

# Public Health Happenings

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

Volume 11, Number 8

January 2017

***PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR PUBLIC HEALTH  
CELEBRATION ON TUESDAY, MAY 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm***

- **Public Health Faculty Meeting**
- **American Public Health Association Annual Meeting**
- **SAS available for UConn Faculty, Staff and Students**
- **Connecticut Public Health Association Call for Nominations**
- **Public Health Student Organization Updates and Narran Training**
- **Featured Alumni Article – Jennifer Martin, BSN, MPH**
- **Featured Faculty Article – Richard Stevens, PhD**
- **Public Health Celebration**
- **CT Walks for Haiti**
- **White Coat Gala “Honoring Heroes and Healers”**
- **Women’s March on Washington**
- **Employment Opportunities**
- **Student, Faculty and Alumni News**

## **PUBLIC HEATH FACULTY MEETING**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>

**TIME:** 2 PM

**LOCATION:** The Exchange, Suite 260

**Department of Community Medicine & Health Care**

**Light Refreshment to be Served**

With reaccreditation in hand, we have scheduled a public health faculty meeting to review all curriculum changes that have and will take place in the coming months. The changes are outlined

below and will be discussed in more detail at the meeting.

### **Beginning with the fall 2016 incoming cohort:**

1. **No Selective Requirement** – students are no longer required to take an assessment, assurance and policy development course
2. **External Reader** – All capstone advisory committees must have an outside reader that is outside the public health area of

study. Outside readers must have at least a master's degree

3. All capstone papers must speak about how the topic relates to **interprofessional education (IPE)**.
4. **New Capstone Application Forms** – All students must use the new forms available on the program's website:

<http://www.commed.uchc.edu/education/mph/current/forms.html>

#### **Beginning with the fall 2017 incoming cohort:**

**Introduction to Interprofessional Public Health Practice** – All MPH students will be required to take this course. The course will be offered every year.

#### **All students:**

**Research Methods Requirement** - With the approval of the research methods instructor, students may **opt-out of research methods** but must substitute it for a more advanced research course

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### **AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (APHA) 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE TOPIC ANNOUNCED**

**"Creating the Healthiest Nation: Climate Changes Health"**



**APHA 2017**  
ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO  
ATLANTA | NOV. 4 – 8

APHA's Annual Meeting and Expo brings together more than 12,000 of your peers from across the U.S. and around the world to network, educate and inspire each other.

#### **Save the Date!**

This is a public health event you won't want to miss! Theme: "[Creating the Healthiest Nation: Climate Changes Health](#)"

**Call for Abstracts** - Now Open! [See submissions page](#).

**Deadline** for Call for Abstracts: Feb. 20 - 24, 2017

**Call for Reviewers** - Now Open! [Become a reviewer](#) today.



*Amy Ponte (2000), Program Director David Gregorio, Zygmunt Dembek (2005) at the APHA Annual Meeting in 2016.*



**SAS: Analytics, Business Intelligence, Data Management**

SAS is now licensed for Faculty, Staff, and Student download on personally owned devices.

<http://software.uconn.edu/sas/>

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION (CPHA) CALL FOR AWARD  
NOMINATIONS



**Connecticut  
Public Health  
Association**

Promoting Public Health in Connecticut Since 1916

There is no greater honor than to be recognized by one's peers. To that end, the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) holds the honor of recognizing individuals and agencies that have demonstrated leadership, and/or have made significant contributions to the public health sector in our state.

The CPHA Call for Awards invites you to nominate an individual or agency from a traditional or non-traditional public health occupation or sector. A description of CPHA's awards can be found on the 2017 CPHA [Call for Awards Nomination Form](#). All nominees are evaluated on their strengths, talents and abilities, as well as their contributions to public health in Connecticut. Anyone is welcome to submit a nomination, even individuals who are not members of CPHA.

The deadline to submit the 2017 CPHA Call for Awards Nomination form to [cpha@cpha.info](mailto:cpha@cpha.info) is **Friday, February 24, 2017**. The CPHA Awards Committee will review all nominations and select award recipients to be acknowledged during the CPHA Awards Event that will take place on Friday, April 7th, during National Public Health Week. More information on the event will follow shortly.

