

Public Health Happenings

The official electronic newsletter of the
University of Connecticut Graduate
Programs in Public Health

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October 2016

*Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have been affected by
Hurricane Matthew*

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ACCREDITATION UPDATE



The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) Board of Councilors acted at its June 15-18, 2016 meeting to accredit the UConn Graduate Program in Public Health for a seven year-term, extending to July 1, 2023. We are proud to announce that the program met 22 of the 23 applicable criteria.

The Council has requested an interim report by spring 2017 clearly defining a curriculum that ensures all students are thoroughly and consistently prepared in **interprofessional public health practice**, as defined in the program's concentration specific competencies (Criterion 2.1). The program and its Advisory committee continue to meet regarding accreditation and have taken

several steps to address CEPH's concerns as outlined above.

- For the first time this spring, the program will be offering Introduction to Interprofessional Public Health Practice with Dr. Angela Bermúdez-Millán, who has vast experiences in interprofessional education. This course will be offered every other year.
- All course instructors have been asked to link the program's identified concentration specific interprofessional competencies with their course learning objectives.
- For the fall 2017 class, one of a student's three capstone advisory committee members must be external to the program. This will help to promote and assure the interprofessional content of the student's work.

We will continue to pursue mechanisms and processes to ensure that our students are competent interprofessional public health practitioners (ie. changing capstone requirements to include asking the student to demonstrate the relevance of the project to interprofessional practice).

Again, we would like to offer a big **THANKS** to university administration, program faculty, students, staff, alumni, the program's advisory committee and our community partners for their contributions and support during this monumental effort!

The Council's final accreditation report can be viewed [here](#).

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The 2016-17 academic year has started with incredible optimism for the future of public health at

UCONN and beyond. Our recent reaccreditation reflects the great quality of our faculty, the strength of our curriculum and the potentials and accomplishments of our students and alumni. I offer each of you my congratulations and sincere appreciation for your part in making such recognition inevitable!

The new academic year welcomed a large and exciting cohort of new MPH candidates. UCONN continues to attract a smart, diverse and committed class of students who well reflect our program's commitment to interprofessional public health practice. We look forward to getting to know each of our new students as you gain experience and perspective over the coming years.

The new year also welcomed a cohort of 7 UCONN undergraduates who are the first to undertake our 4+1 FastTrack BA/BS + MPH option. These students are pursuing undergraduate degrees in such diverse fields as Molecular and Cell Biology, Health Systems Administration and Allied Health Science, yet share remarkable academic profiles and a common passion for improving the public's health. Each week, Dr. Scott Wetstone brings his Epidemiology & Biostatistics courses to the Storrs campus via a synchronous audio-video connection. Shortly, we will begin seeking applications from undergraduates students to join the 2017-18 FastTrack cohort. In the upcoming academic year, we will be offering multiple graduate courses through this electronic connection.

The 2016 incoming classes of UCONN medical and dental students will now complete two years of basic medical science training concurrently with their study of population health as each of them works to receive a UCONN Certificate in the Social Determinants of Health and Disparities. This 12-credit graduate certificate will cover topics of introductory epidemiology and biostatistics, along with a survey of principles regarding the origins and impacts of social inequality and approaches to minimizing those effects on the health of the population and its subgroups. We believe it will usher in an era of clinical practitioners who are skilled and sensitive to the macro-issues that influence individual health. We further believe this relationship of medical and public health education will distinguish UCONN as a population health innovator.

Lastly, fall 2016 also marks the largest class of undergraduates (225 students) in PUBH 1001 – Introduction to Public Health. Each year since its inception has demonstrated large and growing interest in public health at the University. Our spring offering of PUBH 3001 – Introduction to Epidemiology is equally well subscribed. Indeed, discussions are underway about how an undergraduate major and/or minor in public health can be accomplished.

As you can see, UCONN's public health program is vital to our University and our State. We are glad you are a part of this journey and look forward to adding greater accomplishments to our biographies.

