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Susan Allan, NWCPHP Director

Twenty years ago, the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) opened in a leaky basement office of the School of Public Health at the University of Washington. NWCPHP's mission: to link academia and practice, and to strengthen the performance of each by connecting their respective skills and resources.

Through the effort and encouragement of many people who believed in these goals, NWCPHP has grown and developed. Twenty years later, NWCPHP's mission remains much the same: to promote excellence in public health by linking academia and the practice community, providing training, research, and evaluation for state, local, and tribal public health in six Pacific Northwest states – Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

This special supplement to *Northwest Public Health* marks a new endeavor. To provide a comprehensive and timely summary of what is available from NWCPHP, and to highlight and support the important work of our practice partners, we have begun publishing an annual report. This first edition is also a 20-year retrospective.

This report demonstrates some of the dramatic changes in public health over the past 20 years, and also the continuing importance of basic skills and knowledge. As the world has changed, NWCPHP has adapted to meet new needs. Following the startling events of 2001, we added training in bioterrorism, public health response to natural disasters, and conducting tabletop exercises. We responded to governmental emphasis on quality improvement and accountability by developing training on program evaluation and data analysis. As the use of computers expanded, distance training was made available through the distribution of CDs and the Internet. The evolution of our training topics and modalities has reflected the needs and interests of our region. More recently, the field of public health has voiced the need for better evidence of what works. NWCPHP has become part of the network of centers across the country conducting practice-based research to expand the evidence base.

I would like to acknowledge the people whose leadership and vision have been essential to building and sustaining the work of NWCPHP. Our creation and continuation are due to the commitment of Dean Gil Omenn and Dean Patricia Wahl. Each of my predecessors broadened and strengthened NWCPHP's capabilities and its relationships with public health practice. The achievements you will read about here are due to them and to the excellent faculty and staff who have been the foundation of NWCPHP's fine work.

We hope you will enjoy this journey through the past 20 years, and we look forward to your partnership as NWCPHP continues its mission to promote excellence in public health practice.

Susan Allan
NWCPHP Director

The Mission of NWCPHP

The Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) promotes excellence in public health by linking academia and the practice community. As part of the University of Washington School of Public Health, NWCPHP provides training, research, and evaluation for state, local, and tribal public health in six Pacific Northwest states—Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming.

Special Supplement of *Northwest Public Health*

Happy Birthday NWCPHP. This special supplement to *Northwest Public Health* looks at one of the University of Washington School of Public Health's oldest centers, the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP). In its 20th year, NWCPHP has launched an annual report; this first issue is a 20-year retrospective. NWCPHP would like to thank the many, many people who have made these 20 years possible. Although this publication cannot share all of NWCPHP's activities or recognize everyone, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you.

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