



cCMV Public Health and Policy Conference

Request for Host Proposals for 2027 Meeting: Applications Due August 10, 2026

The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM), within Utah State University's Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice, organizes the congenital Cytomegalovirus Public Health and Policy Conference (cCMV-PHPC). NCHAM is currently seeking applicants who are interested in hosting the cCMV-PHPC in August or September of 2027. Having a site host helps to increase the sustainability of the conference and ensure a successful cCMV-PHPC. Consider submitting a collaborative proposal with partner organizations to share the workload.

cCMV Background

Congenital cytomegalovirus (cCMV) is the most common congenital infection, affecting 1 in 200 babies and can pass trans-placentally to the fetus, which can result in multiple disabilities such as hearing loss, vision loss, poor brain growth, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and, in rare cases, death. In fact, cCMV accounts for 15-30% of sensorineural pediatric hearing loss. Despite cCMV causing more long-term problems and childhood deaths than Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, neural tube defects, and Down Syndrome, there is limited public awareness of cCMV. Recognizing the strong connection between cCMV and hearing loss, NCHAM has worked to raise awareness of cCMV in multiple ways, including the cCMV-PHPC.

Conference Background and Benefits of Hosting

The inaugural cCMV-PHPC was held in 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The intention was to hold the conference every other year. However, the conference has gotten off schedule to odd years due to COVID-19 and the 2027 cCMV-PHPC will be the seventh. The two-and-a-half-day conference seeks to disseminate the latest cCMV research on cCMV screening, diagnosis and treatment, best practices for raising cCMV awareness and prevention, information about early intervention options, and family support resources. The conference brings together essential cCMV stakeholders including parents, public health professionals, educators, researchers, and clinicians. This brain trust of stakeholders has the ability to influence policy, guide research, and increase prevention. In fact, the past six cCMV-PHPC have been a catalyst for legislation, publications, research studies, and parent support groups. On average the conference hosts 250 attendees. To view previous agendas and other conference information, go to cmv.usu.edu.

Previous host states have had a positive experience reporting that "Helping bring the 2025 CMV-PHP conference to Minnesota was incredibly rewarding. The high level of local participation was especially impactful...I highly encourage leaders and advocates in other states to consider hosting a future CMV-PHP conference—it is a powerful way to accelerate advocacy and change" (Kirsten Coverstone, Minnesota Department of Health, host site 2025). Also, Dr. Mark Scleiss at University of Minnesota stated "...*This is what the Congenital CMV Public Health and Policy Conference is for, to learn from one another about how we can effect change in public policy that will improve outcomes for future babies!*" Dr. Stephanie McVicar from Utah stated "this is an amazing conference that is so needed. Hosting the conference really boosted compliance with our mandate and increased overall awareness of cCMV in our state. It also built-up momentum and created greater partnerships within our community. The conference is about celebrating all that has been accomplished and discussing what's to come in the future. Being surrounded by passionate parents, researchers, and providers, AND getting to host them all in our city, was so special" (host site 2023).

Attendees from the 2025 conference shared their appreciation for the conference through the conference evaluation:

“I am a Public Health Nurse and feel extremely grateful that I was given a scholarship to attend. I feel I am now better equipped to talk to Childcare centers and families and guide them in navigating and support a positive CMV result. Thank you!!”

“This was a truly wonderful meeting! Thank you for organizing such a productive, collaborative, and engaging event.”

Proposal Requirements

If your state, region, or organization would like to host the conference, please submit a written proposal that is no more than 3 pages to Alyson Ward at alyson.ward@usu.edu with the subject line of “Proposal for 2027 cCMV Public Health and Policy Conference.” **Applications are due August 10, 2026.** A host site will be selected and announced by August 21, 2026.

Your proposal should address the following:

Leadership:

- Host state, region, or organization must provide a single point of contact (POC) to be available for monthly calls on average (twice monthly in the beginning and nearing the conference dates, once monthly in between) starting one year prior to the meeting—approximately September 2026.
- Host state, region, or organization must demonstrate the ability to recruit family members affected by cCMV to participate in the conference planning committee and actively lead the parent planning committee.
- Host state, region, or organization must demonstrate ability to recruit attendees and presenters including local parents, professionals, students, advocacy organizations, and government leaders.
- Host state, region, or organization must commit to seeking exhibitors and sponsors from local, national, and international businesses and organizations. Sponsorship may include discounts, funding of meals, provision of interpreting services, etc. Exhibitor and sponsor recruiting materials will be provided by NCHAM.
- Preference will be given to proposals that include letters of support including financial commitments from the host organization(s) and other meeting sponsors. NCHAM staff will be writing for an NIH R13 conference support grant for this conference, therefore monetary commitments from the host site cannot include R13 funding.

Location: (please consider the following when submitting a location proposal, cCMV-PHPC staff will help solidify, more than one location may be proposed):

- Consider availability of a space to fit 300 attendees with one main room for plenary sessions and 3-4 breakout rooms for conference (one breakout room can be the plenary room).
- Comfortable lodging close by that has at least 150 rooms available at a discount, government price, or reasonable price.

NCHAM staff support for the conference includes but not limited to:

- Develop and update conference website and app.
- Organize monthly planning calls and provide conference timeline.
- Receive funds and make payments including negotiating and executing contracts with hotels, caterers, AV, interpreters, etc.
- Develop marketing materials including website, flyers, emails, etc.
- Solicit abstracts and organize an abstract review committee.
- In collaboration with planning committee, set conference agenda.
- Provide registration and payment logistics and support for attendees.
- Communicate with participants.
- Develop meeting materials (name tags, agendas, signage) including materials for local printing as needed.

- Create and oversee conference budget (e.g., registration income, room expenses, food, interpreters).
- Other tasks as necessary.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

- Host state, region, or organization provides a strong POC.
- Host state, region, or organization demonstrates ability to recruit families who are available and willing to participate in the planning committee and lead the parent planning committee.
- Strength of host state, region, or organization to provide local support and solicit local attendees.
- Cost for attendees in travel and accommodations
- Cost for cCMV-PHPC for venue, catering, and AV etc.
- Ability of host to financially contribute a minimum of \$10,000 to conference costs through their own funding or local sponsorships.

This is a competitive process so make your proposal as strong as possible! If you have questions, please contact Alyson Ward at alyson.ward@usu.edu or Mandy Jay at mandy.jay@usu.edu.

We look forward to receiving your application by August 10, 2026 (send to alyson.ward@usu.edu)!



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