



Healthy Pools. Healthy Bodies.

For Immediate Release 1



World Aquatic Health™ Conference 2008
“It is the premier national gathering
for those interested in planning the future of aquatics.”

Log onto www.eProAcademy.org to listen to over 40 seminars

Media Contact:

Laurie Batter, BatterUp!
Voice 760-438-9304; FAX 760-434-5595
Email batterup@batterupproductions.com

NSPF Contact:

Margaret Smith
Voice 719-540-9119; FAX 719-540-2787
Email Margaret.Smith@nspf.org

Colorado Springs, CO (November 14, 2008)

The fifth annual World Aquatic Health™ Conference (WAHC™) sponsored by the National Swimming Pool Foundation® (NSPF®) held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 15-17, 2008, drew 357 registrants from 42 states and 6 countries, participating in 45 seminars. The World Aquatic Health Conference is the leading global aquatic research forum helping leaders anticipate trends, understand emerging issues, and contemplate long-term opportunities. Attendees included aquatic coordinators and managers, aquatic training specialists, health officials, marketing and sales managers, service companies, manufacturers, academicians, engineers, consultants, lifeguards and pool operators.

“In four short years and five meetings, this conference has grown from a small collection of interested parties to being the premier national gathering of public health, industry, and academic leaders who are interested in planning the future of aquatics,” comments Michael J. Beach, Ph.D., Associate Director for Healthy Water, National Center for Zoonotic, Vector-Borne and Enteric Diseases (NCZVED), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Leaders are drawn to this conference because science highlights future opportunities and helps them prepare their organization to prosper beyond today’s challenges,” explains Thomas M. Lachocki, Ph.D., CEO of NSPF. Of the attendees present, 30% were high-level decision makers including CEO, president, owner, vice president, or director.

NSPF reports that in-person conference registration was up 25%. In addition to the 357 registrants, an additional 341 access codes (tickets) were obtained by people who want to view seminars online at www.eProAcademy.org.



Healthy Pools. Healthy Bodies.



Attendees heard from world experts on critical topics that included recreational water illness prevention, disinfection by-product formation and minimization, lifeguarding and drowning prevention, risk reduction and aquatic facility design, effective programming, and the health benefits of swimming pools and hot tubs. New technology was also highlighted, including a number of talks on energy efficiency and cost savings. There were several presentations on entrapment, including a presentation on the Virginia Graeme Baker Act by the CPSC, the legal anatomy of an entrapment accident, and an emotional visit with Scott Taylor, parent of Abby Taylor, who died in an evisceration accident.

“It is always a great opportunity for our YMCA aquatics staff to attend the World Aquatic Health Conference,” says Kay Smiley, Aquatics Specialist, YMCA of the USA. “This year’s conference addressed some of our nation’s most pressing health and water safety issues. Panelists provided practical solutions and tools for tackling these issues. The YMCA of the USA truly values the support that the National Swimming Pool Foundation provides in our efforts to teach children and families how to be safer in and around water.”

Gary Fraser, Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Washington State Department of Health agrees. “This is the premier event with the best available science related to health and pool safety... We meet with other state health departments on pressing issues as well as hear direction from the CDC and now the CPSC on federal issues...and finally”, he adds, “the WAHC gives us an opportunity to have industry, academia and government working together to protect the public.”

Ten seminars were presented by NSPF grant recipients; this was the first time these results were revealed. Research results shed light on the full range of issues helping attendees formulate solutions. “Since the seminars were videoed and are on the web, people from around the world can go to the conference when it is convenient. Seminars can be accessed at www.eProAcademy.org for \$45.00 each – or less,” suggests Alex Antoniou, Ph.D., NSPF Director of Educational Programs. A full list of the seminars and presenters may be accessed at <http://www.eproacademy.org/WAHCVideoList.asp>.

“This year’s conference brought together the nation’s leaders in the world of aquatic activity for a densely packed series of presentations covering virtually every aspect of the field, from cutting-edge research on health and safety issues, to facility construction and maintenance,” comments Bruce Becker, M.D., Washington State University. “The increase in diversity and quality of presentations was amazing. It was exciting to be a part of it.”

Disease prevention was discussed and addressed throughout the conference. The two keynote presentations addressed the critical topic from two perspectives. Momentous news was announced that has far-reaching significance for the entire industry, but especially for builders, swim schools, aquatic facilities; additionally, the general public and potentially medical providers and insurance companies will find the news compelling.



Healthy Pools. Healthy Bodies.



