

MPH Memos

HAPPY SPRING!

Happy March and Spring Department of Public Health! The weather is getting warmer, the days are getting longer, and the COVID-19 vaccine distribution is well on its way! Although we don't have a spring break this year, we are a little over halfway through the semester and there is plenty to look forward to. Check out this issue for some exciting campus events, professional development opportunities, and information on applied practice experiences. If you have any future ideas for the newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact me at pprother@vols.utk.edu and take this [short survey to provide feedback about the newsletter](#).

CAMPUS EVENTS

- **Disability Inclusive Diversity.** Hosted by the Jones Center for Leadership and Service. Monday, March 22nd at 6:00 PM via ZOOM. [Event link](#).
- **Exploring Inequities in Education: Women's History Month Panel.** Hosted by the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. Tuesday, March 23rd from 12:00-1:15 PM. [Register for this ZOOM event](#).
- **Community Conversations: Disability Rights and Advocacy.** Hosted by the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach. Friday, March 26th from 10:00-11:00 AM via ZOOM. [Register here](#).
- **VOLS ACT Bystander Training for Graduate Students.** Hosted by the Graduate Student Senate. Wednesday, April 7th from 12:00-1:00 PM. [ZOOM link](#).
- See 20 finalists compete at the **Three Minute Thesis Watch Party.** Hosted by the Graduate School. Wednesday, April 7th from 1:00-3:00 PM. [Event information here](#).
- **Graduate and Professional Student Webinar Series: Strategies for Applying and Negotiating Your First Major Job.** Hosted by the Division of Diversity and Engagement. Thursday, April 8th from 6:00-8:00 PM via ZOOM. [Register here](#).
- **Research Poster Workshop.** Hosted by UTK Libraries. Friday, April 9th 10:00-11:00 AM via ZOOM. [Register here](#).

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Comprehensive exam on **Friday, April 9th**
- National Public Health Week is **April 5th–11th**
- Graduate & Professional Student Appreciation Week is **April 5th-9th**
- Last day of classes is on **Wednesday, April 28th**



PUBLIC HEALTH GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

First event of the semester, Narcan Training!

PHGSA had its first successful Narcan training on Thursday, March 11th. There were a total of 9 participants. During the training, participants learned how to identify if a person is in need of help and what the appropriate steps to take are. After completing the training, each participant received a certificate of completion as well as their own personal kit in case they ever come across a person needing assistance.



PHGSA is looking forward to continuing these valuable trainings in the future. If you are interested in participating or joining PHGSA, please reach out to your PHGSA officers for more information!

- **Egla Lopez:** President [Email](#)
- **Jeremy Kourvelas:** VP [Email](#)
- **Bethany Rand:** Secretary [Email](#)
- **Parth Goenka:** Treasurer [Email](#)
- **Isis West:** Philanthropist [Email](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Want to apply for a graduate assistantship (GA) position with the Department of Public Health for the 2021-2022 school year? [Fill out an application here!](#) The deadline is **April 1st** and assistantships will be awarded in May.

The UTK Studio is offering professional headshots for Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week. These will take place outside on **Friday, April 9th**. [Sign up for a timeslot here.](#)

Be on the lookout for the **2021 Student Satisfaction Survey** coming through the listserv soon! Please take a few minutes to complete this for the Department of Public Health.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR: ASHLYN SCHWARTZ

Ashlyn, a PhD candidate in the Department of Public Health was recently awarded a Fulbright Doctoral Research Award. Learn more about her and this exciting opportunity below.

Please introduce yourself!

Hello, my name is Ashlyn Schwartz. I am a PhD candidate of Public Health at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I am a project manager for youth development and evaluation activities on a community-based research opioid use disorder grant. Since 2017, I have continued my research on developmental outcomes related to childhood trauma, neonatal abstinence syndrome, and substance use disorders. Outside of academics, I am an outdoor enthusiast with a particular interest in hiking and kayaking!

