

# MPH CONNECTION

The Official Newsletter of the Master of Public Health Program at Missouri State University

## A Word from the Interim Director



The MPH program at MSU continues to grow and to improve. We have been particularly happy with the high rate of employment of our graduates as they move directly into the public health work force. We believe this is primarily due to our emphasis on high quality education and application of that education to real-world public health issues. Of course, the quality of our students is exceptional as well.

In the coming semester we plan on offering three graduate certificates, one of which can be completed entirely online. Those certificates are:

- Public Health and Homeland Security (can be finished online)
- Public Health Administration
- The Public Health Core

Each certificate will require the completion of five graduate courses. The certificates are in the final stages of approval and if there are no delays, we hope to offer them in the spring semester of 2015.

The certificates are only a few of the changes and improvements we have made to the program. If you are interested in discussing the program, give me a call at 417-836-8945 or drop me a line at [DavidClaborn@MissouriState.edu](mailto:DavidClaborn@MissouriState.edu).

David M. Claborn, DrPH



## STUDENTS IN ACTION

Recently, many of our students attended the annual Missouri Public Health Association Conference in Columbia, MO. The conference gives students the opportunity to network and learn valuable tools for the future.

## GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

For the 2014 fall semester, Leslie Kavlak was hired on as a new Graduate Assistant for the Public Health program. She will be working alongside GA Christie Oestreich in the McQueary MPH Office. As one of her duties, Leslie will be tutoring Epidemiology for students needing additional assistance. Leslie started the MPH program in the Spring of 2014 with a bachelor's in Biology and previous experience of working in the hospital. Her future goal in the professional world leans toward the field of Epidemiology and Environmental Health. During the summer, Leslie began volunteering for the American Red Cross to prepare for future emergency situations. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to music, painting, spending time with her husband and dog, traveling, and being outside in nature.

## Alumni Spotlight

### Allison Wilson

**Current Job:** Allison is currently the Program Manager for the Healthy Living Alliance in Springfield, MO. HLA began three years ago and is a collaboration of community organizations that work together to make living healthy easier in Springfield. Her tasks vary from day to day but include such things as managing grant goals, project management, providing technical assistance for rural communities on using community assessments and any behind the scenes work to make sure HLA partners have what they need to be connected to the health needs of the Springfield Community.

**Research:** Recently, Allison presented her research project, "Cupcakes no more: Using community school partnerships to change birthday party policy in school." at the 141st APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Boston, MA. Her research focused on dealing with the inconsistent birthday party policies at local elementary schools. A pilot program was started that eliminated bringing in outside food for birthday parties at school. Instead, the children were given a choice of extra recess, stickers, or snacks purchased at the school cafeteria. Evaluation of this program has shown promising results and led to the expansion of the program to all Springfield Public Schools.

**Advice to Current Students:** Focus on community involvement. While in school, I made connections through being involved in community groups and in my GA position that led me to my current position. Even if you don't plan on staying in Springfield, getting involved in community efforts during your masters will add a lot of value. Don't rush your schooling if possible, and start thinking about and planning for your internship early. Be intentional about what internship or project you choose; try to make it apply to your future direction. If you do a research project, try for publication or presentation at a conference.

### CONGRATUALIONS

Recently, some of our students competed in the annual Interdisciplinary Forum held by the Graduate College in late spring. The forum allows students to showcase their research through oral or poster presentations. Last spring, three of our students competed presenting their own research.

Christie Oestreich - "Assessment of Missouri's Public Health Agencies' Capacity to Respond to Vector Emergencies: 2014."

Travis Fisher - "Perceptions of Healthy Foods Availability in Neighborhood and Worksite Environments."

Lawal Garuba - "Edentulism and Tobacco Use in Adults Aged 65 Years and Older in the United States".

Lawal's poster also won an award. If you are interested in competing, the next interdisciplinary forum will be held on April 25, 2015.

## New Student Corner

As the fall semester is off and running, many of you might notice a lot of new faces. This semester we welcomed many students and some who are taking a non-traditional route. One of these students is Abby Garton. She is enrolled in the accelerated MPH program. This program allows undergraduate students to take classes (credit hours) that can be counted towards both the undergraduate degree and graduate degree. Abby currently is pursuing her undergraduate degree in Psychology with a minor in Leadership. Her long term educational goal is to obtain her Master's in Health Administration on top of her undergraduate degree and Masters of Public health. Career wise, Abby's goal is to dedicate her career to helping her hometown of Marshfield, MO. In her spare time she enjoys traveling; her favorite vacation spot is Costa Rica, where she hopes to visit again with her husband. When Abby is not in school, she enjoys kick-boxing, reading, traveling, Cardinal baseball and teaching Sunday school.

