

The Public's Health and the Law in the 21st Century
5th Annual Partnership Conference

Concurrent Session

**Best Practices in Faith-Public Health Partnerships for
Policy Implementation**

Wednesday, June 14, 2006
10:30-12:00 pm

Moderator: Hon. Toni N. Harp, Deputy President Pro Tem, Connecticut State Senate, New Haven, CT

Panel: Stephanie B.C. Bailey, MD, MSHSA, Director of Health, Metro Public Health Department, Nashville, TN

Timothy M. Cerio, JD, General Counsel, Florida Department of Health, Tallahassee, FL

Covia L. Stanley, MD, MDiv, Regional Health/ Medical Director, Region 6 of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), Conway, SC

Session Purpose:

The most successful public health agencies often are the ones that build broad, vibrant partnerships with community-based organizations that have goals and strengths that complement those of the public health agencies. Faith-based organizations increasingly are being recognized as important partners because of the central role they play in communities and with families.

Many public health leaders who want to build partnerships with faith-based organizations, however, find themselves face-to-face with real or alleged legal barriers. These stem, in some cases, from questions about the applicability of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (i.e., "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..."), the applicability of similar provisions in states' constitutions, or other features of federal or state law.

All the members of this panel have explored or developed working partnerships between public health agencies and faith-based organizations. The real-world experience and insights they share in this session will illuminate the practical value of such collaborations as well as the types of legal issues—and solutions to those issues—that often arise as these partnerships are designed and implemented.

Learning Objectives:

By the close of this session, conference participants will be able to:

- Describe concrete community health benefits that can be realized through public health agencies' partnerships with faith-based organizations;
- Identify and explain principal federal and state constitutional and statutory legal issues relevant to the intersection of government public health agencies with the faith-based community; and
- Outline "best practices" public health agencies have taken to address these legal issues and establish a strong legal foundation for successful public health collaborations with faith-based organizations.

Session Convener:

The Public Health Law Association