

Public Health Happenings

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Programs in Public Health
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Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.
Martin Luther King, 1966

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IT'S WHAT YOU CAN DO!

In 2003, when he was interviewing for the position of Director of the MPH program, David Gregorio presciently stated, "It's not so much what you know when you graduate, but what you are able to do." David may have been ahead of the times, but he was onto something that is being recognized more and more—the importance of competency and practice experience in an applied academic program.

Similarly over ten years later, in its biannual "Education Life" Section, the title of an article by Anya Kamenetz in the *New York Times* (p. 26, Sunday, November 3, 2013) proclaimed, "Are you Competent? Prove It. Degrees based on what you can do, not

where you went or for how long." While no UConn program is likely to move from degrees based on credit hours to degrees based solely on the demonstration of competencies, at least in the foreseeable future, programs such as ours have long emphasized the importance of competencies and practical experience.

The MPH program in particular offers several opportunities to demonstrate public health competencies in the field. As in all other accredited programs, the Practicum is required for all students, regardless of their level of prior experience. During the spring of 2014, the MPH Practicum students will be working at six outstanding practicum sites: The City of Hartford Department of Health and Human

Services, Community Health Center Association of CT (CHCACT), the Connecticut Department of Public Health Early Childhood Nutrition Program, the Town of Manchester School Readiness Council, the March of Dimes Connecticut Chapter, and the Naugatuck Valley Health District,

But there are many other opportunities as well—which are particularly recommended for students with limited prior public health experience, or for seasoned professionals who want to move in a new direction:

- There are a variety of **internships** available at different points in time. For example, there are two internships advertised in this newsletter for next semester (see below)—one with the Department of Public Health Office of Health Care Access and the other with the Advocacy Committee of the Connecticut Public Health Association. With a little research students can find other internships with local, national or even international organizations. If students are looking for credits, they can register for the projects as **Field Experiences in Public Health**.
- Students can do expanded field experiences for their **Capstone** projects, in consultation with their major advisor and associate advisors.

One additional point is important to note: we could not offer these experiences without the help and enthusiastic cooperation of our community partners. They identify the questions that need answers and the work that needs to be done, and they provide essential guidance to our students. And as our students graduate and enter the workforce, these alumni frequently become preceptors for the students that have followed them. We are so appreciative of our many community partners!

Students interested in a practice experience this semester or during the summer should contact me at segal@nso.uchc.edu. Of course, I also encourage community agencies to contact me if they want to explore potential student projects.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy New Year!

Joan Segal
Editor

HEALTH DISPARITIES SEMINAR SERIES

The University of Connecticut Health Disparities Institute (HDI), a collaborative initiative to reduce health disparities across Connecticut, announces the inauguration of the annual Health Disparities Institute Seminar Series, **Health Disparities through the lens of Research, Capacity Building, Outreach & Engagement and Policy**.

There are four speakers for 2014. The first speaker



is [Dr. Chau Trinh-Shevrin](#), who will present on *Large Research Initiative/Health Equity/P60 Center of Excellence* on **Thursday, January 30, 2014, 4:00-6:00 p.m.**, at Cell and Genomics Sciences, 400 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, CT. Chau Trinh-Shevrin, DrPH is an Associate Professor in the Department of Population Health and the Department of Medicine at the New York University (NYU) School of Medicine. Within the Department of Population Health, she serves as Director of Large Research Initiatives and heads the Section for Health Equity. She also directs the Office of Community Engagement for the NYU-Health and Hospitals Corporation Clinical and Translational Science Institute, developing community-engaged research and research training initiatives.

Dr. Trinh-Shevrin is a social epidemiologist with a doctorate in public health from Columbia University and a master in health policy and management at the University of New York at Albany. Her work focuses primarily on understanding, addressing, and reducing health disparities of racial and ethnic minority and other underserved populations.