If you have questions about the nomination process, please send an email to the Awards Committee Chair Brittany Allen at [cpha@cpha.info](mailto:cpha@cpha.info).

## Become a member of CPHA Today!

### What does CPHA do for you?

- **Advocate** for greater public health resources and infrastructure at the state and federal level
- Voice **your opinion** on public health issues
- Provide **networking opportunities** with health professionals from across industries in Connecticut
- Participation in the [Annual Conference](#) at a discount
- Offer opportunities for [CHES credits](#) throughout the year
- [E-newsletters](#) and updates on public health issues that matter to you

### What does CPHA do for Connecticut?

- **Making a change** to improve safety and health of the public in Connecticut
- [Advocate](#) for healthy living in Connecticut
- Connecting with and [affecting change](#) at local health boards
- Support the public health workforce through [mentoring and educational](#) opportunities

### What does CPHA do for agency/organization members?

- **Promotion** of events, personnel and job openings
- **Advocate** on your behalf for greater resources at the state and federal level
- Discounted individual **memberships** for up to 3 of your employees/members

### **CLICK HERE TO JOIN CPHA!**

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, contact the Membership Committee at [membership@cpha.info](mailto:membership@cpha.info).

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## PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ORGANIZATION (PHSO) NEWS

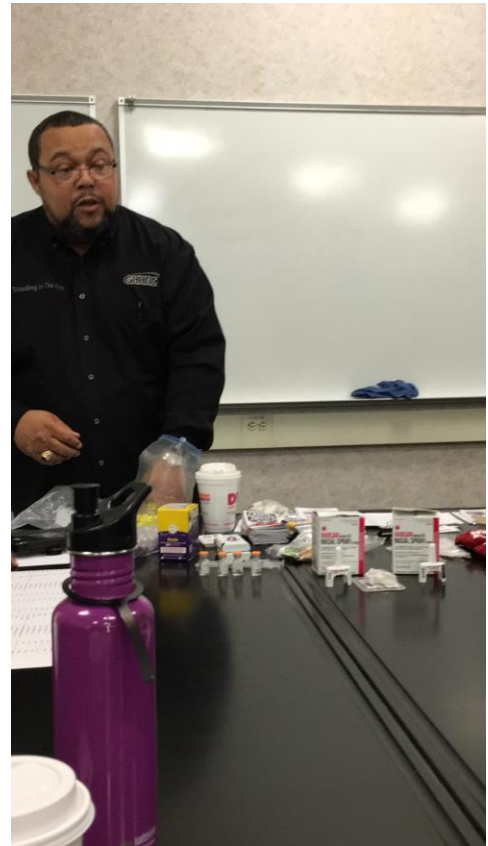


***Paisley Rearden, Derek Evans, Alex Senetcky, Cory Loftis, Michelle Pomerantz, Patrick Lau, Jameel Kassam at Narcan Training***

In November, due to the generosity of the MPH program several MPH students were able to attend the CPHA conference for free, and even more students were able to attend with the PHSO at a reduced price. This opportunity was much appreciated and has had profound impacts on the UConn MPH students. We are excited to announce that one of these impacts will be a combined partnership with the Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition.

The Public Health Student Organization in combination with the Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition hosted a Naloxone Training on Monday, January 23rd, 2017 at UConn Health. There were over 30 participants that included both program faculty and students. Attendees left the training having the necessary skills and confidence to distribute Naloxone. Participants received a free Naloxone kit. This event is a byproduct of the connections several of the MPH students made at the CPHA conference.

Later in the semester we are excited to be hosting different speakers and we are planning a full range of activities for National Public Health Week. You can stay updated on all of our events by liking our page on Facebook: UConn Public Health Student Organization or emailing us at [psho@uchc.edu](mailto:psho@uchc.edu). We would be happy to tell you about any upcoming events. Our events are open to all students and alumni.



