

# **MAHC Adoption: The Public Health Perspective**

**Douglas C. Sackett: Executive Director  
Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code**

**NCSL Webinar  
State's Role in Updating Pool Safety Codes**



## Introduction

- ❑ **New York State Department of Health( 38 yrs): Retired**
  - Managed the development and update of the NYS swimming pool regulations
- ❑ **Director of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC)**
- ❑ **Currently the Executive Director of the Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC)**

# Current Code Development Process

- ❑ **Current swimming pool code development done at the “local” level**
  - **Not all jurisdictions seek and incorporate input from regulated parties/industry**
  - **Requires significant staff resources and time to research, prepare, and develop code language**
  - **Local health department responsible for defending proposed changes from needs/benefits and cost impact standpoint**



## **Code Development Process with the MAHC**

- ❑ MAHC developed by expert consortia of national and international stakeholders**
- ❑ Substantial industry participation in the process**
  - Results in better acceptance by industry**
  - 71% of public comments accepted**
- ❑ Annex is a valuable tool that provides the data and other supporting evidence for the code requirements**
- ❑ Updated every two years through the Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC)**

# A Successful MAHC Must Stay Up to Date



- ❑ A data-driven and best-practices guidance document like the MAHC must be “fed” data to stay “alive”
- ❑ Data and documented lessons learned drives change
  - Anecdotes may be good for marketing but don’t drive substantive, sustainable change
- ❑ Aquatics (regulators and industry) must see the importance of data and strive to collect it

## **How Will the MAHC Be Kept Up-To-Date?**



- ❑ **CDC owns, revises, and publicly posts the MAHC**
- ❑ **Need to renew and update**
- ❑ **Self-sustaining mechanism**
- ❑ **Needs a conduit to gather input**
  - **Public health, aquatics, academia, general public**
- ❑ **Conduit needs to**
  - **Gather national input, decide on scientific merit, and summarize changes needed for CDC to accept**
- ❑ **Model after Conference for Food Protection that oversees FDA Model Food Code**

# Keeping the MAHC Up to Date



- ❑ **Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC): Non-profit formed in 2013**
  
- ❑ **Vision**
  - **Up-to-date, knowledge-based MAHC that supports healthy and safe aquatic experiences and is used by pool programs across the U.S.**
  
- ❑ **Mission**
  - **Collects, assesses, and relays input on MAHC revisions back to CDC for final acceptance**
  - **Provides advocacy and needed support to health departments and other partners on using the MAHC**
  - **Solicits, coordinates, and prioritizes research needs**

## **CMAHC Long-Term Strategy**

- ❑ Develop a sustainable model for renewing the MAHC**
- ❑ Partner with CDC and other groups**
- ❑ National clearinghouse for advising CDC on changes to MAHC**
- ❑ National Conference held every 2 years**
- ❑ National support center for MAHC use**
  - Technical assistance, toolkits, research**
- ❑ Coordinates development of MAHC research plan**

# **Block the Time for CMAHC 2015 Now!**

## **1<sup>st</sup> CMAHC Biennial Conference**



- **1<sup>st</sup> CMAHC Biennial Conference, Scottsdale, AZ**
  - **October 6-7, 2015 (before the World Aquatic Health Conference)**

**Scottsdale Plaza Resort**

**7200 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85253**



# State/Local Jurisdictional Control & Decision Making

- ❑ MAHC can be adopted in whole or in part
- ❑ MAHC can be modified to address local issues
- ❑ Annex provides support for code requirements when jurisdictions are working with local stakeholders



## **Short-Term Benefits of Using the MAHC**

- ❑ Reducing pool code violations and closures,**
- ❑ Increasing use of a risk reduction approach to pool design and operation,**
- ❑ Improving the effectiveness of pool inspection programs,**
- ❑ Improving data collection through standardization,**
- ❑ Expanding use of inspection data to improve decision-making, and**
- ❑ Decreasing resources used for creating and regularly updating pool codes.**

## Long-Term Outcomes of MAHC Use Should Include Reducing:

- ❑ Outbreaks of waterborne illnesses,
- ❑ Drowning incidents,
- ❑ Injuries from pool chemicals and
- ❑ Swimming-related emergency room visits.



## Conversations With State and Local Pool Programs\*

- ❑ **Are there benefits of having a federal model code (MAHC)?**
  - “The code is scientific/research based and is defensible”
  - “We have a lot of contractors that apply for building pools out of state and a federal code will help ensure uniformity”
  - “We will not have to reinvent the wheel each time we update our code”

\*Quotes are anonymous to encourage open discussion

## Conversations With State and Local Pool Programs\*

- ❑ **Are there cost savings ( resources and/or financial) to your local code development/revision process by having a federal model code ?**
  - “Over time it will likely save resources because we won’t have to develop the code from scratch each time. But the MAHC is in such great detail that we will have to go through it first to identify if any local objections exist. Using the FDA Food Code was difficult the first few years, but now it saves significant time and resources”
  - “Annex will serve as the rationale that are not in codes now. Every time we do a rule or act revision we must reinvent the wheel. The wheel has been invented with the MAHC.”