Dr. Stephen Blair, P.E.D., University of South Carolina gave the keynote address, *Does Regular Swimming Reduce Your Risk of Dying?* Dr. Blair reported on over 35 years of research studying 80,000 people who were enrolled in the Cooper Institute's Aerobics Center Longitudinal Study (ACLS). He compared the death rate in swimmers to runners, walkers and people who do not exercise. This is the first research that reveals evidence-based studies of swimming. Many attendees were struck by the important new research finding and its significance. Dr. Blair's seminar available for free to anyone who would like to hear his results.

At last year's conference, **Dr. Michael Beach (CDC)** urged attendees to take action to fight the skyrocketing number of recreational water illness outbreaks. This year, Dr. Beach reported on the new National Outbreak Reporting System (NORS) and so far, this year, the upward trend in crypto outbreaks seemed to rise only slightly; however, Dr. Beach strongly cautioned against assuming that just because Crypto outbreaks did not increase dramatically this year, that Crypto is "over". **In his keynote presentation, *Recreational Water Illnesses: Reversing the Trend Will Require Education and Investment***, Dr. Beach gave a historical perspective on outbreaks since year 2000. Television campaign examples and a new brochure were revealed and he reminded attendees to gear up for RWI Prevention Week 2009. He then presented status of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).

In addition to the keynotes, 43 additional seminars were given to help find solutions to prevent injuries and health problems at aquatic venues. New research highlights include:

Michael Goodman, M.D., MPH, Emory University, asked the question – *Does Swimming in Indoor Pools Cause Asthma?* Dr. Goodman conducted a review of 25 studies related to swimming and asthma. The preponderance of studies do not support the suggestion of a link between asthma and non-competitive swimmers. There were many questions he raised about the research process of the studies he reviewed. Dr. Goodman considered the question of whether asthma is caused by swimming and commented on the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations.

James Amburgey, Ph.D., University of North Carolina, reviewed his NSPF-funded research study that looked at *Cryptosporidium Oocyst properties and control with swim diapers and filters*. Dr. Amburgey explained in detail about crypto, what it is, how it poses a threat to those in the water, the length of time it remains activated (how long it can last in a pool), the effects of sand filtration, and finally the risk assessment associated with the use of swim diapers. He presented important findings related to a broad spectrum of diaper combinations used in aquatic facilities.



Healthy Pools. Healthy Bodies.

For Immediate Release 4



Bruce Becker, M.D. Washington State University, Director, National Aquatic and Sports Medicine Institute, summarized results to-date for the two-year NSPF-funded hot water immersion study. New results show that after simply sitting and immersing in warm water of 102 F at chest depth for 25 minutes, there was a decrease in the body's stress level, a decrease in cardiac irritability, improved mood state, and improved mental focus and memory. "The results of this recent research add improved understanding of the physiology behind previous research demonstrating improved heart function in individuals with mild to moderate heart failure, and damage from ischemic heart disease," comments Dr. Becker. "All of the changes we noted may well have beneficial public health implications for water use... there may indeed be magic in the water."

Dr. Blair concurs, saying "the World Aquatic Health Conference included several important reports on the health benefits of water activities. It is clear that these benefits are similar to the health benefits of other types of physical activity, and that indeed water activities are perhaps preferred for some individuals." He goes on to explain, "for example, persons with musculoskeletal problems that make other physical activity difficult or uncomfortable can participate in swimming, water jogging, or water aerobics."

Reflecting on the conference, Dr. Lachocki observes, "More organizations are holding their meetings in parallel with the WAHC so they can also attend. More people are taking advantage of the online seminars. This option is smart and economical for many people. We are honored to host an event that forges the foundation for a brighter future."

NSPF[®] donated table-top display space to several non-profit organizations who attended the conference including NSF International (NSF-I), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the International Journal of Aquatic Education and Research (IJARE), the American Red Cross, USA Swimming, the International Swimming Hall of Fame/Conquer Fear Instructor Training Project, and Florida Swimming Pool Association (FSPA).

Grants recipients and several leading Certified Pool/Spa Operator[®] instructors were recognized throughout the conference. A special appreciation of support was given to conference sponsors Accu-Tab Systems, Adolph Kiefer & Company, Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA), Aquatic Fitness Systems, CAT Controllers, Counsilman-Hunsaker, ETS, Master Spas, TMI Salt Pure Corporation, USA Swimming, Hayward, and Water Technology, Inc.

The sixth annual World Aquatic Health[™] Conference is scheduled for October, 2009 in the southeast region of the United States. Go to www.nspf.org where you can sign up to get more information when it is available.

###