

Public Health Happenings

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

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Congratulations to the 33 MPH Graduates for 2008-2009!

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COMMENCEMENT RECAP

On behalf of the MPH program staff and faculty, we want to congratulate all 33 new MPH alumni who completed the program during the 2008-2009 academic years. On Tuesday evening, May 12, we celebrated their collective accomplishments at our annual graduation dinner and awards ceremony at Wampanoag Country Club in West Hartford. Over 70 graduating students, their guests, faculty and major advisors, staff, and Health Center dignitaries attended the event.



A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the **Mulvihill Medal** to our most outstanding graduate for 2008-2009, awarded for strength of academic performance coupled with quality of the capstone project. This year the Mulvihill Medal went to **Richard Rodriguez**, in recognition of his perfect GPA and the excellence of his thesis titled, "The Associations Between Social, Behavioral, and Health Risk Factors on a High School Student's Decision to

Pursue Post High School Plans." Richard is an epidemiologist with the Connecticut Department of Public Health. He was presented with the award by Dr. James E. Mulvihill.

The Mulvihill Medal was established by **Dr. James E. and Mary Jane Mulvihill**. Mary Jane is a graduate of the UConn MPH program. Dr. Mulvihill was vice president, provost, and executive director of the University of Connecticut Health Center from 1980 to 1992. Dr. Mulvihill, a strong supporter of the UCONN MPH program, was there to present the medal to Richard in person. David Gregorio, who served as major advisor, introduced Richard and talked briefly about his accomplishments.

Linda Estabrook was recipient of our second major award, the Susan S. Addiss Award in Applied Public Health Practice. In introducing Linda, Judy Lewis, her major advisor, noted that for her applied practice project she had developed and orchestrated the first conference on transgender health and law issues, held at UConn Center in April 2007 and in each of the next two years. Linda was also recognized for her extensive public health practice activities. For 20 years she has been at the helm of Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, which has grown from a small grass-roots entity into a multi-service, multi-population community-based organization.

The **Susan S. Addiss Award** honors the graduating student who best exemplifies the characteristics of Susan S. Addiss: Leadership, Advocacy, Community Practice, and Academic Achievement. At the dinner to present the award was **Susan Addiss**, who has had a long and accomplished career in public health, serving as Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Addiction Services under Governor Lowell Weicker, as President of the American Public Health Association as well as the Connecticut Public Health Association, and as a local health director of the Quinnipiac Valley Health District. She is the current and long-standing chair of the UConn MPH Advisory Committee. Susan Addiss (left, above) made the presentation to Linda.



Last year, the MPH Student Organization was successful in establishing the Beta Rho Chapter of Delta Omega, the national honor society in public health, at UConn. Graduating students inducted into Delta Omega this year include **Ross Friedberg, Alexandra Hajduk and David Skoczulek**. Also inducted with the Class of 2009 were alumni **Stephen Huleatt, Bonnie McRee and Laurel Risom**; Joan **Segal** (Faculty) and **Judy Lewis** (Honorary).



We congratulate all 33 of 2008-2009 graduates on their achievements:

- May 2008: Robert Bramwell, Naa-Solo Tettey, Christine Woolley
- Dec. 2008: Tanya Dempster-Bazile, Joan Levine
- May 2009: Titilopemi Aina (MD/MPH), William Carter III (MD/MPH), Maureen Couvares, Jennifer Dearborn (MD/MPH), Linda Estabrook, Lisa Fasulo, Ross Friedberg (JD/MPH), Alexandra Hajduk, John Kouch (MD/MPH), Christina Langer, Christina Lazar, Laura LeBlanc, Maria MacDonald, Jennifer Martin, Michael McTague, Lauren Mentasi (DMD/MPH), Susan Moore, Jonathan Noel, Alyssa Norwood (JD/MPH), Denise Ortiz, Martha Page, Katie Perham, Giorelly Prado, Richard Rodriguez, Moises Salas, David Skoczulek, Kristie Smith, and Veronica Tessier

We have enjoyed working with them and look forward to their continued relationship to the program as alumni.