The other seminars in the inaugural year of the series include:

- **Thursday, March 6, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** [Dr. Kien S. Lee](#) – Presenting on Health Disparities/Capacity Building/Community Program Evaluation
(Deadline to register: February 27)
- **Wednesday, April 23, 9:00-11:00 a.m.** [Dr. America Bracho](#) – Presenting on Outreach & Engagement/Latino Health/Health Disparities
(Deadline to register: April 16)

- **Thursday, May 29, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**
[Dr. Adewale Troutman](#) – Presenting on
Supremacy of Social Determinants of Health
/Health Equity/Policy
(Deadline to register: May 22)

The deadline for registering for the January 30 seminar is *January 23, 2014*. To register for any of the seminars, go to the following website:
http://healthdisparities.uchc.edu/news/seminar_series/registration.aspx.

PART-TIME STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The Urban Oaks Organic Farm, located in an inner city area of New Britain, is seeking a part-time head teacher with an interest in the area of food systems. The program is Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday after school and includes a school garden curriculum, "Growing healthy habits." Interested candidates should contact Linda Glick at 860-508-4354 and/or send their resume/letter via email to:
lgglickurbanoaks@gmail.com.

SPRING DPH OCHA INTERNSHIP

Are you looking for an internship, field experience or potential capstone project for the spring semester? The Connecticut Department of Public Health's Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) has an excellent opportunity for two students to assist in developing its 2nd Statewide Health Care Facilities and Services Plan.

The Plan is an advisory document intended to be a blueprint for health care delivery in Connecticut. It serves as a resource document for policymakers and those involved in the Certificate of Need (CON) process, providing information, policies and projections of need to guide planning for specific health care facilities and services. Data included in the plan are intended to provide information on the use of health care resources and services, the types of care specific populations use and how frequently, unmet need and gaps in services. Interns will be involved in updating/collecting additional information for the inventory of facilities and services, a critical part of the plan. Interns will assist in the development of survey instruments, the compilation of lists for survey dissemination, the administration of surveys, the analysis of survey responses and the production of the inventory. They will work with Office of Health Care Access staff and its consultant, Health Resources in Action.

If you are interested in this excellent opportunity, contact Kaila Riggott directly at Kaila.riggott@ct.gov

or 860-418-7037; or to discuss further contact Joan Segal at segal@nso.uchc.edu.

ADVOCACY INTERNSHIP

If you are interested in an advocacy experience, the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) has an outstanding internship or field experience available during the spring semester. Legislative interns will:

- Participate in the legislative process in Connecticut;
- Track bill activity;
- Research and draft materials needed for CPHA to advocate effectively for its legislative priorities--health equity, environmental health, and public health infrastructure.

The internship requires strong writing skills, travel to the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, a flexible schedule and the ability to take initiative. Previous coursework in Environmental Health and Social and Behavioral Health is recommended. It is intended for graduate students in Public Health, Law, Policy, Social Work, Nursing and related fields.

If you are interested, please submit a cover letter and resume to Colleen O'Connor, Chair, CPHA Legislative Advocacy Committee at colleen.oconnor@cpha.info. If you are interested in registering for the project as a Field Experience in Public Health, also contact Joan Segal at segal@nso.uchc.edu

APPLIED EPIDEMIOLOGY FELLOWSHIP

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Association of **Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH)**, and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) have announced a request for applications for the [Applied Epidemiology Fellowship Program](#). This program, which trains recent graduates in the field of applied epidemiology, is now entering into its twelfth year. During a two-year assignment, participating fellows develop applied epidemiologic skills during a high quality, mentored training experience in order to prepare them for a long-term career at the state or local level. While the program provides rigorous training for its participants, it is also designed with flexibility in order to meet the particular interests of the fellows. The fellowship program is designed for recent master or doctoral level graduates in epidemiology or a related field who are interested in the practice of public health at the state or local level.

Fellows are carefully matched to their host agencies based on their own career interests and available opportunities of the host agencies and, upon placement, will develop a comprehensive set of core skills through applied competency-based training and experiences.

