

# Environmentalists Must Be Aggressive, Creative

**By Larry J. Gordon, M.S., M.P.H.**

Director, Environmental Services Division

New Mexico Health and Social Services Dept.

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## Why Environmental Health?

**Because the public is aroused, concerned and demanding.**

**Because it is basic to man's health, comfort, safety and well-being.**

**Because environmental health programs have been, and are, too little and too late.**

**Because vastly increased attention to problems of the human environment is essential  
for sound economic development and social well-being.**

**Because the environment is being despoiled, degraded, deteriorated, impaired, scarred,  
polluted, and contaminated at a rate frightening to consider and difficult to  
understand.**

**Because, to ignore the compelling problems of the modern environment is to defraud  
the public, as well as to ensure the eventual ineffectiveness of all other efforts to  
ensure health, comfort, safety, and economic and man's social well-being.**

**Because there is an environmental crisis, and**

**Because it is the place where we are all going to spend the rest of our lives.**

## We have an environmental problem created by:

**People**

**Technology**

**Lack of proper environmental health budgets**

**Improper organizational status for environmental health**

**Lack of public understanding, support, and demand - until recently**

**Abdication of responsibility by states and local governments and subsequent complaining about federal intervention.**

**Failure of health officials to be aggressive in pursuing goals and objectives.**

**Failure of health officials to believe in the necessity of regulatory efforts.**

**Many health officials believing that environmental management is only preventive medicine,**

**Many health officials believing that only the health component of environmental programs should be administered in a health agency.**

**Many health officials believing that health is a goal or an end unto itself, rather than one factor in insuring man's complete well-being.**

**Many health officials failing to recognize that an environmental factor such as air, water, food, or housing should be administered in an integrated, comprehensive manner with due emphasis on the relationship to objectives of safety, comfort, and well-being as well as health.**

**The over-emphasis on "health professionalism" with resultant mysticism and secrecy, with insufficient regard for public information, communication, participation, and intelligence.**

**The overly frequent emphasis on attempting to relate and justify environmental programs solely on the basis of morbidity and mortality statistics.**

**The frequent failure of health officials to understand the art of politics, and their disdain of rubbing shoulders with politicians or the "rascals down at city hall."**

**Legislation designed by vested interests created to create procedural delays and ineffectiveness rather than environmental quality and consumer protection.**

**Health professionals believing, insisting, and acting on the premise that the public will follow their recommendations because health officials are professionals and "know what's best."**

**The failure of health officials and government in general to understand ecological relationships; the fact that environmental factors are inextricably interdigitated, and the necessity of one consumer protection oriented agency administering all related environmental management programs as an entity or a package.**

**The failure of health officials to give due consideration to related problems of conservation, economic development, recreation, transportation, inter-governmental relations, planning, zoning, and land-use.**

**The frequent failure of health officials to predict, accept, and program for new and emerging problems, thereby abdicating their responsibilities and leaving a void for other agencies to fill.**

**The prevalent public opinion, now changing, that someone is looking after their environment even when no budget, personnel, legislation, or program exist.**

**The fact that, heretofore, environmental programs may not have seemed as glamorous or compelling as other services and facilities which must be financed by government.**

**The lack of complete knowledge or understanding concerning the long-term chronic health, safety, comfort, and economic and social well-being effects and interactions of environmental problems.**

**Some health officials at all levels of government having appeared to be content with partial, fragmented programs and having, in fact, often supported (or at least not resisted) moves to fragment programs or leave health agencies with only standard promulgating or recommending authority.**

**Many environmental programs being administered by agencies which are not entirely public service or consumer oriented, thereby providing biased programs and creating lack of program balance due to the absence of rational priorities.**

**The common omission of balanced representation of environmentalists on state and area-wide comprehensive health planning councils.**

**Whether or not we accept the foregoing reasons or excuses, we still must admit that our environment has been messed up and "fed up."**

### **Who Speaks for the Environment?**

**Public health people may think they are the environmental spokesmen, but they've convinced few others. In many instances, MORE environmental health programs have been fragmented OUT of health agencies or abdicated THAN have remained IN.**

## **WHO Speaks for the Environment??**

**The large important, powerful conservation interests?**

**The agriculturalists and agricultural lobby?**

**Labor leaders and interests with their claim on certain important aspects of environmental health?**

**HUD, with its diverse environmental programs?**

**INTERIOR, with its diverse environmental programs?**

**Public Health agencies which should be consumer oriented and interested in ensuring an environment that will confer optimum health, safety, comfort, and well-being on its inhabitants?**

**All of the foregoing?**

**Are you satisfied with your own answers?**

## **What Must Be Done?**

**Aggressiveness on the part of environmentalists, and willingness to engage in controversial situations where necessary, in order to insure a quality environment for this as well as future generations.**

**Creativity and imagination on the part of environmentalists in order to do a better job with what we have.**

**Willingness to depart from tradition, outmoded concepts, practices and organizational patterns where necessary.**

**Acceptance of the fact that health agencies, government, and society in general have not met their responsibilities managing a quality environment.**

**Creation of an atmosphere of communication, salesmanship, information, and a dialogue conducive to maximum feasible understanding, rather than maximum feasible misunderstanding.**

**Belief that a quality environment is a right, rather than a privilege, and a "must" if man is to thrive and survive.**

**Environmental programming of environmental factors, contacts and stresses on a comprehensive interdigitated basis, and aimed at objectives of man's comfort, safety, and well-being as well as his health.**

**Budgeting for environmental health programs on a basis commensurate with the acknowledged importance of the place where we are all going to spend the rest of our lives.**

**Understanding that results are often achieved only through regulatory efforts and that such efforts are an integral component of environmental programs.**

**Programming of environmental concerns in such a manner as to give due recognition to related problems of conservation, recreation, productivity, convenience, natural beauty, esthetics, and economic development.**

**Organization of environmental programs on a basis necessary to ensure effectiveness, adequate budgets, emphasis, inter-agency communication and joint action, comprehensiveness of programs, and prevention of fragmentation.**

**Adoption of legislation that does more than create delays and time-consuming procedures.**

**Increased acceptance of program responsibility by state and local governments.**

**Problem-shed approach to environmental management, based on air-sheds, water-basins, population density, employment location, transportation, rather than on artificial political boundaries and inefficient fiefdoms.**

**Increased emphasis on research and demonstrations.**

**Increased emphasis on pre-service and continuing in-service training for environmentalists.**

**Continuing short and long-range program planning, including goals, objectives, methods, financing, priorities, and evaluation.**

**Is it possible to reach the point of no return in fouling our environment?**

**Are we wearing out our welcome on Earth?**

**Can society really afford not to retain or restore a high quality environment?**

**Are health professionals prepared to earn the mantle of environmental management leadership?**

**Who will speak for the environment and the consumer in future years?**

**Are present environmental management and consumer protection policies designed to offer the greatest good for the largest number over the longest period of time?**

**What quality of environment do you want?**

**Freedom from pollution, contamination, over-crowding, safety hazards, fraud, unwholesomeness, adulteration, nuisances, and disease must be considered basic American rights rather than privileges.**

**Environmentalists must be more than just not timid or just not nearsighted. Unless the challenge is accepted and leadership provided, the public may continue to be defrauded and the environment despoiled.**

**Options are still open to create or  
recreate an environment in which to  
thrive rather than merely survive.**