With very best wishes to all our graduates and honorees,

David I. Gregorio, PhD, MS
Director, Master of Public Health Program

Joan Segal, MA, MS
Associate Director

MPH STUDENT ORGANIZATION (MPHS)/DELTA OMEGA FUNDRAISER
The Travelers Golf Championship Tournament is one of the biggest sporting events to take place in CT all year! The MPH Student Organization and Delta Omega are currently selling tickets for any day of this weeklong event at considerable savings (\$20 instead of \$32) and are earning a significant share of the proceeds. Tickets are valid for a General Admission, One-Day Pass, Monday, June 22 - Sunday, June 28, 2009 at the TPC River Highlands, Cromwell, CT

This is an opportunity to help both of these organizations increase their activities next year. Tickets are available now, and all orders must be in by **June 5**. Please make checks payable to UCONN Health Center. To order tickets, please contact MPH Student Organization Representative Roberto Cruz at (860) 978-8315, robcruz@mph.uchc.edu, or Delta Omega Representative Janice Vendetti at (860) 679-5423, vendetti@up.uchc.edu.

DELTA OMEGA/BETA RHO CHAPTER UPDATES

The Beta Rho (UConn) Chapter of Delta Omega has selected officers for the 2009/2010 academic year. **Morgan Hollebeck, MPH (2006)**, a research assistant with the MPH program, has been elected President. **Paul Gacek, MPH (2008)**, a CDC Epidemiology Fellow assigned to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, is President Elect and **Janice Vendetti, MPH (2000)**, Research Associate in the Department of Community Medicine, UCHC, is Secretary/Treasurer.

As its first fundraiser, Delta Omega has teamed up with the MPH Student Organization to sell tickets to **The Travelers Golf Championship Tournament**. (see above article). New inductees to Delta Omega are listed in the opening article.

STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION

Students are invited to submit proposals and abstracts for poster presentations for the **Forum on Innovations in Healthcare Delivery and Organization**, an event co-sponsored by the UConn School of Business and the UConn Center for Public Health and Health Policy. This forum will take place on **Wednesday, September 30**, in downtown Hartford at the University of Connecticut Graduate Business Learning Center.

This forum will highlight research and exploratory ideas on healthcare innovations from the academic setting that can be shared with health care professionals and policy makers in Connecticut. The overriding theme of this Forum is to advance the agenda for change and innovation in Connecticut, and to share with the health care community pertinent research projects and ideas that may have the potential for delivery system/organizational improvement.

The winner of the poster competition will be formally acknowledged at the program. You can

submit an abstract, manuscript or ideas for a proposed workshop. Abstracts should be about 500 words. All submissions should be sent in electronic form by **June 30, 2009** to Brian Benson at bbenson@uchc.edu. For questions related to submissions, please call (860) 679-5425.

SNEAK PREVIEW; FALL 2009 COURSES

The course listing for fall 2009 has been announced. Core courses are as follows:

PUBH 5431	Public Health Research Methods	Monday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
PUBH 5408	Intro to Epidemiology/Biostatistics I	Tuesday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
PUBH 5406	Law and Public Health	Wednesday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
PUBH 5403	Health Administration and Policy	Thursday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Electives covering all three aspects of public health practice—assessment, assurance, and policy development—are being offered. They include:

Monday:	Toxicology and Risk Assessment	6:00-9:00 p.m.
	GIS and Health Informatics	2:30-5:30 p.m.
Tuesday:	Occupational/Environmental Health Policy	5:30-8:30 p.m.
	Human Rights and Health	5:30-8:30 p.m.
	SAS Programming and Data Management	5:30-8:30 p.m.
Wednesday	Women, Public Health & Reproduction	6:00-9:00 p.m.
	Injury and Violence Prevention	5:30-8:30 p.m.
Thursday	Management of Public Health Agencies	5:30-8:30 p.m.
	Introductory Ergonomics & Exposure Assessment	5:30-8:30 p.m.