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday, January 17, 2014**. All application materials must be received by the deadline to be considered for acceptance. Incomplete applications or applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

For further information and to apply to this program, visit the CSTE [website: http://www.cste.org](http://www.cste.org). Applications are available online. Questions may be directed to Ms. Valerie Underwood, the workforce and fellowship administrator at CSTE, via email at VUnderwood@cste.org.

PREVENTION COORDINATOR

East Haddam Youth & Family Services, Inc., a non-profit Youth Service Bureau, has an immediate opening for a full-time Prevention Coordinator for a federally-funded program. **Responsibilities include:** Coordinating and facilitating coalition services and project activities; incorporating the five steps of the Strategic Planning Framework into all Coalition and sector member activities; insuring ongoing assessment and capacity building activities; data collection, reporting and dissemination; resource development and grant writing for sustainability of coalition efforts and other duties as determined by the Executive Director.

A successful candidate will possess the following qualifications, experience and characteristics:

- Post-secondary education in Social Work, Community Organization, or related field with experience working with and developing community coalitions;
- Experience in and knowledge of evidence-based substance abuse prevention practices, the dynamics of community coalitions and community approaches to prevention;
- Experience in networking, building consensus and coordinating diverse groups in accomplishing a unified plan of action;
- Good relationship building skills with ability to reach out to representatives and members from all community sectors and work easily with people in various positions;
- Well organized and detail-oriented with ability to maintain a high level of performance while managing multiple tasks;

- Able to accurately track, analyze and report program data;
- Grant writing experience (preferred, not required);
- Self-motivated, extroverted and energetic with strong interpersonal and communication skills;
- Experience in developing training and marketing materials using multiple media approaches;
- Strong computer skills.

This is a five-year, grant-funded position (30 hours per week), currently in the second year of funding. The position requires in and out of state travel and availability in the evening at times. Candidates must have a valid driver's license and reliable transportation for local travel. Mileage will be reimbursed at the Federal rate.

Interested candidates should submit their resume, three references and cover letter to: toni.mccabe@prodigy.net or mail to East Haddam Youth & Family Services, Inc., Attn: Toni McCabe, Executive Director, P.O. Box 572, Moods, CT 06469. See www.ehyfs.org for information about East Haddam Youth & Family Services and the East Haddam Local Prevention Council.

CLINICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM MANAGER

The Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Women's Mental Health is looking to fill a Clinical Research Program Manager position. The Center is dedicated to the evaluation and treatment of psychiatric disorders associated with female reproductive function. It provides consultation to women on the use of psychiatric medications during pregnancy and treatment for postpartum mood and anxiety disorders. The Program also treats women with premenstrual dysphoric disorder and menopause-related mood and anxiety disorders. For more information on the clinical and research program, visit www.womensmentalhealth.org.

The Clinical Research Program Manager will be assigned one or two active clinical studies and will be responsible for the implementation of those studies under the guidance of the principal investigators. Additionally, the Clinical Research Program Manager will be responsible for coordinating grant submission activities and for other Program-wide administrative and regulatory activities.

Applicants should have the following skills, abilities, and competencies:

- Thrive in a busy work environment that requires coordination of multiple activities and the judgment and flexibility to reprioritize to accommodate emergency requests
- Function independently and work with only very general direction from the Director and Program Manager
- Make independent and effective decisions
- Independently prioritize tasks and set deadlines
- Demonstrate high level of organizational and time management skills
- Display sound interpersonal skills and the ability to train and supervise others effectively
- Work well as a member of a team
- Handle sensitive and confidential issues
- Have strong analytical skills to problem solve efficiently
- Demonstrate strong database management and computer proficiency, and have ability to learn new computer programs quickly
- Be able to display initiative and introduce innovations to active research projects

Requirements for the position include a bachelor's degree and at least three years of relevant research experience or a combination of relevant research and administrative experience. A master's in public health, psychology, clinical research administration, or related field is preferred.

