

Peace Caucus

APHA Annual Meeting November 5-8, 2017 Atlanta, GA

Peace Caucus in Official Relations with the American Public Health Association

202.0 Sunday 11/5 8-9 AM

Business Meeting Everyone Welcome!

Omni Hotel M1 - Cottonwood A

3062.0 Monday 11/6 8:30-10 AM

Impacts of War & Conflict on Veteran's Health

Omni Hotel M3 - Hickory

3182.0 Monday 11/6 10:30 AM - 12 PM

Climate Change and the Effect on War and Peace

Omni Hotel M3 - Hickory

4137.0 Tuesday 11/7 10:30 AM-12 PM

Worldwide Threats to Health Generated by War

Georgia World Congress Center B310
(Organized by International Health)

4246.0 Tuesday 11/7 12:30 - 2 PM

Role of Public Health in Relation to Modern War & Conflict

Omni Hotel M4 - Grand Ballroom D

4423.0 Tuesday 11/7 4:30 - 6 PM

Countering Militarism to Prevent War: A Public Health Imperative

Omni Hotel M4 - Grand Ballroom C

Peace and Public Health: You Can't Have One Without the Other

Learn more at APHA's Peace Caucus sessions View our full program and CE information [here](https://apha.confex.com/apha/2017/meetingapp.cgi/Program/1681):
<https://apha.confex.com/apha/2017/meetingapp.cgi/Program/1681>

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARDED TO THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS: A VICTORY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH!

In a major victory for public health and global survival, the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** was adopted by **122 U.N. member states in June**, with over 50 nations signatories

to the Treaty since September. For its crucial efforts to bring this treaty to ban nuclear weapons from the planet to fruition, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was just awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. In making the award, the Nobel Committee recognized ICAN for its work to "draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of these weapons."

APHA has long recognized the inextricable link between public health and nuclear weapons, having adopted 23 policy statements since 1981 that explicate the public health threats embodied in the research, development, testing, maintenance, and use of nuclear weapons. APHA explicitly supports the abolition of nuclear weapons, the goal of the 2017 Treaty.

(article continues on next page)



Nobel Peace Prize continued

Since the founding of the Peace Caucus in 1985, its members have authored many of APHA's policy statements on nuclear weapons and related topics and organized scores of presentations to educate APHA members on the link between nuclear weapons, peace and public health.

When the Treaty has been ratified by 50 states, the ban on nuclear weapons will enter into force and will be binding under international law for all the countries that are party to the Treaty. The work to make the goal of the Treaty a reality has just begun. Success will require concerted, ceaseless, and collaborative effort by the public health community and its allies. Notably the nine known nuclear-armed states, including the U.S., Russia, Britain and China, boycotted the Treaty talks and remain opposed to its ratification.

Our public health campaign to make the health consequences of nuclear weapons visible to the public and policy makers dates to the dawn of the nuclear age. In 1961 Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) was founded in recognition that there is no adequate medical response to a nuclear war and thus "prevention is the only cure." The next year, several of PSR's co-founders, Drs. Victor W. Sidel, H. Jack Geiger, and Bernard Lown, published a groundbreaking article in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in which through a quantitative analysis of the health consequences of a nuclear attack in Massachusetts, they challenged the "usually unstated assumption that since we have survived other catastrophes we will survive now – under any circumstances – if only we plan carefully enough."

During the Cold War PSR members and other health professionals documented the presence of Strontium-90, a highly radioactive waste product of atmospheric nuclear testing, in children's teeth, efforts that contributed importantly to the 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban treaty that ended atmospheric nuclear testing.

While moving nuclear testing underground reduced atmospheric fallout, it did not stop the rapid expansion of the world's nuclear arsenals. In 1980, in the face of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, leaders of PSR along with physicians in the Soviet Union founded the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), reasoning that their obligation as physicians included a common commitment to the prevention of nuclear war. In 1985 PSR shared the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to IPPNW for ... "creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare, which contributes to an increase in the pressure of public opposition to the proliferation of atomic weapons and to a redefining of priorities, with greater attention being paid to health and other humanitarian issues" (Figure1).

In 2007, IPPNW launched ICAN, an organization of nearly 500 NGOs from 101 countries, which took the lead to ensure the passage of the Ban Treaty. As part of this global effort on the part of civil society, PSR translated the scientific data

essential in educating the international community about the public health and medical impacts of nuclear weapons, now and forever, and supported ICAN's work in the UN with a trained team of citizen and physician lobbyists.

Ira Helfand, MD, Co-President of IPPNW and PSR board member who serves on ICAN's International Steering Group described ICAN as "a powerful voice reminding us all of the urgent need to ban and eliminate these weapons as the only reliable way to make sure they are not used." **Dr. Helfand will receive the prestigious Edward Barsky award at the 2017 APHA Health Activist Dinner on Sunday November 5th for his tireless efforts that contributed so much to the success of the Ban Treaty. For tickets go to: www.healthactivistdinner.org**

The Nobel Prize is a profound acknowledgment that the Ban Treaty has already begun to change the international dynamics around peace and security. The world community has drawn a clear line against the catastrophic threat posed by nuclear weapons. Yet at the same time, President Trump says he intends to effectively upend the Iran nuclear deal and is threatening Korea with military force, while the U.S will be spending \$4 million dollars per hour over the next 30 years modernizing its nuclear arsenal.

ICAN's Nobel Peace Prize inspires our continued activism within and beyond APHA towards the goal of nuclear abolition. Our defense of public health in these dread times will only be more powerful if strongly linked with this vital work for peace --- you really can't have one without the other!



Figure 1: Co-Founders of PSR (left to right): Drs. H. Jack Geiger; Victor W. Sidel (Dr. Sidel is also a Past President of APHA); and Sidney Alexander at the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony awarded to IPPNW

Support the Peace Caucus!

- Please come to the Peace Caucus sessions and bring your colleagues
- Help organize the 2018 program. Thanks to Nada Alnaji and Patrice Sutton for planning the 2017 program!
- Help create a Peace Caucus website
- Join the Peace Caucus
Send your name, email address, and check for \$10 - \$50, or more (sliding scale) to APHA Peace Caucus c/o Robert Gould: 311 Douglass Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.
- Contact Peace Caucus Chair Robert Gould, MD for more info at: rmgould1@yahoo.com