

University of California
Centers for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH)

History and Legislation

The need for the Centers for Occupational & Environmental Health (COEH) grew out of a major industrial poisoning incident and scandal in 1976 in Stockton, California. The State held extensive hearings following the Stockton incident. These efforts resulted in two bills AB 3413 and 3414, establishing the Centers on Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH). Their mission is education, research and community service in five areas:

- Occupational Nursing
- Occupational Medicine
- Epidemiology
- Toxicology
- Industrial Hygiene.

In accordance with the provisions of AB 3414 and under contracts between The University of California Regents and the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) Director, a Northern California Occupational Health Center, located on the UC Berkeley campus, and Southern California Occupational Health Centers, located on the UC Irvine campus, and the UC Los Angeles campus were established.

AB 3414 also required DIR "to develop a long-range program in the area of occupational health and medicine: and to cooperate with the University of California to create occupational health centers for the purposes of training personnel and performing research functions in the field of occupational health and medicine".

The major functions of the Centers are:

- Teaching - the training of occupational physicians and nurses, toxicologists, epidemiologists, and industrial hygienists
- Public Service - proving a referral service for occupational illnesses, promoting health in the workplace, and providing clinical care

- Research - stimulating research on the causes, diagnosis, and prevention of occupational illnesses. Each of the Centers serves as the focal point of all occupational health-related activities on the campuses in its geographical area, thereby strengthening the University's programs of teaching and research in this field.

Statewide Advisory Committee

The Director of DIR, assumed responsibility in 1979 for the appointment and functioning of a Statewide Advisory Committee to the University of California Occupational Health Centers. The committee was composed of representatives from labor, industry, government, and occupational health professions and was advisory to the Center directors on broad issues of policy and programs.

The Statewide Advisory Committee is the principal link between the Centers and the workplace. Its membership now includes representation from labor, industry, occupational health practitioners, State government and other private agencies.

The Statewide Advisory Committee is advisory to the University of California President through the Vice President of Health Affairs on broad issues of policy and the workplace. It reviews activities of the Centers and provide advice to the Directors.

Detailed on each centers current activities may be found at their individual web sites as listed below:

- Northern California Center
(UC Davis, UC San Francisco
and UC Berkeley)
<http://coeh.berkeley.edu>
- Southern California
(UC Los Angeles Center)
<http://www.ph.ucla.edu/coeh/>
- Southern California
(UC Irvine Center)
http://www.coeh.uci.edu/old_index.htm