The salary for this full-time position is \$35,000 per year, and benefits are available. Interested applicants may send cover letters and resumes to Abigail Davies via email to adavies2@partners.org or via USPS to 185 Cambridge Street, Floor 2, Boston, MA 02114.

NON-PROFIT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Jennifer Jaff Center, Inc. (formerly Advocacy for Patients with Chronic Illness) in Farmington, CT is searching for a new Executive Director. The national organization seeks an experienced Executive Director and attorney with the skills and commitment to successfully execute, promote, and grow the organization in alignment with its mission. The ideal candidate is passionate about providing free information, advice, education and advocacy services to patients with chronic illnesses nationally. The focus of the Center is on health and disability insurance, Social Security disability, employment discrimination, family and medical leave, educational equity, and resource location, and on the protection and promotion of the concerns of the chronically ill through education and public policy. The full-time, onsite position is for immediate hire.

The major responsibilities of the Executive Director include organizational leadership, fundraising, outreach and community relations, operational planning and management, legal representation, financial planning and management, and risk management.

Among the requirements, applicants should have the following experience:

- A minimum of five years as a licensed attorney in at least one state in the United States for the practice of law
- Prior experience in or exposure to the nonprofit sector, with specific experience or interests in fundraising and grant writing
- A minimum of five years of prior work experience in a management role

The position also requires a Law degree (JD) and current bar admission in at least one jurisdiction. Additional requirements for the position include:

- Exceptional communication, organization, and interpersonal skills
- Legal experience with insurance and disability law
- Media relations skills
- Demonstrated ability to manage
- Knowledge of the role of advocacy
- Knowledge of the area of chronic illness
- Passion for advocating on behalf of others in need
- Fundraising expertise

This high profile leadership position offers excellent benefits and a starting first year annual base salary of \$90,000. For immediate consideration, please send your resume, and a cover letter describing your professional background and passion for the mission of the Jennifer Jaff Center via email to: TJJC@scionstaffing.com.

SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE GROUP FORMED
Mazen El Ghaziri and Jenny Garza, along with others in the Occupational and Environmental Division, have initiated a Scholarly Discourse Group (similar to a journal club). Its purpose is to provide a medium that will allow students, faculty, and staff to discuss emerging topics in occupational health research. If you are interested in joining, please RSVP to Mazen (elghaziri@uchc.edu) or Jenny (Garza@uchc.edu).

MPH THESIS DEFENSES

Katelyn Sileo will be defending her MPH thesis, "Determinants of Family Planning Uptake and Use of Contraceptives among Postpartum Women in Rural Uganda," on Tuesday, **January 14** at 1:00 p.m. in the Large Conference Room, Department of Community Medicine and Health Care, at The Exchange. Susan Kiene, PhD, is the major advisor. Katelyn entered the UConn PhD Program in Public Health in January 2013.

On **January 28** at 12:00 noon, Luz Flaherty will defend her thesis, The Relationship between Obesity and Occupations among the U.S. Population Based on Occupational Tasks, in the Department of Community Medicine, Small Conference Room, at The Exchange.

HISTORY OF MEDICINE SEMINAR

"American Nursing's Response to War and the Flu, 1917-1918" is the topic of a seminar to be held on Tuesday, **January 14**, noon to 1:00 p.m. in the Onyiuke Dining Room, UConn Health Center cafeteria. The seminar will be presented by Jennifer Telford, PhD, as part of the 2013-2014 History of Medicine Lecture Series, sponsored by the Hartford Medical Society and the Robert U. Massey Medical Humanities Fund. Free pizza will be available, with on-campus registration at: <http://hsecfs1.uhc.net/eventregistration/>.

CDC HEALTH DISPARITIES REPORT

CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report — United States, 2013 is the second agency report examining some of the key factors that affect health and lead to health disparities in the United States. Four findings bring home the enormous personal tragedy of health disparities:

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Non-Hispanic black adults are at least 50% more likely to die of heart disease or stroke prematurely (i.e., before age 75 years) than their non-Hispanic white counterparts.
- The prevalence of adult diabetes is higher among Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and those of other or mixed races than among Asians and non-Hispanic whites. Prevalence is also higher among adults without college degrees and those with lower household incomes.
- The infant mortality rate for non-Hispanic blacks is more than double the rate for non-Hispanic whites. Rates also vary

geographically, with higher rates in the South and Midwest than in other parts of the country.

