

# **Medical Director's Report Tompkins County Board of Health July 2011**

## **General Activities of the past month:**

- Completed Jail Quality Assurance chart review.
- Reviewed Influenza Vaccine Policy for 2011/2012 vaccine season.
- Attended Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature meeting with regard to issues regarding the CHHA.
- Met with Melissa Gatch regarding physician orders and issues regarding timeliness and of same for the CHHA.
- Met the new Commissioner of Public Health of New York State, Dr. Shah, at NYS Academy of Family Physicians' meetings in Albany the weekend of June 18<sup>th</sup>.

At the meetings of the NYS Academy of Family Medicine, Dr. Shah was featured speaker and attended along with Karen Westervelt, the advisor for primary care development. I had the opportunity to briefly speak with both of them.

I offered Dr. Shah our department's gratitude for the manner in which his staff is working with our Environmental Health Director and those of the State in our dealing with the Marcellus Shale issues. He seemed pleased to hear this. Later in the evening I had an opportunity to ask him publicly about the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA, a federal act which has not been revised since creation and is woefully short of protecting the public's health). He responded that NYS Department of Health is very concerned about the Marcellus Shale issues and chemicals pollution of the environment and is taking the matter very seriously. He did not make comment on the Act itself. He has only been Commissioner since January. Hopefully my question will resonate with other things he may hear.

He seemed very personable and took considerable time to take questions and give reasoned replies. We can be hopeful that his leadership will be well thought out.

At the Academy, the Public Health Commission I chair introduced a resolution to reform TSCA (the Toxic Substances Reform Act of 1976). It is a major means of protecting the public from dangerous chemicals. But, it is inadequate and needs significant restructuring. It received support and was referred to the Board for further action.

- Prepared comments for public health for the meeting of the Legislature held the evening of June 21<sup>st</sup>; a copy of which is included with this report.