Courses will be listed on the MPH Program Website by the end of the month. Students are urged to register during the week allotted to degree students to ensure courses of choice. **We will be reviewing all course registration two weeks prior to the start of classes—August 17--and those classes that have insufficient registration at that time will be cancelled.** Students who work at UConn and have tuition waivers must let Barbara Case know which courses you plan to register for by August 17 so we may include you in the registration numbers.

In addition to the MPH courses, students with an interest in health administration and policy may wish to take advantage of Public Policy courses being offered by the Masters of Public Administration Program on the Hartford Campus of UConn located a few miles away in West Hartford. A small number of slots have been reserved in the following courses specifically for MPH students:

Monday:	Financial Management for Public & Nonprofit Organizations	6:30-9:00 p.m.
	Human Resource Management	4:00-6:30 p.m.
Tuesday:	Evaluating Public Programs	6:30-9:00 p.m.
	Public Finance & Budgeting	4:00-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday:	Leadership & Management of Nonprofit Orgs	6:30-9:00 p.m.
	Analytic Tools for Public Problems	4:00-6:30 p.m.
Thursday:	Principles & Methods of Survey Research	4:00-6:30 p.m.

STUDENT RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. Program administrators suggest that students periodically review their rights, which are outlined at the following Website:

<http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/ferpannu.html>.

Also, students should note that the University implemented an online FERPA Privacy Waiver on May 28, 2009. If students log in to the Student Administration System (PeopleSoft) on or after May 28th, they will need to decide whether they want to permit employees in the University's administrative offices (Registrar, Graduate School, Law School, Financial Aid, Bursar, Residential Life, One Card, Continuing Studies) to speak with a third party (such as a parent, guardian, spouse, partner, etc.) about their University records.

Students do not have to assign anyone if they do not wish to, but they will have to indicate that preference by clicking a checkbox indicating that they do not wish to disclose information to anyone. If students decide to designate someone they will have to assign that person a 4-character access code; and if that person calls, the University will use that code to authenticate his or her identity and the students' desire that a University representative speak with the designated person.

By way of reminder, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) GENERALLY prohibits universities from talking about students' records with anyone but that student. For more information regarding FERPA, a **Frequently Asked Questions** document for students and **Information for Designees** please access the University's FERPA website at <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/ferpa.html>.

Important Note: When students log into the Student Administration System beginning May 28, 2009 and beyond, and then click **Self-Service**, the look of the page will be quite different. The navigation has been simplified to display only the **Student Center** folder. Students' access to information is still exactly the same. Click the **Student Center** folder to the right side of the page or the Student Center link on the left-side menu. In addition, if students had pages in their **Favorites** folder, these pages will no longer display and they will have to reset their Favorites after completing the online FERPA Privacy Waiver.

2010 APHA PUBLIC HEALTH FELLOWSHIP IN GOVERNMENT

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is looking for candidates with strong public health credentials who wish to spend one year in Washington, D.C. working in a congressional office or on a congressional committee on legislative and policy issues related to health, the environment or other critical public health issues.

The fellowship will begin in January 2010 and continue through December 2010. The fellowship is designed to provide a unique public policy learning experience, to demonstrate the value of science-government interaction, and to make practical contributions to enhancing public health science and practical knowledge in government.

The APHA fellow will receive a stipend of \$65,000 for the year plus up to an additional \$10,000 for travel (to include moving costs, the costs of attending the APHA Annual Meeting, and the annual one-day meeting in March 2010 in Washington, DC).

To be eligible, all candidates:

- *must be APHA members
- *have five years of experience in a public health position
- *have a graduate degree in a public health discipline.

Applications and additional information are available at the following Website:

<http://www.apha.org/advocacy/fellowship/>. The application, including CV and three letters of recommendation, is due to APHA by **June 22, 2009**.