- Men are far more likely to commit suicide than women, regardless of age or race/ethnicity, with overall rates nearly four times those of women. For both men and women, suicide rates are highest among American Indians/Alaska Natives and non-Hispanic whites.

The report was published as Supplements to *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, November 22, 2013 / 62(03); 1-2.

UCHC EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

With the winter weather upon us, students and faculty should make sure to follow the Health Center's **Emergency Closing Procedures**. It is very important to remember that UCHC policies and decisions are NOT the same as those of other state agencies, the main campus in Storrs, or other UConn branches, nor are they the same as those announced by the Governor's Office. The nature of the Health Center's activities requires that official notification of emergency closing decisions be made and communicated **ONLY** by the Health Center.

Under the UCHC Emergency Closing policy, Health Center employees and students are requested to contact the Health Center's **Operational Status Hotline at 860-679-2001** as the only reliable and official source of communication regarding **delayed openings, class cancellations, or closings** of the Health Center's non-essential service units due to weather or other circumstances. Broadcast e-mail messages are also sent to correspond with the appropriate message.

Because of restrictions imposed by mass media automated notification systems, the Health Center no longer broadcasts closing information through radio or television station outlets. This is necessary because in recent years the majority of radio and television stations in Connecticut have converted to automated systems announcing closing information. These systems restrict the scope and description of the information conveyed and do not meet the particular needs of the Health Center.

In the unlikely event that service of the Health Center's Operational Status Hotline is disrupted, UCHC employees and students may call the **Back-up Number: (860) 486-9292**. Please keep the above two telephone numbers in convenient locations at home for quick access.

Finally, the Health Center has announced the following resources to help keep you and your family safe during adverse weather conditions

- http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/winter.shtm
- <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
- <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/>
- <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster>
- <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/winter/>

EPIDEMIOLOGY GAME

The University of Minnesota School of Public Health has released a new online game which simulates actual tasks performed by a team of public health professionals during an epidemic. In the *Epidemic Game*, a mysterious disease is causing people to fall ill in your city. Join the team to stop the epidemic before it spreads throughout the city and beyond! To play for free, go to www.epidemicgame.org.

STUDENT NEWS

John Donnelly is a partner in the accounting firm of Mahoney Sabol & Co., LLP and is located in their Essex office. He is also a member of the Old Saybrook Rotary club and has worked with his club to obtain matching grants for literacy and sanitation in Ghana. The total grant money raised so far is a little over \$50,000. John is in the process of finishing his MPH and expects to be spending more time in Ghana working on literacy and health related challenges in the coming years.

Shir Lerman, an MPH and doctoral student in anthropology, is an adjunct instructor in cultural anthropology at Manchester Community College.

ALUMNI NEWS

Elaine Abrams, MPH (2002), RN, CHES, recently assumed the position of Program Manager, Alzheimer's & Dementia Services at Hebrew Senior Life in Boston, Massachusetts. She will manage the coordination of dementia care, education and advocacy through the advancement of research, the provision of care and support for all affected in the organization's system-wide continuum of housing and health care. This newly created position will also include educational outreach to the greater Boston community to address the burden of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Hebrew Senior Life, a Harvard Medical School affiliate, is the largest provider of elder care and independent senior housing in the Boston metropolitan area and home to the prestigious Institute for Aging Research, the largest gerontology and geriatrics research facility based in a clinical setting in the U.S.

Patricia Beckenhaupt, RN, MS, MPH (1999), is working at the CDC as Public Health Advisor and Project Officer, State Consultation Team, Division of Diabetes Translation, Program Evaluation Branch.