David Gregorio, PhD, MS
Program Director

PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ORGANIZATION (PHSO)



Welcome back to another school year! The PHSO is excited to welcome 45+ students into the program this year! We were honored to have met so many of you at our first monthly night out at the Tavern.

Julie, a first year student is quoted, “the first PHSO night out was a great opportunity to to meet other first year students and connect with upper classmates”.

The PHSO board is excited to welcome Katie Bentivegna and Gulcan Ince as our newest members. Gulcan has been appointed to the position of PHSO secretary and Katie will step up

as our event coordinator. We hope the additional position of event coordinator will help more students get involved.

We had a successful bake sale at the end of the September and are now ready for our **October monthly night out**, scheduled for **October 19, 2016**. We would like to extend an invite to program faculty, staff and alumni. The event will begin at **4:00PM** at the **Tavern**. If you are planning to attend, please send an email to phso@uchc.edu.

The CPHA Annual Conference will be held on November 10 this year. A large group of us will be attendance and encourage you to join us! It is a great time for networking within the Connecticut public health community.

Whether you have been to every event or have yet to attend your first, we hope you'll join us! As always, if you have questions, want to get involved or have ideas for events, please email us at phso@uchc.edu.

You can also find us on Facebook: UConn Public Health Student Organization or seek out Derek, Michelle, Alex, Katie or Gulcan in one of your classes. We look forward to another great school year!

Derek Evans, MPH Candidate
Michelle Pomerantz, MPH Candidate

2016-17 PHSO Board
President: Derek Evans
Vice President: Michelle Pomerantz
Treasurer: Alex Senetcky
Secretary: Gulcan Ince
Event Coordinator: Katie Bentivegna

FEATURED FACULTY ARTICLE
HOWARD BAILIT, DMD, PhD



Are Dental Disparities a Supply or Demand Problem?

Access disparities are greater for dental care than for any other medical service. About 55% of Americans in the highest quartile of the family income distribution visit a dentist annually versus 25% in the lowest quartile. Most Americans believe that these disparities are fundamentally a supply problem. That is, more dentists and mid-level dental providers are needed to solve this problem. Others argue that it is an “effective” demand problem. Although the underserved want better access to dental services (demand), a large percentage are not covered by public or private dental insurance and cannot afford to purchase dental services out-of-pocket (effective demand). The dental safety net system (e.g., Federally Qualified Health Centers) is supposed to serve the poor, but has little capacity, and annually treats only about 4.5 million of the estimated 100 plus million underserved population.

To understand this supply versus demand issue, my colleagues and I have done a number of studies. In the state of Wisconsin, we looked at Medicaid dental utilization rates and the per capita number of dentists by county. If the basic problem is one of supply, then it is reasonable to expect that as the availability of dentists increases so will Medicaid utilization rates. We found essentially no relationship, and other independent studies have reported similar results.

In a more recent Connecticut study, we assessed the impact of increasing Medicaid dental fees to market competitive levels. As a result of a lawsuit,

the state raised Medicaid fees to the 70th percentile of market fees for children. Prior to the fee increase, only 35% percent of Medicaid children visited a dentist annually, and only 38% of Connecticut dental practitioners participated in the Medicaid program. The impact of the fee increase was dramatic. Within three years, utilization rates for Medicaid children increased to 46% (and to 72% for children continuously enrolled for 12 months). At the same time, the percentage of practitioners treating Medicaid children increased from 38% to 66%.

These two studies strongly suggest that dental access disparities are the result of a lack of effective demand and not the supply of dentists. Medicaid programs need to enroll families up to about the 250th percentile of the Federal Poverty Level; include basic services in the benefit plan; and keep Medicaid fees reasonably competitive with private market fees. These three changes will solve most, but not all, of the disparity problem.