FAMILY HELP DESK PROGRAM MANAGERS

Project HEALTH works to break the link between poverty and poor health by mobilizing volunteer college students to provide sustained public health interventions in partnership with urban medical centers, universities, and community organizations. The volunteers run clinic-based Family Help Desks to address families' unmet resource needs by connecting them with government and community resources. Project HEALTH is seeking highly effective candidates to contribute their energy, passion, and skills to the growing management team of the organization's New York, Baltimore, and Washington, DC sites.

The ideal candidates will have exceptional communication skills and will ensure mutual respect and understanding among families, volunteers, and providers. This position provides an opportunity to help realize Project HEALTH's potential during a critical phase of organizational development. To this end, the Family Help Desk Managers must be highly organized and able to manage multiple priorities effectively, as well as have the ability to identify, initiate, and implement innovative solutions that will enable Project HEALTH to realize its vision for quality and growth.

These are full-time positions with a minimum two-year commitment reporting to the Executive Directors. The three major responsibilities of the Family Help Desk Manager include:

- Provide Case Management Oversight & Ensure High-Quality Service Delivery
- Ensure Strong Clinic & Partner Relationships
- Provide Volunteer Training and Coaching

The program manager positions require a BA or BS, with an advanced degree in a related field preferred. Other requirements include:

- Demonstrated experience successfully managing a team of young staff or volunteers
- Experienced professional, with strong track-record working with community agencies and/or performing case management in a clinic or other setting
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, self-direction, flexibility, and leadership abilities
- Strong interest and experience in working with and developing emerging leaders
- Ability to interact effectively with multi-disciplinary team members

To apply, please submit a resume, cover letter, writing sample, and list of three references to Stephanie Gould, Project HEALTH Administrative Assistant, gould@projecthealth.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. To learn more about Project HEALTH, visit <http://www.projecthealth.org/involved-jobs>.

CPHA LEGISLATIVE/NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Members of the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) are cordially invited to attend a free Membership Breakfast, "**Our Efforts/Our Vision: A Legislative Report from the Connecticut Public Health Association**" at the Legislative Office Building (private dining room) on **Tuesday, June 16, 2009, 8:00-10:00 a.m.**

Patricia Baker, President and CEO of the Connecticut Health Foundation, the keynote speaker, will address key advocacy issues of interest to CPHA: racial and ethnic health disparities, health literacy, and universal health care.

All members are urged to take advantage of this special breakfast to network with legislators and public health professionals; to celebrate our legislative accomplishments, and to discuss CPHA's vision of advocacy.

Not a member? Not a problem! To join CPHA, contact Renee Coleman-Mitchell, Membership Chair, at renee.coleman-mitchell@po.state.ct.us or (860) 509-7730 or Joan Segal, President, at segal@nso.uchc.edu or (860) 679-1509 for a membership brochure. In this time of constrained resources and job freezes and cutbacks, it is more important than ever for us to network. Employment opportunities and collaborators are out there, but you have to know whom to contact!

We also have much to celebrate. With the hard work of our stalwart and extremely hardworking advocacy committee co-chairs, Annamarie Beaulieu, MPH (2007) and Alyssa Norwood, JD/MPH (2009), the participation of the CPHA membership, and the tireless efforts of the entire Safe and Healthy Connecticut Coalition, the Connecticut legislature has passed the most stringent BPA legislation in the country. Annamarie and Alyssa will update us on the entire legislative agenda for the 2009 legislative session.

To attend the breakfast, please R.S.V.P. to Alyssa Norwood **by Tuesday, June 8**, at Alyssa.norwood@cpha.info or (860) 424-1345. (Please provide your name and affiliation.) Directions are available at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/capitol tours/directions.htm>.

SAVE THE DATE: CPHA ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

"Protect, Promote, Prevent"

The Annual Meeting and Conference of the Connecticut Public Health Association will be held **Friday, October 23, 2009** at the Aqua-Turf Conference Center in Southington, CT. Please mark your calendars now to reserve the date, as last year's conference sold out with over 300 participants. Another exciting day is planned for this year with prominent presenters and workshops on a wide range of public health topics. This is your chance to hear national speakers at a local venue to reduce travel costs in today's tough economy.