Courtney Butler, MSW, MPH (2011) has been promoted to the position of National Specialist of Psychosocial Ancillary Services by Gentiva Health Services.

Demetria Cain, MPH (2007) has been appointed Research Scientist at the Center for HIV/AIDS Education Studies & Training (CHEST) in New York City. She is a PhD candidate in Community Health Sciences at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

Angela Colantonio, MPH (2013) has been appointed Director of Implementation at Urban Alliance (UA), a Christian non-profit organization located in Hartford. Using a professional services approach, the UA mobilizes a network of churches and Christian organizations who work together to help neighbors in need in the local community. "I'm very excited to take this next step forward in my public health career," reports Angela.

Zygmunt F. Dembek MS, PhD, MPH (2005) is Deputy Editor of *Public Health Reports*, which has been published continuously for 127 years, and authored the editorial for the November/December 2013 issue. He recently attended the 3rd annual Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) Conference, held in Marrakesh, Morocco from December 4-7, 2013, where he evaluated disease surveillance presentations.



Zyg Dembek (right) at EMPHNET Conference with the Iraq Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) Director, Dr. Faris Lami.

Tanya Dempster-Bazile, MPH (2008) has been working as a Senior Business Intelligence IT

Consultant/Project Manager at New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation since February 2013.

Ally Hajuk McGovern, MPH (2009) has been accepted into the T32 Postdoctoral Training Program in Geriatric Clinical Epidemiology at Yale.

After more than three years at the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, **Alyssa Norwood, JD/MPH (2009)** has joined the staff of the Commission on Aging, a non-partisan state agency of the Connecticut General Assembly, where she serves as Special Projects Coordinator. The Commission's broader mission is to prepare the state for its burgeoning aging population while promoting policies that enhance the lives of the present and future generations of older adults.

Eileen Shingleton, MPH (2012) has a permanent position as Service Information Developer III for a large enterprise data center.

Prakrity Silwal, MPH (2012) is a student at Boston College in the Master of Social Work, Global Practice program and is a graduate assistant with Boston College Career Services.

Ruonan Roy Wang, MPH (2013) has been appointed Executive Assistant to the Director, City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services.

Our condolences to **Cyndi Billian Stern, MS, MPH (2005)** on the December 20 passing of her mother, Geraldine Kremer.

FACULTY NEWS

Tom Babor, PhD, MPH, Chair and Professor, Department of Community Medicine, presented on "Global concentration of high risk product industries: Implications for alcohol control policies," and with alumna **Kate Robaina, MPH (2011)**, on "Influence of industry actions to increased availability of alcoholic beverages in the African Region," at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, November 2-6, 2013 in Boston.

Also presenting at the APHA Annual Meeting was **Richard Fortinsky, PhD**, Professor of Medicine and Health Net, Inc. Endowed Chair in Geriatrics and Gerontology, on "Results and lessons learned from the proactive memory care study." Dr. Fortinsky will teach the MPH elective, *Public Health and Policy in an Aging Society*, in the spring 2014 semester, along with co-instructor Julie Robinson, PhD (Thursdays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.).

Stephen Schensul and his research team presented a seminar, "Multilevel Intervention for the Prevention of HIV/STI in India," at UConn Health Center on December 12, 2013. The presentation focused on the results of an Indo-US project funded for six years by the National Institute of Mental Health. This intervention project focused on married women in a primarily Muslim, low income community of 600,000 in the northeast section of Mumbai. The seminar was sponsored by the Department of Community Medicine and Health Care and the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at the University of Connecticut.

Helen Swede, Assistant Professor of Community Medicine, presented a talk, "Epidemiology and Survival Trends in Breast Cancer," at the Medical Grand Rounds held on October 31 at UConn Health Center. The presentation explored the key risk factors and the hypothesized underlying pathology in breast cancer, described recent trends in incidence and survival, and identified outcome disparities by race.

Joan Segal, Editor

**Production: Barbara Case, Morgan Hollenbeck
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