### ***NARCAN TRAINING***

*President: Derek Evans  
Vice President: Michelle Pomerantz  
Treasurer: Alex Senetcky  
Secretary: Gulcan Ince  
Event Coordinator: Katie Bentivegna*

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### **FEATURED ALUMNI ARTICLE By: JENNIFER MARTIN, BSN, MPH Syrian Refugee Trip**

“Be as flexible as Gumby” is a saying one of my teammates uses frequently when we work overseas. Nothing has been more true and we haven’t even left for Jordan yet. This year our hosts have recommended that it will be better if we go to Lebanon instead of Jordan. Same work, similar population, different country. Thankfully the agency our hosts work for has outreach efforts to the Syrian refugees in both Jordan and Lebanon. Demonstrating our flexibility we are changing our plans and leave for Lebanon on Feb 16<sup>th</sup> .

Our mission remains the same, a team of 15 will be providing medical and dental care to the Syrian

refugees. The refugees in Lebanon face very similar circumstances as the refugees in Jordan; they do not have access to medical care, they are prohibited from working and have survived atrocities that we cannot even imagine. The only difference, they now live in Lebanon instead of Jordan.

For me, it's not about the location but the work we will be doing. The situation for the refugees pulls on the strings of my heart and I feel called to go and help. God has given me a skill set and I am excited for the opportunity to use my skills and minister to this group of people.

Last year we treated over 700 refugees. Each so thankful for the help we could provide and the hope we shared. One of our patients was a 9 year old boy who was so badly burned on his legs that they didn't bend properly making it very difficult for him to walk. His grandmother had to carry him around town. We were able to help him get a wheelchair. See the picture below.

There is a significant expense involved with a trip like this and I am asking for you to consider contributing financially to this cause.

As a team we are hoping to raise \$15,000 to purchase the necessary supplies and cover the costs of the trip. I'm asking if you will consider making a \$25 donation towards this trip. Like last year, any funds that are raised above the expense of the medications and/or the trip will be donated to our host group for the intent purpose of being used towards addressing ongoing medical needs.

If you are able to make a tax-deductible donation, please go **online to this link and scroll down to select my name.** [https://vcbc.ccbchurch.com/form\\_response.php?id=318](https://vcbc.ccbchurch.com/form_response.php?id=318)

If you prefer, write a check, make it out to **Valley Community Baptist Church** and in the memo section write - **Lebanon trip/Jen Martin** and mail it to me.

My new address is  
357 Prospect St  
Wethersfield CT 06109

All donations need to be received **by Feb 3rd.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to

contact me. If you would like, respond to this email and as we have internet access I will send updates. Please provide me with your mailing address so I can mail you a note after the trip providing a more detailed update.



Thank you for contributing to this mission!

Keep Smiling,  
Jen

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## FEATURED FACULTY ARTICLE By: RICHARD STEVENS, PHD



### Can electric light be considered a toxic substance?

Light is an exposure that challenges the conventional definition of a toxic substance. If a little asbestos is bad for you, more is certainly worse. The same holds for ionizing radiation, dioxin, and lead. Light is by definition the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum, and so it does not include X-rays, or even ultraviolet radiation, which can burn skin. Light can't break chemical bonds and damage DNA, and it's not a hormone like estrogen that in excess can cause changes in the breast that can lead to cancer.

The difference is that the effects of exposure to light on human health depend crucially on timing. Over millions of years, we have evolved with a daily cycle of about 12 hours of bright light (the Sun), and about 12 hours of dark. So during the day, our body expects light, whereas during the

night it expects dark. There is a deep biology to this, and electric lighting, particularly at night, is throwing it out of kilter.

One perplexing possible consequence is an increased risk of breast cancer in women.

I first became interested in this possibility in the mid 1980s. At the time, we thought we understood the reasons for the much higher incidence of breast cancer in the industrialized countries compared to the developing world: it had to be diet. But the first large prospective studies of diet and breast cancer began to be reported in the 1980s and there was just about nothing there: fat in the diet was unrelated to risk, and vegetables didn't seem to matter either. So if diet wasn't the driver of risk, what could it be about the modern way of life?

I realized that a hallmark of industrialization was the increasing use of electricity to light the night. I began to learn about circadian biology, and was then able to put one and one together to say: hey, maybe it's electric light (as chronicled in "Surely you're joking, Mr. Stevens"; Mutation Research Reviews Vol 682, Issue 1, 2009).

Over the intervening years I have been involved in all manner of studies in the attempt to gather reliable evidence for, or against, the theory. These include case-control, cohort, ecological, and laboratory studies of intermediate markers of risk.