CPHA is currently rebuilding its website, but information and on-line registration should be available soon at www.cpha.info. Look for further details on speakers, workshops, and registration, and opportunities for students to present posters of their work, in forthcoming issues of *Public Health Happenings!* For more information, contact Tim Morse (conference co-chair) at tmorse@uchc.edu.

APHA REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Join your academic and practice colleagues and students from MPH programs across the country at APHA's 137th Annual Meeting and Exposition in Philadelphia from November 7-11, 2009. Experience over 1,000 scientific sessions focusing on the latest public health challenges, 700 booths of state-of-the-art public health products, networking opportunities, Public Health CareerMart for those seeking new positions or career information, and much more! Philadelphia is only 4-5 hours away, so we hope to have a large UConn contingency there. For registration and housing information, go to www.apha.org/meetings/registration. With the early-bird discount you will save \$115. Due to the economic situation, hotel rates have been slashed. Eleven hotels have rates as low as \$149-\$179 and no hotel has rates higher than \$195. Early booking is suggested to secure the best rate. For information on the great programming offered this year visit www.apha.org/meetings.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES TOOL (GO TOOL)

GO-Tool provides information on educational and training experiences in reproductive health. The tool allows healthcare students interested in broadening their reproductive health training to search for clinical and non-clinical opportunities using an interactive flash map. Users can share sites via e-mail, write an online review of their experience, and access supplementary travel and funding resources. Organizations can recruit students by listing program information online. For more information, visit: www.arhp.org/GOtool.

EVALUATING COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

The American Academy of Pediatrics has published a two-part guide to program evaluation for implementing community-based health initiatives.

Part I: Designing Your Evaluation



This resource sets the stage for program evaluation by providing a "how to" for those who are implementing community-based programs. It contains strategies for setting measurable objectives, identifying realistic outcomes, and developing logic models for health initiatives. The guide is designed in a workbook format, which allows it to be used by planning committees when developing program proposals or as an evaluation training tool for project staff.

NEW Part II: Putting Your Evaluation Plan to Work



This is the follow up publication to Part I: Designing Your Evaluation. This guide takes the evaluation plan developed for a community-based health initiative from the planning to the implementation stage. The guide goes through steps in a workbook format to help you decide how to measure progress on your objectives and collect, analyze, and present the resulting data meaningfully and efficiently.

To receive a printed copy of these guides, please send your name and mailing address to healthyt@aap.org. The guides can also be downloaded from the AAP Website: <http://www.aap.org/commpeds/htpcp/EvalResources.html>.

2008 NATIONAL HEALTHCARE QUALITY & DISPARITIES REPORTS

For the sixth year in a row, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has produced the *National Healthcare Quality Report* (NHQR) and the *National Healthcare Disparities Report* (NHDR). These reports measure trends in effectiveness of care, patient safety, timeliness of care, patient centeredness, and efficiency of care. The reports present, in chart form, the latest available findings on quality of and access to health care.

The National Healthcare Quality Report tracks the health care system through quality measures, such as the percentage of heart attack patients who received recommended care when they reached the hospital or the percentage of children who received recommended vaccinations. The *National Healthcare Disparities Report* summarizes health care quality and access among various racial, ethnic, and income groups and other priority populations, such as children and older adults. Copies of these reports can be downloaded in PDF format from the AHRQ Website at <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/qdr08.htm>.

FREE TUTORIAL WEBSITE FOR MEDICAL SPANISH

A new site presents free medical Spanish immersion, with vocabulary including greetings, history, examination, and everyday speech, all with translation and audio. It is designed to be helpful for a variety of medical personnel. In addition to introducing Spanish medical terms, this site will hopefully improve fluency. To access the site, visit: <http://www.practicingspanish.com>.