Evidence to support this statement is seen in the marked improvements in national Medicaid children utilization rates over the past 10 years. Federal laws now require states to make most of the previously described changes in their Medicaid dental program for children. Their annual utilization rates increased from about 30% to 50%. These changes were not required for the adult Medicaid dental program, and their average utilization rates remain very low.

Similar to other medical services, the dental disparity problem cannot be solved by just making care available and affordable to the low income population. This is because personal health behaviors play a major role in determining health status. Because of lack of education, inequalities in income and related factors, the poor are at a major disadvantage. Our society has to address these larger issues before the disparity problem can be fully resolved.

Howard Bailit, DMD, PhD
Professor, Department of Community Medicine and Health Care

**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION (CPHA) 2016 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

**Back to the Future- 100 Years of Public
Health in Connecticut and Beyond!**



When: November 10, 2016 | 9am-6pm
Where: Anthony's Ocean View, New Haven,
CT

Join CPHA to celebrate 100 years of public health in Connecticut with over 30 presenters, a keynote speaker, an expert panel on opioid abuse, and a networking Happy Hour with live music! Take a glance into the past during the lunch presentation on the history of CPHA and public health in the state, and look forward to the future and with innovations in health research, policy, and community programs. *We are excited to announce that 16 current public health students are already registered. We hope you will join them!*

	Through 10/14	After 10/14
Members	\$85	\$95
Student Members	\$50	\$60
Non-Members	\$135	\$145

**This conference is eligible for CHES credits
for an additional \$25 fee**

Bring a group of 10 or more people, and CPHA will give you 10% off the conference registration fee

and \$10 off your membership fee. [Click here for the group registration form.](#)

[Click here for the 2016 Conference Brochure](#)



**2017 SPRING COURSES
ANNOUNCED**

**Registration begins Monday,
October 24** for the spring 2017
semester. The usual schedule of

evening core courses includes the group **Practicum** on selected Mondays, **Social and Behavioral Foundations of Public Health** on Tuesdays, **Environmental Health** on Wednesdays, and **Introduction to Epidemiology and Biostatistics II** on Thursdays.

The range of MPH electives includes **International Health, Public Health Agencies and Toxicology & Risk Assessment** on Monday evenings; **Intermediate Epidemiology and Health and Human Rights** on Tuesday evenings; **Public Health and Policy in an Aging Society** on Wednesday afternoons (2:00-5:00); **Ethics & Regulation of New Medical Therapies and Chronic Disease Prevention & Control** on Wednesday evenings; **Introduction to Interprofessional Public Health Practice** (new course), **Public Health Policy, Development and Advocacy** and **Critical Issues Facing the US** on Thursday evenings.

Online courses to be offered include: **Foundations of Public Health and Disability** and **Public Health Interventions in Disability**.

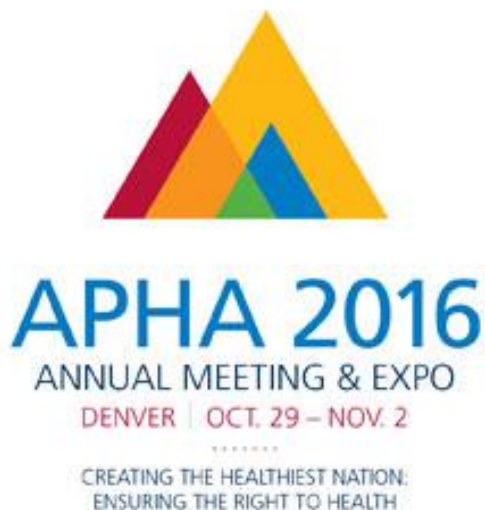
Health Care Organization and Management will be offered on Tuesdays, as a “Flex” course that combines online and in-class sessions located at the UConn Graduate Business Learning Center, 100 Constitution Plaza, in Harford.

Other graduate courses being offered this spring include the **Public Health Doctoral Research Seminar** (to be scheduled) and an online course, **Exercise Prescription for Chronic Disease and Health Conditions**.

