The CCPH Featured member is **The Network: Towards Unity for Health** represented by The Network’s Secretary General, Arthur Kaufman. The Network is a Non-Governmental Organization in official relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO). It was founded in 1979 as the "Network of Community-Oriented Educational Institutions for Health Sciences." At that time, WHO had adopted the strategy, "Health for All by the Year 2000", and was encouraging a shift in emphasis from hospital-based curative care towards community-oriented preventive and curative care was deemed necessary for the education of health professionals. A group of representatives of health care educational institutions who were already reorienting their curricula to meet this requirement founded The Network: Toward Unity for Health. The Network has become a global association of institutions for educating health professionals to be committed to contribute, through innovative education, research, and service, to the improvement and maintenance of health in the communities they serve.

In addition to being the current Secretary General of The Network, Arthur Kaufman is a Full Professor in the Department of Family, Community and Emergency Medicine at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Arthur and The Network have been long-time members of CCPH. In October 2004, CCPH and The Network will team up to co-sponsor an international conference in Atlanta, GA.

**Q) Briefly, what is the mission of your organization?**

A: The Network: Towards Unity for Health is a global network of individuals and groups, of institutions and organizations whose mission is to improving the health of communities. To improve the relevance of health institutions and provider organizations to priority health needs of their communities, strong partnerships and unity of action must be fostered between community stakeholders including community representatives, health professions institutions, health services, and health policy makers.

**Q) What do you most want people to know about the work that you do and the unique characteristics of your organization?**

A: The Network is a non-government organization of the World Health Organization. The majority of members are from developing countries whose voice, whose priorities, whose innovations are rarely heard abroad. The Network is a "home" and "clearinghouse" where ideas, questions, strategies and effective programs addressing the Network's mission are disseminated via annual, international meetings, email correspondence, listservs, website, bi-annual newsletter and the Network's tri-annual peer-reviewed journal, Education for Health. It is one of the few international organizations which promote a bi-directional consultation process between institutions and programs in developing and industrialized countries, for some of the most important innovations are emerging in developing countries but are unknown outside a local context due to language, cost of travel, and access to channels of dissemination.

**Q) What are you passionate about in your work?**

A: The Network is a "learning organization." What excites me about working with colleagues I meet through the organization is the fresh ideas that emerge, that are shared, and that allow us to transform institutions and programs "at home." For example, our innovations in health professions education and community service in New Mexico were very much influenced in our early years by programs we visited in the Philippines and in Mexico. In the Philippines, we saw how communities were involved in selecting promising youth who would become future health professionals on the islands of Samar and Leyte. We were struck by how they developed a career ladder of training around priority rural health needs. In the marginal areas of Mexico City, we observed their first and second year health science students conducting all their studies in the neighborhoods while performing local public health tasks and
conducting health education and health screening of local school children. We adapted both of these programs in our institution.

Q) What is your dream for the future of your organization and/or community-campus partnerships you’re involved in?

A: No organization can adequately serve all the needs of its membership because of the limitations of resources. To better serve our membership in a resource-limited environment, I believe it is important to form strategic partnerships (formal or informal) with like-minded organizations that can bring complementary strengths to our members. Today, information can be exchanged electronically via linking to one another’s websites, announcing meetings, events, consultations and submitting articles in other organizations newsletters or journals. I see The Network and CCPH, with so many overlapping interests engaging in this kind of sharing.

Q) What wisdom would you like to communicate to others in this field? What advice would you give to a student or professional just entering into the field?

A: Individuals engaged in institutional change, in forging links between different organizations, fields or sectors of society are vulnerable. Their task is daunting, their problems often isolating, and their need for finding knowledgeable colleagues great. The Network has provided an international "home" for those engaged in this important struggle, where needed information, consultation and support can be found in the most unlikely places. I strongly recommend learning from a far broader set of international experiences than we are used to.

Q) What is the biggest challenge you face in your work and how are working to overcome it?

A: One of our biggest challenges is fund-raising. Funding is more easily targeted toward programs rather than infrastructure. However, to run a successful international program which focuses so heavily upon the needs of innovators in developing countries we need a robust central coordinating office. We have tried to address these problems by tapping into the time and support of individuals in different universities, especially Maastricht University in The Netherlands, our organizational home, and conduct as much business as possible through internet. As travel becomes an unaffordable expense for so many Network members, electronic communications becomes essential.

We believe strongly in the concept of a "Health Commons" where many intractable health problems in a community can only be solved by the contribution of many stakeholders in the community. Solutions are often evident at the front line, but power structures usually promote "top-down" approaches. Effective policy makers must therefore try to overcome the tendency of agencies and organizations to frame solutions in self serving rather than collaborative terms. And they must go out of their way to listen to the voice and wisdom of those most affected by health problems.

Q) Why did you join CCPH? How would you describe the organization to your colleagues?

A: We joined CCPH because it is a "kindred spirit" organization from the Network's perspective. CCPH offers an important model of the importance of multi-professional learning and service. Where The Network's geographic focus lies in developing countries, CCPH's lies in the U.S. and linking the two can broaden the shared experience of both.

Q) What value do you see in being a member of CCPH to meet your future goals for your organization and for the field?
A: Because of the relative wealth of the United States and its access to communications channels, the experiences of CCPH's membership are easily accessible and would be of great value to more resource-poor countries.

Q) What strengths and talents do you bring to CCPH?
A: As an international member, The Network can bring to CCPH different perspectives, and offer a set of experiences, project outcomes, personal and organizational relationships which can broaden approaches to community-campus partnerships. CCPH members who have come to annual Network meetings have been welcomed and been moved by their interaction with international colleagues.

For more information please contact:
The Network: Towards Unity for Health
P.O. Box 616
6200 MD Maastricht
Netherlands
Website: http://www.network.unimaas.nl/