It has not yet been proven (i.e., a consensus of experts), but the circumstantial evidence so far does support the idea. I have written extensively about this at "The Conversation" (google "the conversation bugs stevens" if you're interested).



**PUBLIC HEALTH CELEBRATION  
SAVE THE DATE!**

**Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2017**

**Time: 6 PM**

**Location: Real Artways**

<http://www.realartways.org>

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**CT WALKS FOR HAITI  
8<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL WALKATHON**  
Please joins us on Saturday, April 1, 2017

**10:30 to 2:30 PM**

**St. Peter Claver  
47 Pleasant Street  
West Harford, CT**



**FOOD  
MUSIC  
CRAFTS  
SILENT AUCTION AND MORE**  
Featuring Fox 61's Joe Furey as MC



**2016 Walkathon**

CT Walks For Haiti runs an annual walk-a-thon and festival to fund the projects of charities working in Haiti. Since 2010, CT Walks For Haiti has raised over \$140,000 for educational, medical and nutritional programs.

For additional information contact **Paola Chanes-Mora, MPH, CHES** at [chanes.paola@gmail.com](mailto:chanes.paola@gmail.com) or visit

<http://www.ctwalksforhaiti.org>



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**Date: Saturday, April 22, 2017**

**Time: 6:30 PM**

**Location: Connecticut Convention Center,  
Hartford, CT**

Join our black-tie celebration to support UConn Health's campus expansion and the 30th anniversary of the nationally renowned [Center on Aging](#).

We are honoring philanthropists Dr. George A. Kuchel and Robert and Renée Samuels for their remarkable contributions to geriatrics research, treatment, and education.

New this year! A performance of "Game Night" by [The Second City](#) traveling tour will cap off an exciting night of fun and entertainment. The Second City, the world's premier comedy club and school of improvisation, has launched the careers of comedy legends Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi, Stephen Colbert, Tina Fey, Jane Lynch, Bill Murray, Joan Rivers, and so many others. Check out some of their [work](#)!

If you are unable to attend, but would like to support UConn Health's White Coat Gala, please visit [here](#).

Questions?

Please contact the UConn Foundation at [uchgala@foundation.uconn.edu](mailto:uchgala@foundation.uconn.edu) or (860) 486-7169.

Register here:

<https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=214073&>

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**The Women's March on Washington** held on January 21, 2017 served as a worldwide protest in support of women's rights and other causes including immigration reform, health care reform, protection of the natural environment, LGBTQ rights, racial justice, freedom of religion, and workers' rights.



**Samia Hussein, a 2016 MPH graduate, stands in line to board one of four buses bringing 250-300 people to Washington D.C. for the Women's March on Washington.**

<http://www.courant.com/hc-women-s-march-on-washington-20170121-004-photo.html>

Samia was joined by other public health students, faculty and alumni to include:

**Alumni**

- Katie Boyle, MPH (2009) – (Hartford)
- Pamela Higgins, MPH (2001) – (Hartford)
- Mitch Irving, MPH (2016) - (Hartford)
- Maytee Restrepo-Ruiz, MPH (2015) – (Hartford)
- Janice Vendetti, MPH (2000) – (Hartford)

**Faculty**

- Audrey Chapman, PhD – (Hartford)
- Martin Cherniak, MD - (Hartford)
- Bonnie McRee, PhD, MPH (1997) – (Hartford)

**Students**

- Carolyn Kwiat – (Hartford)
- Sara Namazi - (Hartford)
- Jennifer Succi - (Washington DC)



***Pamela Higgins, MPH (2001), Janice Vendetti, MPH (2000) and Bonnie McRee, PhD, MPH (1997) at the Women's March***

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## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Newtown Youth and Family Services**

#### **CSC Initiative Program Coordinator**

This full time position will administer and coordinate the Connecticut Strategic Prevention Framework Coalition Initiative grant (a substance abuse and prevention grant) and programs. Responsibilities include: program evaluation and data collection, implementation of a community needs assessment, create and revise services and programs and assist in collation special events. This individual will serve as a resource/referral source and a community liaison between the school district, youth groups and other community organizations.