## Ozarks Public Health Institute

The OPHI is part of Missouri State University and aims to address public health issues across Missouri. A recent project of the OPHI was Food Recovery Network. This program brings together students on campus to fight waste and feed people in the community by donating surplus unsold food from colleges. Each chapter works with on-campus dining halls and other off-campus agencies to divert food from the landfill to community members in need, while also raising awareness on issues of food waste and hunger in America. OPHI has taken the lead in creating a new chapter here on campus, the first in Springfield, MO. The



pilot program started on September 22nd and will last four weeks. In the first week over 100 pounds of food was recovered.



### FPHP

If you are interested in joining the Future Public Health Professionals please join us at our next meeting, November 5th at 4 PM in Plaster Student Union room 312C. If you have any questions you can contact the president, Christie Oestreich at [oetrech1012@live.missouri-state.edu](mailto:oetrech1012@live.missouri-state.edu). FPHP is a great way to meet other students who have the same interest as you, gain valuable experience, attend conferences, and give back to the community.

## There and Back again: An Intern's Story

By Kip Thompson

No, this isn't a story about a Halfling and a bunch of dwarves; it is about the long and arduous journey through the MPH program. After long semesters of courses and countless hours of studying, you have finally passed your comprehensive exams and can see light at the end of the tunnel. But wait, before you can cross that rainbow bridge to MPH-dom, you still have one more hurdle to jump: the field experience!

After all of your work, what should you expect? For me, the field experience was a very fun experience. I was lucky to be accepted as an intern at the Polk County Health Clinic under the supervision of Ms. Michelle Morris. As a smaller department, the PCHC isn't really divided into specific sections; each employee may serve in multiple roles to meet the needs of the public. Because of this, I was able to move between areas such as health care via a free clinic, environmental health where I did food service inspections, hotel inspections, and on site waste water treatment facility permitting. I also was involved in a hand washing educational program at the local pre-schools. Additionally, I collected and analyzed data regarding obesity and dietary choices as the county works towards healthier eating and the consumption of locally grown foods. Through all of this, I think the most rewarding aspect of the field experience was the realization that all of my course work was not in vain. The courses, especially the core courses, are relevant and I used the skills and knowledge gained in those courses during this experience. Ms. Morris even commented on this when I was able to actually teach the staff a thing or two based on my course work! As you navigate through your courses, don't just take a class and then move on. Actively work to internalize what you are learning. You never know, you just might need it!

## Future Course Offerings

| Course  | Course Title  | Fall 2015        | Spring 2016               | Summer 2016      |
|---------|---|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| PBH 720 | Epidemiology  | Online           | Seated                    |                  |
| PBH 730 | Biostatistics in Health Sciences                        | Blended          | Online                    |                  |
| PBH 740 | Health Behavior   |                  | Online                    |                  |
| PBH 745 | Environmental Health                                    | Online           |                           |                  |
| MGT 701 | Health Services Organization                            | Evening          | Evening                   |                  |
| PBH 735 | Software Applications and Data Sources in Public Health | Blended, Weekend |                           |                  |
| PBH 756 | Introduction to Public Health                           | Blended, Weekend |                           | Blended, Weekend |
| PBH 760 | Research Methods in Public Health                       |                  | Blended                   |                  |
| PBH 783 | International Health and Infectious Disease             |                  | Online                    |                  |
| PBH 775 | Principles and Skills of Public Health Administration   |                  | Seated with Remote Access |                  |
| PBH 771 | Public Health Preparedness                              | Seated           |                           |                  |
| PBH 778 | Chronic Epidemiology                                    |                  |                           |                  |

| Course  |   | Fall 2016        | Spring 2017       | Summer 2017 |
|---------|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| PBH 720 | Epidemiology  | Online           | Blended (weekend) |             |
| PBH 730 | Biostatistics in Health Sciences                        | Blended          | Online            |             |
| PBH 740 | Health Behavior   |                  | Online            |             |
| PBH 745 | Environmental Health                                    | Seated           |                   |             |
| PBH 735 | Software Applications and Data Sources in Public Health | Blended, Weekend |                   |             |
| PBH 756 | Introduction to Public Health                           | Blended, Weekend |                   |             |
| PBH 760 | Research Methods in Public Health                       |                  |                   |             |
| PBH 783 | International Health and Infectious Disease             |                  | Seated            |             |
| PBH 775 | Principles and Skills of Public Health Administration   |                  | Seated            |             |
| PBH 771 | Public Health Preparedness                              | Seated           |                   |             |
| PBH 778 | Chronic Epidemiology                                    |                  |                   | Online      |

**This is for planning purposes only and is subject to change.**



### MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM

901 South National Avenue, Springfield, MO 65897

Phone: (417) 836-8850 • Fax: (417) 836-8418

<http://www.missouristate.edu/mph/>