For additional information:

<http://health.uconn.edu/student-services/registrar/current-uconn-health-graduate-school-students/>

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting
"Creating the Healthiest Nation: Ensuring the Right to Health"



"Health is not an option. It's about access. It's about equity. And it's about giving more attention where needed. EVERYONE deserves the opportunity to achieve the highest level of health. Becoming the healthiest nation means some communities and populations might require more resources than others. Moving toward health equity means we must value all people equally, promote prevention and zero in on the social determinants of health (apha.org)."

Why attend?

"It's a great opportunity to learn about cutting-edge research and everything that's going on...the latest and greatest in the public health space."

--Erika Goldberg, Massachusetts

"Witnessing how diverse and dedicated the public health workforce is was extremely inspiring."

--Sara Abdelhalim, California

"I met with public health leaders and had a great time learning from their experience and professionalism."

--Kadek Dioi Rahayu, Indonesia

We are happy to report that four program faculty will be presenting at APHA this year. Please support them and attend their session! Detailed information is outlined below.

Tom Babor, PhD, MPH – Oral Presentation –
"Alcohol Marketing in the Americas and Spain during the 2014 FIFA World Cup Tournament."

Date: Wednesday, November 2, 2016
Time: 1:10 PM

Audrey Chapman, PhD – Oral Presentation -
"Assessing Goal 3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals from a Human Rights Perspective."

Date: Monday, October 31, 2016
Time: 10:30 AM

Rick Fortinsky, PhD – Roundtable Presentation -
"Translating an evidence-based in-home dementia care intervention in a Medicaid waiver and state-funded home care program population."

Date: Tuesday, November 1, 2016
Time: 10:30 AM

David Gregorio, PhD, MS – Oral Presentation –
"Geographic Disparities in Breast Cancer Survival, Connecticut 1985-2013."

Date: Monday, October 31, 2016
Time: 2:30 PM

David Gregorio, PhD, MS - Oral Presentation -
"A Cross-national Study of Child Health Determinants."

Date: Tuesday, November 1, 2016
Time: 10:30 AM

David Gregorio, PhD, MS – Moderator -
"Health Disparities in Cancer Research"

Date: Monday, October 31, 2016
Time: 2:30 PM

FEATURED ALUMNI ARTICLE ROBERTO HENRY, MPH



After completing his degree, **Roberto Henry, MPH (2014)** joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a Public Health Associate. Roberto was assigned to Charleston, WV where he is stationed in the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department's Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Threat Preparedness for two years. In this role, Roberto has worked to improve the health department's capacity by developing Ebola response plans, acquiring funding through grants, investigating infectious disease outbreaks, collaborating with local and state community partners, participating in and evaluating preparedness exercises, and coordinating Zika testing.

Roberto published a Notes from the Field article in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) based on his investigation of a healthcare-associated outbreak of Epidemic Keratoconjunctivitis in West Virginia. As a result of his work and dedication to public health, Roberto was awarded the CDC's 2016 Louis Salinas Outstanding Public Health Associate Award.

This past year, Roberto took a 60-day deployment to San Juan, Puerto Rico to assist on the Zika response.

For additional information on Roberto and his accomplishments please click [here](#).

NATIONAL HEALTH DISPARITIES ELIMINATION SUMMIT

The **2nd Annual National Health Disparities Elimination Summit** entitled, **Living in America Today: Transforming Environments to Eliminate Health Disparities** will take place on October 28-29, 2016 in Farmington, CT. The summit is the result of a successful collaborative partnership between the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at the University of Connecticut and the W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute, made possible through the generous support of the Connecticut Legislative Black & Puerto Rican Caucus.

The goal of this endeavor is to bring various stakeholders together to provide important information and resources to eliminate health disparities. This year's Summit will take a holistic approach and focus on how different environments, such as the physical environment (e.g. Flint, Michigan water crisis), healthcare environment (e.g. role of diversity in improving outcomes) and social environment (societal structural issues such as gun violence), are creating or exacerbating health disparities. Where you live matters. Therefore, patients, health care providers, political leaders and community leaders can each make a positive impact to improve their environment, resulting in improved health outcomes in their communities.