FT 35 hours per week plus benefits, pay rate \$25.00/hr. Also must be available to work some weekends for specials events and evenings. As well as lift or carry items for meetings and events when needed. Must have minimum of a Bachelor's Degree with 2-3 years' experience with youth and adolescents, community programming, and grant funding. Previous experience with substance abuse prevention is a plus. And willing to work towards earning Certification in Prevention Specialist.

**Send cover letter and resume:**  
**[srusso@newtownyouthandfamilyservices.org](mailto:srusso@newtownyouthandfamilyservices.org)**

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## **ProHealthPhysicians, Inc.**

### **Research Assistant**

We are seeking a Research Assistant to support the Connecticut Center for Primary Care (CCPC) practice transformation research and/or quality improvement projects. This position is primarily responsible for supporting patient enrollment and data collection efforts, including scheduling participants for study visits, tracking research participants' visit status in research database, collecting data from medical records, performing data entry, conducting internal audits of source documents (e.g. medical records) to ensure compliance to research protocol and provide limited data analysis. Serves as a liaison between researchers and clinicians.

Responsibilities:

- Assists in planning research design
- Schedules and coordinates research and QI activities
- Ensure that all subject enrollment and follow-up are completed per protocol procedures
- Collects data from electronic medical records, claims, surveys, structured interviews or other sources and enters into research database

Requirements:

- BA/BS degree in a related
- 2 years of related work experience
- Experience with project management software
- Experience with REDCap Data Collection system preferred
- Proficient in Microsoft Office
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Familiarity with geriatric population and medical terminology
- Position will require occasional evening meetings.

**Send resume to**  
**[humanresources@prohealthmd.com](mailto:humanresources@prohealthmd.com).**

**For additional details:**

**<http://www.prohealthmd.com/careers/about-us/>**

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## STUDENT NEWS

**Amna Sarwar** gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Muhammad Ali, on September 15, 2016. Congratulations Amna and Ahsan!



**Melissa Feulner** is now a research assistant at The Miriam Hospital's Centers for Behavioral and Preventive Medicine.

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Zygmunt Dembek, PhD, MPH (2005)** is lead author for the following peer reviewed publication:

Dembek ZF, Mothershead JL, Chekol T, Myers DB, Meris RG, Meranus D, Wu A. Operational Perspective of Lessons Learned from the Ebola Crisis. *Military Medicine*. 2017. January 182(1):e1507-e1513.

This article can be accessed here:

<http://militarymedicine.amsus.org/doi/abs/10.7205/MILMED-D-16-00074?journalCode=milmed>

**Samia Hussein, MPH (2016)** was featured in the January 2017 edition of the Harford Magazine for her work as President of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut. Samia's coalition is dedicated to outreach, education, and community service.

**Jon Noel**, a PhD candidate and MPH graduate (2009) has been elected as **President of the Connecticut Public Health Association**.

**Chinekwu Obidoa, PhD, MPH (2005)** was selected as Population Health Equity Fellow at Harvard. Chinekwu Obidoa, assistant professor of

global health in Mercer University's College of Liberal Arts, was recently selected as a Population Health Equity Fellow by the Population Health Equity Forum at Harvard University. The fellowship is awarded to public health professionals who address population health equity issues based on their ongoing academic and professional achievements. Dr. Obidoa is one of five fellows selected from a competitive pool of international candidates, and is the only tenure-track professor in the U.S. selected to participate in this inaugural cohort.

For additional information please see:

<http://news.mercer.edu/articles/2016/global-health-professor-selected-as-population-health-equity-fellow-at-harvard-university.cfm#.WluAylMrdV>

**Prakrity Silwal, MSW, MPH (2012)** has moved to a new position, Program Coordinator II at Boston Public Health Commission.

**David Skoczulek, MPH (2009)** has been named Vice President of Business Development for iCare Management in Manchester, CT.

**Morgan Spencer, MPA, CPH, MPH (2006)**, has been elected as President-Elect of the Connecticut Public Health Association.

## FACULTY NEWS

**Amanda Durante, PhD**, has been selected as a **UCONN Service Learning Fellow for 2017**. During her time as a Fellow, Dr. Durante will participate in service-learning workshops and work to develop service learning curriculum for our program. Amanda's selection is well deserved and well timed as we move our curriculum toward engagement of students in population health concerns of the community

**Written by: Morgan Spencer**