STUDENT NEWS

Robey Champine, who has just completed her first year in the MPH program, has been selected to participate in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Honors Internship program for the summer of 2009. For ten weeks, she will work in the Counterintelligence Division at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. To qualify for the internship and earn a top-secret security clearance, Robey successfully completed oral and written interviews, drug testing, a polygraph exam, and an extensive background investigation. She graduated from Smith College in 2007 with a BA in Psychology and Spanish, and from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008 with a MS in Criminology.

Robert Cruz was nominated by the Delta Omega chapter (Beta Rho) at UConn to present a poster in the 2009 Delta Omega poster session at the 2009 annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. His abstract was one of the 19 selected from among nearly 50 submissions from 26 Delta Omega chapters. The poster session will be held Monday, November 9, 2009 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. Student participants will be presented with a certificate and cash prize of \$350 at the Delta Omega Social Hour/Reception on Monday, November 9.

Lwendo Moonzwe is recipient of \$5,000 scholarship award from the Health Center [Auxiliary](#). The award will be augmented by grant funding to provide her with a half-time graduate assistantship under Dr. Stephen Schensul.

Congratulations to **Heather Pekarovic** and her husband Jim on the birth of a daughter, Gracie Olivia (7 lbs and 14 oz, 20 1/2 inches long).

ALUMNI NEWS

Amala Guha, PhD, MPH (1997), presented a lecture, "Transforming Consciousness into Matter," on how the Science of Ayurveda establishes a deep connection between body, mind and spirit, and the link between universal consciousness and the individual spirit that transmutes to health and wellness. The presentation took place at UConn Health Center on March 27. On May 20, she gave a seminar at UConn Health Center on ways to tap into the energy of the universe to overcome adversities and maintain wellness.

Amber Hromi-Fiedler, MPH (2002), PhD is lead author of the following two recently published papers, co-authored by **Angela Bermúdez-Millán, MPH (2001), PhD**:

Hromi-Fiedler A, Bermúdez-Millán, A, Segura-Perez S, Damio G, Perez-Escamilla R. Adaptation of the U.S. food security survey module for low-income pregnant Latinas: Qualitative phase. *Journal Hunger Environmental Nutrition* 2009; 4:62-80.

Hromi-Fiedler A, Bermúdez-Millán, A, Melgar-Quiñonez H, Perez-Escamilla R. Psychometric properties of an adapted version of the U.S. household food security survey module for assessing food insecurity among low-income pregnant Latinas. *Journal Hunger Environmental Nutrition* 2009; 4:81-94.

Cyndi Stern (2005) and Kristin Sullivan will be presenting on the "M.O.R. (Mentoring Organization Registry) for the Public Health Workforce: Connecticut Public Health Association's strategy for developing youth as future public health leaders" at the Annual APHA Meeting in Philadelphia on Wednesday, November 11, 2009, at 12:30 p.m. The overall session is on "Effective Leadership Development Strategies and Programs That Increase Diversity of Leadership in Public Health Practice." The project they describe comes from their work as co-chairs of CPHA's Mentoring Committee.

FACULTY NEWS

Minakshi Tikoo, PhD, Assistant Professor of Community Medicine, presented on "Quality of data reported on race and ethnicity in federally funded programs and relevance to policy and decision-making" at a seminar sponsored by the Center for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos (CEHDL) on April 3.



Marcia Trape-Cardoso, MD, MPH, Occupational & Environmental Medicine, received the Irving J. Selikoff Professional Excellence Award from the Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety and Health (ConnectiCOSH). The non-profit, statewide organization helps unions, individuals and communities win healthier and safer working and living conditions.

Stanton Wolfe, DMD, MPH, has received a grant for the Collaborative Integration of Public Health Content into Undergraduate Education program from the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research and the Council of Graduate Programs of Public Health. As the first step in this process, he will be working to introduce course work in public health to undergraduates on the UConn Storrs Campus.

Joan Segal, Editor

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