academicians, practitioners, and communities, must work collectively to build a public health services research enterprise, maximize system efficiency, build credibility, strengthen effective advocacy and improve the effectiveness of applied research.

### Purposes of Forum meeting:

- describe the current state of public health services research
- discuss developments in the field of public health services research
- recap the public health services research meeting at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention May 9 –10
- gain insight into perspectives and initiatives of organizations supporting public health services research
- determine action items and next steps

### The Forum confirmed the need to:

- develop a national research agenda and prioritize research needs
- establish a research section at a national meeting where public health services researchers can come together to share methods, findings, and questions
- pilot 3 to 4 "Centers of Excellence" in public health services research in order to develop and translate research into action
- create a public health services research fellowship program to help "grow" the pool of researchers in this field
- establish, as a recurring event, a Leadership Forum where public health research supporters can come together to ensure that adequate funding is available for public health services research

In order to begin developing and prioritizing research needs, Forum participants suggested building upon national frameworks and objectives outlined in Healthy People 2010 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 7 capacity-building priority areas for public health preparedness. Based upon these national initiatives, a number of common research themes around workforce development, improved communication, utilization of performance standards and evaluation, and improved preparedness and response emerged as priority areas to be addressed in a national public health services research agenda.

Through the Forum, general consensus from researchers and practitioners alike identified the establishment of 3-4 Centers of Excellence in public health services research and doctoral level public health services research fellowships as necessary components to improve the evidence-base of public health, specifically in the areas of infrastructure and preparedness.

As a result of recent events, the American public has unprecedented levels of awareness about the need to improve public health infrastructure. It is now time to capture this "window of opportunity" by rapidly expanding the evidence base for the practice of public health and ensure that the research is translated into action.