Please Note: Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education Credits offered.

Speakers

The speakers featured in the Summit includes distinguished scientists, researchers, government officials, public health experts and community leaders from Connecticut and around the country. Presenters will share information regarding efforts to eliminate health disparities and will discuss the current state of African American and Latino Health in America today. The discussion will also include an emphasis on community involvement in the development of promising, effective strategies to reduce and eliminate disparities.

Keynote Speaker



[Mustafa Santiago Ali](#)

Senior Advisor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Justice & Community Revitalization Division.

Register online at:

<http://cicats.uconn.edu/2016nhdes>

STUDENT NEWS

Rashea Banks, a Community Breast Navigator at UConn Health, will be presenting her abstract, *Community Breast Navigation improves Breast Screening in Hartford, CT*, at the American Cancer Society's Making Strides event on Sunday, October 16, 2016 at Bushnell Park in the UConn Health sponsored Survivors Tent. The abstract has also been accepted for presentation at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in Texas on December 8, 2016. The abstract was written in collaboration with Dr. Christina Stevenson.

Micaela Eisenhandler Forshaw, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Grace Ellen, on May 14, 2016. Grace weighed in at 9 pounds 7 ounces. Congratulations Micaela!



Sara Namazi, a PhD candidate, will be presenting her poster entitled; *Qualitative Evaluation of a Peer Health Mentoring Program in Corrections* at the 2016 CPHA Annual Meeting held in November.

Jon Noel, a PhD candidate, had an Op-Ed, entitled [Higher Alcohol Prices Save Lives In CT](#), published in the Harford Courant on September 16, 2016. Jon will also be presenting an abstract at APHA this year; *Evaluation and Teenage Perceptions of Alcohol Ads on Facebook*.

ALUMNI NEWS

Salman Hamad Alzayani, PhD (2016) has been appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain.



Martiza Bond, MPH (2012) will be presenting a poster entitled; *Conectando la Comunidad (Connecting Communities) Initiative: Building Health Literacy and System Navigation Skills Among Certified Application Counselors, Community Health Workers and Hispanic Persons of Color* at the CPHA Annual Conference held in November.

Kate Hayden, MPH (2010) was recently honored by Harford Business Journal as one of the "40 Under Forty" for 2016. These are young professionals who share a commitment to business growth, personal excellence and deep community involvement, and are shaping the future of Greater Harford. The award presentation was held on September 14, 2016 at the Connecticut Convention Center. Also this past year, Kate was appointed to the Public Health Alumni Board.

Rasy Mar, MPH (2008) will be presenting a poster at APHA this year entitled, *You Don't Know what*

you Don't Know: Preparing Health Professionals to Work with Southeast Asian Communities. This poster was done in collaboration with Dr. Stacy Brown.

Tom Meehan, MD, MPH (1992) assumed the role of Executive Director for the Connecticut Center for Primary Care (CCPC) on August 8, 2016.

Fawatih Mohamed-Abouh, MPH (2016) will be presenting a poster entitled; *Large Disparity in Diabetes Mortality in CT: An Ecological Study* at the 2016 CPHA Annual Conference held in November.

Ava Nepaul, MPH (2008) will be presenting a poster entitled; *Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Screening and Risk Assessment Practices* at the 2016 CPHA Annual Conference held in November.

Daniel Ray, MPA, MPH (2016), our 2016 Commencement Speaker, began his position as an Administrative Fellow, in Hospital Administration, at UConn Health. He was also appointed to the Public Health Alumni Board.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MAIN STREET COMMUNITY FOUNDATION Program Officer (full-time)

This 40-hour per week position has primary responsibility for developing program initiatives, particularly in the health area, plans broad program agendas, provides technical assistance to applicants and grantees, reviews grant proposals and monitors existing grants to support the Main Street Community Foundation's mission.

