

## Professional conferences enrich and energise

Nearly 1200 academics, practitioners, and policymakers from around the world gathered in Wellington, New Zealand from 1–4 October 2012, for Safety 2012—the 11th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion. The theme of the conference was ‘Connecting pathways for a vibrant and safer future’, which was chosen to highlight the importance of key stakeholders strengthening collaborations to develop comprehensive approaches to address and prevent the most pressing injury problems of the 21st century.

When you return from conferences, it is often challenging to put into words what you ‘got out of it’. Typically, the networking opportunities stand out because these gatherings offer excellent opportunities to connect with people who you don’t interact with in between meetings, or who you only talk to via internet. Good ideas and great enthusiasm usually result, and if you are fortunate there will be a follow through in the form of new, interesting, and impactful projects. Breaking free of the day-to-day and learning about new approaches and ideas can also be refreshing and inspiring, providing new energy for your return to the office. Such was the case at the recent World Conference. Poster and oral/panel sessions, breaks, and social events provided ample time for such connections.

Equally noteworthy at this year’s meeting were the plenary sessions that included time for audience participation. The speakers were provocative and it was fascinating to hear reactions from a wide array of colleagues from around the world. The debate session pitting research against implementation led to a number of comments from the audience who had surprisingly disparate opinions on the issue. SAVIR, Safe States, and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) were represented at the meeting, and this particular debate resonated with us. The general consensus seemed to be the answer is that we need both research and implementation, and one without the other paints an incomplete picture, at best. Stay tuned for a summary, which is expected to appear in print in the near future.

In 2013, SAVIR and Safe States Alliance will partner to convene a dynamic and collaborative national injury and violence prevention conference. The Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy, along with partners from other divisions of Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will host the 2013 National Meeting at the Sheraton Baltimore City Center Hotel from 5–7 June 2013 in Baltimore MD. Over several decades, injury and violence prevention professionals

have worked tirelessly to enhance the health and safety of communities across the USA. Representing a variety of fields, disciplines and organisations, these professionals work collaboratively each day to achieve a shared goal: to decrease the national burden of injuries and violence. It is in this spirit that the theme chosen for the meeting is ‘Safe Today...Safer Tomorrow’.

During the National Meeting, we will celebrate the accomplishments that have increased the safety of communities in the present day, while also building on these achievements to create a safer and healthier future. We will also celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Safe States Alliance. The meeting promises to be an excellent learning and networking opportunity for researchers and practitioners from all aspects of our field—health departments, hospitals, first responders, trauma centres, government agencies, and community organisations. SAVIR will also organise a day on Capitol Hill for interested injury prevention researchers and advocates. Educating our country’s legislators and their staff on the public health burden of violence and injury, and demonstrated effective solutions to keep people safe is important for the development and implementation of research-based injury prevention policies.

These sorts of gatherings are critical for our field, particularly as new challenges continue to arise, budgets continue to tighten, and the world continues to change at an ever increasing pace. The partnership between research and practice is critical to achieve a safer tomorrow. We look forward to seeing you soon in Baltimore.

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