You were recently awarded the Fulbright-University of Bordeaux Doctoral Research Award in France, what does that entail?

This 10-month fellowship will support my investigation of how adverse childhood experiences are related to binge drinking, brain structure alterations, and mental health challenges among French college students. I will be collaborating with scientists at the University of Bordeaux on the Internet-based Students Health Research Enterprise (i-Share) cohort project. To explore my research questions, I will use three methodological approaches, including secondary data analysis, structural brain imaging, and qualitative interviews.

What were your reactions to receiving the Fulbright award?

Becoming a Fulbright Scholar has been a dream of mine for over 7 years! I've always had an interest in international scholarship, but never felt that my personal and professional trajectories aligned—until now. I became a substance use disorder researcher after the passing of my brother; having the opportunity to honor him through this award is very meaningful to me.

Beyond research, what will your days in Bordeaux look like?

A central component to the Fulbright is becoming a cultural ambassador. As such, I plan on taking culinary workshops to appreciate the local cuisine and gastronomical traditions of Bordeaux. I will continue my language studies and cultural immersion through the Alliance Francaise, of which, I hope to bridge Bordeaux and Knoxville through collaboration.

Why were you interested in France?

As a young child, my nanny from France enchanted me with French customs and dreams—including lavender field in Aixen-Provence. These childhood memories built a yearning and appreciation for the French culture. I further desire to improve my French in efforts of communicating with my boyfriend's family, residing in Liege, Belgium.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CPH EXAM

Want to distinguish yourself as a public health leader? Need a resume builder? Consider the Certified in Public Health Credential (CPH)!

What is a CPH certification?

CPH stands for Certified in Public Health. This certification demonstrates to public health employers and leaders that you have mastered key public health sciences by going beyond your education and passing a voluntary examination. This is offered by the National Board of Public Health Examiners. The CPH covers content in 10 domains that the NBPHE has determined to be key knowledge in the public health workforce. The domains are listed below:

- Evidence-Based Approaches to Public Health
- Communication
- Leadership
- Law and Ethics
- Public Health Biology and Human Disease Risk
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Program Management
- Policy in Public Health
- Health Equity and Social Justice

The CPH encourages ongoing professional development and 50 recertification credits are required to be completed every 2 years. [See a list of these approved activities here.](#)

Who is eligible?

All of you in the MPH or DrPH program! Current students and alumni of CEPH-accredited public health programs (that includes UTK!) are eligible to take the exam. If you pass the exam as a student, you will be provisionally certified until graduation which at that point you will be Certified in Public Health.

What does the exam entail?

The exam consists of 200 questions relating to the 10 domains. It is offered all year long and costs \$385.

What are the benefits of being CPH?

- Stay current on best practices and education
- Invest in your career
- Provides a potential for promotions and salary increases
- Distinguish yourself from your peers
- Raise the visibility of public health
- Meet and maintain a national professional standard



For more information, visit the [NBPHE website.](#)

“When you differentiate yourself among your peers, you establish an advantage. This is one of the ways holding the CPH helps you move ahead in your career. This nationally recognized certification demonstrates your mastery of public health sciences. It says you are committed to national standards for practice and improving the profession. Your education does not end with your degree. Completing professional development opportunities and advancing your knowledge is essential; the CPH is one way you move along this continuum.”

- Dr. Kathleen Brown

APE INFORMATION

Planning to do your applied practice experience this summer? Below are some important reminders:

- Review the [APE Guidelines and Eligibility Information](#)
- Fill out the Student Request form for APE
- Placements should be confirmed by April 1st and no later than April 30th

For all students, mark your calendars!

MPH Internship Presentations will be on *Monday, May 3rd from 9-11 AM* and *Tuesday, May 4th from 2-4 PM* via ZOOM.

Contact the APE coordinator Amanda Letheren at alethere@vols.utk.edu with any questions.