\*Quotes are anonymous to encourage open discussion

## Conversations With State and Local Pool Programs\*

- ❑ **Are there negatives of having a federal model code (MAHC)?**
  - “If it’s too restrictive and does not allow us to make local decisions. Because the MAHC is not mandated, this is not a concern”
  - “Federal code being a model code is the right direction. Its not VGB. A Federal law with no money is a major problem. Option to adopt all, part or none of the MAHC is huge. Industry standard of care will likely be the MAHC and will be used in court cases”

\*Quotes are anonymous to encourage open discussion

## The Future

- ❑ Encourage everyone to become members of the CMAHC to drive future revisions of the MAHC
- ❑ Encourage health departments to consider adopting the MAHC
- ❑ Don't hesitate to contact the CMAHC if your jurisdiction has questions about the MAHC or MAHC adoption
- ❑ By all stakeholders working together we can preserve and protect one of America's greatest pastimes



## Contact Information

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**More Information: Search on  
"CDC MAHC" or visit the  
Healthy Swimming MAHC  
Website: [www.cdc.gov/mahc](http://www.cdc.gov/mahc)  
Email: [mahc@cdc.gov](mailto:mahc@cdc.gov)**

**More Information: Search on  
"CMAHC" or visit the CMAHC  
Website: [www.cmahc.org](http://www.cmahc.org)  
Email: [info@cmahc.org](mailto:info@cmahc.org)**

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### The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC): A National Model Public Swimming Pool and Spa Code

**MAHC Resources**

- Health Promotion Materials
- Newsroom
- Announcements

**Healthy Water Sites**

**Healthy Water Home**

- Drinking Water
- Healthy Swimming/Recreational Water
- Global Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH)
- Other Uses of Water
- Water-related Emergencies & Outbreaks
- Water-related Hygiene

CDC has been working with public health, academia, and aquatics industry representatives across the United States on guidance to prevent drowning, injuries, and the spread of recreational water illnesses at public swimming pools and spas. The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) is a voluntary, science- and best-practices-based guidance document that can help local and state authorities make swimming and other water activities healthier and safer. The MAHC serves as a voluntary model and guide for local and state agencies needing to update or implement swimming pool and spa code, rules, regulations, guidance, law, or standards governing the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of public swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, and other disinfected aquatic facilities.

**The Model Aquatic Health Code**

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Contact Us:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
800-CDC-INFO  
(800-232-4636)  
TTY: (888) 232-6348  
[Contact.CDC-INFO](mailto:Contact.CDC-INFO)

For more information, please contact us at [MAHC@cdc.gov](mailto:MAHC@cdc.gov)

**MAHC Topics**

<b>General Information</b> Purpose, outcomes, FAQs...	<b>MAHC Status</b> First complete "knitted" version...
<b>MAHC Development</b> Development & oversight of the MAHC...	<b>Steering Committee</b> Guiding the MAHC process...
<b>Technical Committees</b> Providing specialized knowledge...	

**New!** The public comment period for the **first complete version** of the MAHC closed on May 27, 2014. The first edition of the MAHC will be released in summer 2014.

**CMAHC**  
Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code

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**Announcements**

**Workshop: National Environmental Health Association — July 7, 2014**

**Springboard to Prevention: The Model Aquatic Health Code, 1st Edition**

This workshop at the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Annual Educational Conference (AEC) will present the "knitted" version of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).

**Meeting: Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code — October 8, 2014**

This FREE organizational meeting gives public health officials and members of the aquatics industry the unique opportunity to help form the Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC), which will become the preeminent organization for pool and spa standard of care across the country.

**Welcome to the Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code**

The Conference for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC) is a nonprofit organization created in 2014 to support and improve public health by promoting healthy and safe aquatic experiences for everyone. The CMAHC will serve as a national clearinghouse for input and advice on needed improvements to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). The MAHC is a voluntary, science- and best-practices-based guidance document that can help local and state authorities make swimming and other water activities healthier and safer. The CMAHC will collect, assess, and relay national input on needed MAHC revisions back to CDC to keep the MAHC current and up to date with the latest public health issues and aquatics sector advances. As a new organization, we encourage interested parties to join and help us build this new organization into a driving force for improved health, safety, and fun at the nation's public swimming facilities.

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