NEWS AND COMMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT MEETING

A meeting of Public Health Unit Directors was held on July 11 at the NSW Health Department, after which a general meeting for all the Public Health Units was held at the Royal North Shore Hospital. These are the key points:

PLANNING

Proposed structure for the NSW Health Enhancement Program Annual Report 90/91 was circulated. It was suggested that "key staffing activities" be added as a category.

It was agreed that each PHU will:

- provide copies of annual reports/planning reports to other PHUs
- provide draft outline of the Unit's report according to the proposed structure to Epidemiology & Health Services Evaluation Branch as a wordperfect document on floppy disc by the end of July
- report on a quarterly basis as a minimum requirement

HEALTH OUTCOMES DOCUMENT - PROGRESS

George Rubin reported on the Year 2001 Health Outcome Goals for NSW document. The existence of health outcome indicators in CEO performance agreements should lead to increased monitoring of health outcomes by CEOs and shift the focus from health service indicators.

Key discussion points:

- The document encourages uniform definitions with decentralised monitoring
- Issues of the accessibility, collection and
- adequacy of data for measuring outcome targets
 Source of funds for programs
- Role of private hospitals/practitioners in data collection and program implementation.
- Need to set goal priorities in individual Areas/Regions
- Profile and place of environmental health in document

Current status:

- Health outcomes will be incorporated into the Department's corporate plan for 91/92 with key intermediate indicators
- Aim to finalise the document by May 1992 after consultation throughout the Department
- Incorporate outcomes into CEOs' performance agreements — possibly by the 92/93 financial year.

OUTCOME

A decision on the nature and timetable for the consultative process within the Department for the health outcomes document would be made at the Senior Executive Council Meeting (CEOs) in August. (Following distribution of the Year 2001 Health Outcome Goals for the NSW document, George Rubin argued the case for incorporating health outcomes in State, Area and Regional planning and strategy development at the August 7 meeting of the council. Area Chief Executive Officers and Regional Directors gave unanimous support to move to continue the consultative process to develop the document and head towards steady implementation. It was suggested that local and State level consultation take place over the next eight months to determine health outcome areas, targets and intermediate objectives and that health outcomes increasingly be incorporated in senior executive performance agreements.)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Epidemiology & Health Services Evaluation Branch's Strategic Plan, 91-95 was tabled for discussion at the next meeting based on the following:

- Relationship of PHU health outcome strategies to other public health agencies — especially community health and health promotion units/agencies
- Inter-sectoral cooperation strategies to integrate public health activities at the local level ·
- Integration of public health strategies within Areas and Head Office of the Department.
- Outline of strategic direction of each PHU for 91-95 period

A draft implementation plan for the 91-95 Strategic Plan will be developed by a working party whose members are to be determined.

BUDGET

It was agreed that:

- funding for PHUs be maintained in real terms for 91-92 financial year
- 1/6th total PHO time will be spent in regional PHUs each year
- PHOs should service Public Health Network outside funding should be sought for other public health agencies with some exceptions (eg CDC)
- Decision on funding options for uncommitted Line 3 funds be made at next PHU Directors meeting. Options to be considered include training, research, PHU funding, infrastructure, program development/implementation, coordination, E&HSE Branch funding, data systems (including sentinel practices) and new PHOs

Decisions will be made on the Public Health Officer Training Program at the next meeting. They will include a mandatory placement program, composition of the selection committee for PHOs, the number of new PHOs for 91-92 and the medical/non-medical mix of new PHOs.

The next PHU Directors meeting will be held on Friday, August 23 from 10.30am to 5.30pm at Central Office in the level 7 conference room. Agenda items will include: performance agreements for PHUs for 91-92 activities contained in the strategic plan, Epidemiology Branch Strategic Plan 91-95, and decision-making process at Directors meetings.