APE HIGHLIGHT: SAMIRA TAMIMI

Please introduce yourself!

My name is Samira Tamimi and I'm an MPH-HPM student. I've lived in Knoxville, TN for the majority of my life but was born in Tampa, Florida. I come from a pretty different background. My mother is from El Salvador and my father is from Palestine. My cultural background has been a huge impact on my academic career path as we have seen in our studies the importance of culture and public health. As an MPH student I have also served on the PHGSA as treasurer and served as a committee member on the department's Equity and Diversity Committee.

Tell us about your applied practice experience!

I am currently doing my applied practice experience at a nonprofit organization called Prevent Blindness. They are the nation's leading consumer advocate for eye health and safety with a mission of preserving sight. My main career goal in life is to attend optometry school and become a practicing optometrist. I got the idea to find an applied practice experience that brought public health and optometry together after a conversation I had with Dr. Brown at the end of my first semester. After meeting with the APE coordinator this summer, I was connected with a colleague who is a board member of Prevent Blindness. She then connected me with my preceptor. What I enjoy most about my APE is that it combines my two areas of interest: optometry and public health. As of recently I have completed one of my deliverables which has been an extensive literature review on vision screening practices for children ages 3-5 years old. I was able to accomplish this from the experience I gained from Dr. Kintziger's course on Systematic



Reviews/Meta-Analysis (PUBH 635). For another project, I am conducting an environmental scan with another intern with the organization that attends another university. Currently my position is remote, but under normal circumstances, I would have had to relocate to Chicago where the organization is based. Because of the pandemic I have been given the privilege of being able to connect with a more diverse network of individuals, expanded my knowledge on public health and how its impact can be made in the field of optometry. Overall this experience has been insightful to me as to what it is that is out there within public health and optometry.

What are your career goals after graduation?

My career goals after graduation are to work in public health research for sometime before beginning my application process for optometry school. My goal is to be able to be a moving piece in public health optometry, as it is not a large area of focus currently in public health. It is growing, and hopefully by the time that I am able to practice and provide vision care more will have been accomplished in providing better care and accessibility to those in need.

PUBLIC HEALTH PODCASTS

Looking for something to listen to during long days of homework? Want to learn something in the process? Check out these podcast recommendations!

- Want to learn about the biology and history of new diseases? Check out [This Podcast Will Kill You.](#)
- Listen to interviews of experts in public health on [Case Confirmed](#)
- Want to learn about health disparities? Check out [Flip the Script](#)
- Want to learn more about potential future career options in public health? Check out [public health perspectives](#)
- Passionate about environmental health? Check out [Environmental Health Chat](#)
- In honor of National Nutrition Month, check out [Soundbites: A Nutrition Podcast](#)

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

National Public Health Week is April 5th-11th. The 2021 theme is “Building Bridges to Better Health.” Check out some of the events and how to stay involved below.

Each day of National Public Health Week (April 5th-11th) will feature a theme to learn about key issues in public health. Check out the week’s topics below and find more information, including fact sheets [here](#).

- Monday: Rebuilding
- Tuesday: Advancing Racial Equity
- Wednesday: Strengthening Community
- Thursday: Galvanizing Climate Justice
- Friday: Constructing COVID-19 Resilience
- Saturday: Uplifting Mental Health and Wellness
- Sunday: Elevating the Essential and Health Workforce

Join the National Public Health Week Twitter Chat on Wednesday, April 7th at 2:00 PM EST. Follow NPHW on Twitter and use the hashtag #NPHWchat. Find more information on [NPHW’s website](#).



COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION

Are you eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine? Tennessee is now vaccinating phases 1a1, 1a2, 1b, 1c, and those who are 65 years or older. Here are some places to get vaccinated in Knoxville.

- Walmart
- Knox County Health Department
- UT Student Health Center
- Covenant Health
- UT Medical Center



For more information, visit the [Knox County Health Department Website](#)