The Program Officer serves as senior staff to fund advisory committees and other health initiatives initiated or coordinated by the Foundation. S/he must ensure the Foundation's grant program is both responsive to needs and opportunities in the community and proactive in seeking out funding opportunities.

Job Responsibilities:

- Work with Foundation staff and outside experts to develop strategies for grantmaking, to explore new areas of potential interest and unmet needs and to initiate special projects, particularly in the

area of health.

- Analyze conditions and trends in program areas as they relate to the Foundation's objectives and program goals and assist in positioning the Foundation as an innovative grantmaker.
- Review and analyze grant requests, carry out research on grant applications and gather required documentation on applications.
- Provide continuity with long-term grantees and those grants already approved.
- Prepare grant documentation and/or recommendations for the health grants program.

Experience and Educational Requirements:

- Minimum of a Bachelors degree required; Graduate degree in a health related field preferred
- 4 to 5 years of experience developing and managing programs in a health-related area
- 2 to 3 years of experience in foundation grant making preferred
- Familiarity with public health or experience working in government public health
- Enjoy working as a team member to encourage meaningful philanthropic action to improve the communities the Foundation serves and maximize donors' positive experiences with the Foundation
- Excellent communication (oral and written) are essential
- Ability to work independently and initiate projects.
- Flexibility, initiative, and interpersonal skills are essential
- Good judgment, attention to detail, strong organizational skills, and the ability to manage several projects at once
- Ability to handle multiple tasks and help develop processes and systems to maximize the Foundation's services
- Ability to travel for site visits and regional/national meetings
- Knowledge of electronic databases and grant making software

- Proficient in Microsoft Office; Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint

This position description is intended to be an overview and will evolve over time. The description is subject to periodic updating. At management's discretion, the employee may be assigned different or additional duties from time to time.

The Main Street Community Foundation seeks to establish and maintain diversity among its staff and thereby is inclusive in its employment practices.

To Apply:

Send, via regular mail or fax, a cover letter and resume to:

Susan Sadecki, MBA
 President and CEO
 Main Street Community Foundation
 P.O. Box 2702
 Bristol, CT 06011-2702
 Fax: 860.589.1252

Full job description can be found [here](#).

In the cover letter, please describe your related work experience and indicate your salary requirements. **Closing date for receipt of applications is October 31, 2016.**



DPH is seeking qualified personnel to work onsite as part of its **Performance Management and Workforce Development Program**.

Primary job responsibilities are as follows:

Work with the Department of Public Health and Public Health Systems Improvement staff to coordinate and implement workforce development activities to meet the training needs of the Department. Workforce development activities include but are not limited to:

- Assist with coordination of the Workforce Development Committee including scheduling and taking of minutes, that will

guide implementation of the agency's Workforce Development Plan.

- Assist with developing policies and procedures as needed, related to workforce and professional development
- Assist in identifying or developing low and no-cost training(s) to meet Department staff training needs
- Utilize the DPH learning management system called TrainingFinder Real-time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) for all training registration and posting of recorded trainings and training materials.
- Assist in coordinating and hosting training(s).
- Assist with coordination of the student intern process. This includes administering the Department student intern website and intranet sites to assist with intern recruitment and placement.
- Assist the Department with other workforce development tasks as needed.
- Participate on national coordinating calls to learn best practices from other states
- Assist with annually reviewing and updating the agency's workforce development plan
- Periodically assess staff training needs and satisfaction.
- Assist with development of processes and policies to address knowledge management/institutional memory

A master's degree in public health or a related area is preferred. Interested candidates should contact Kristin Sullivan at the number below

Kristin L. Sullivan, Manager
 Public Health Systems Improvement
 Connecticut Department of Public Health
 Phone: (860) 509-7126
 Cell: (860) 637-2683
 Email: kristin.sullivan@ct.gov

Written by: Morgan Spencer