

# MPH MEMOS

University of Tennessee | Department of Public Health

FALL 2015 Issue 3

## Faculty and Students Present Research at APHA

The 143rd annual American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference took place in Chicago, Illinois on October 31-November 4. This year's conference held a theme of "Health in All Policies." UT faculty and students from the Department of Public Health not only attended, but also presented recent work in poster sessions.

Public Health master students, Elizabeth Conner and Jennifer Russomano, and doctoral students, Michelle Smith, and Joanne Patterson, attended the conference. Jennifer Russomano and Joanne Patterson both presented posters. Jen earned the Public Health Education and Health Promotion Student Award on her poster regarding multi-level barriers to SNAP implementation at farmers markets in rural East Tennessee. Joanne presented two posters entitled "Demonstrating Mastery of Public Health Competencies through Practical Application in Introductory Master of Public Health Courses: A Case Study" and "Does Practice-Based Teaching Prepare Students for the Workforce? An Evaluation to Assess Long-Term Outcomes of Teaching through Practical Application." Faculty members, Dr. Kathy Brown, Dr. Jennifer Jabson, and Dr. Paul Erwin, attended the conference as well.



### Tips from 2015 APHA Attendees

This year's attendees agreed that the APHA Conference was a worthwhile experience, providing valuable networking and educational opportunities. If you are considering going to next year's conference, here are a few tips from this year's attendees:

1. Plan your schedule ahead of time in order to see all the sessions that interest you. The amount of sessions offered can be overwhelming once you arrive!
2. Attend as many sessions as you can.
3. Network! This conference is a perfect opportunity to meet public health professionals. Let conversations with attendees spark your ideas!
4. Return home with renewed enthusiasm to submit a presentation for the next year.

### Mark Your Calendar!

Next year, the conference will be held in Denver, Colorado October 29 to November 2. The call for abstracts will open this December 18, 2015. This is a perfect opportunity for any student interested in attending to develop a poster or presentation and submit it to APHA. This date also coincides perfectly to practice the presentation at the Public Health Student-Faculty Research Day on February 5, 2016. If interested in developing posters or presentations for next year, contact your faculty advisor!

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Jeanmarie Salie took and successfully passed the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) examination. The CHES examination is a competency-based tool used to measure possession, application, and interpretation of knowledge in the Seven Areas of Responsibility for Health Education Specialists.

"I took the CHES exam because aside from earning my MPH, I wanted to show employers that I meet national standards of practice in health education. CHES credentials will help keep me accountable for staying current and committing to continuous professional development, which is very important in this field." Congrats, Jean!



Visit <http://www.nchec.org> to learn more about the CHES exam.

Amy Adams took and successfully passed the Certified in Public Health (CPH) examination. The CPH exam covers the five core areas of knowledge in public health. The exam assesses a person's knowledge of these competencies, regardless of the concentration.

"I decided to sit for the Certified in Public Health Exam under the advisement of my preceptor at HRSA Bureau of Primary Health Care, Angela Powell. The CPH certification shows my value as a public health professional and proves that I keep my expertise up-to-date. The exam was certainly not easy but my courses at UT prepared me well. To refresh my memory for the test I purchased the study guide from the National Board of Public Health Examiners. The practice questions were extremely helpful and very similar to the ones on the final exam." Congratulations, Amy!



Visit <https://www.nbphe.org/CPHexaminfo.cfm> for more information.

# Second MPH Career Guidance Workshop



## Do You Know How to Find a Job After Graduation?

More than a dozen MPH students attended this year's second career guidance workshop to learn how to search for public health jobs. Students gained valuable insight from Dr. Kathy Brown's professional journey and learned about logistics of and strategies in planning a job search. The workshop was concluded with a panel discussion featuring personal stories and insider tips from public health professionals. Didn't make it to the workshop? Here are some key takeaways:

### Develop a Strategy

Start by creating an action plan. What are your priorities? Your short and long-term goals? Create a system to track your applications and follow up communications for each submission. Diversify your search techniques to utilize job boards, target particular companies, and network and promote yourself on platforms like LinkedIn.

### Dream Big!

Be open to new possibilities, but don't settle for positions that do not serve your career aspirations. When interviewing, remember that you're interviewing the company, too! You may be the right person for their position, but are they the right organization for you? Try to get a feel for the company culture, management styles, and opportunity for growth.

### Tailor Your Approach

Communicate your relevant qualifications to promote yourself as the best person for the job. Begin by researching the company and critically reading through the job description. Mirror the "power words" found in the company's mission, goals, and job position description. Be sure to prioritize what you include in your cover letter and resume so that you're highlighting your experience that directly speaks to the necessary and preferred skills listed in the job description. Employers want to know, "What is the best thing you did in previous work that matches what I need now?"

### Start Now

Even if it's your first semester, start branding yourself by creating an effective LinkedIn profile and getting others to endorse you. Engage in face-to-face networking. "Networking" can be a scary concept – consider it instead as building relationships. Be genuine and approachable, and use it as an opportunity to learn how different organizations operate. This will help to inform you of aspects that are attractive, or ones to avoid, when asking about organizational culture in future interviews.

Thank you to panel members: Dr. Kandi Qualls, Blue Cross, Blue Shield of East TN; Khrysta Baig, Knox County Health Department; Tracy Spencer, Noblis; Belle McFarland, American College of Cardiology.

Do you need additional job search guidance? Contact Mary Beth Browder, career specialist, UT Career Development Center, (865) 974-5435 or [mbrowde2@utk.edu](mailto:mbrowde2@utk.edu). Join us in January for an interactive workshop on writing effective cover letters and resumes!

*Author: Jessica Waddell*



## DATES TO REMEMBER

December 3,4,7-10  
Final Exams

December 10-11  
Graduate Hooding  
Commencement

December 15  
Deadline for Travel  
Awards

December 18  
Call for APHA Abstract  
Opens

January 13  
Spring Classes Begin

January 30  
Deadline to meet with  
Julie to plan summer  
field placements

Late January  
Resume/Cover Letter  
Workshop

February 12  
Research Day

Late February  
Interview/Job  
Negotiation Workshop

April 1  
Spring MPH  
Comprehensive Exam

## Recent MPH Events

### Field Practice

A total of fourteen MPH students are preparing for their field practice this spring!

Nine Community Health Education students and five Health Policy and Management students will complete the required 360-hour field placement this spring at organizations pertaining to their career interests, including: non-profits, medical centers, health department, higher education, coalition, and consulting. Students will develop selected concentration and core PH competencies through contributing to worksite wellness, refugee health, public policy, drug abuse prevention, mental health promotion, program evaluation, health data analysis, and organizational process improvements. Intern oral presentations—a culminating experience for the MPH degree—will be scheduled for late April/early May. Students planning a summer 2016 field practice should meet with **Julie Grubaugh** (jgrubaugh@utk.edu), FP coordinator, by January 30, 2016.

### HPM Job Faculty Search

The department has concluded interviews for the HPM faculty position. Each of the four candidates spent almost two days meeting with faculty, students, college deans, and university officials. Thanks to all who attended presentations or met with the candidates! Your input is essential to the decision as to who to hire. We hope to move the process forward as quickly as possible and identify a new member of our faculty.

### News From PHGSA

Elizabeth C. Conner, Elena Stewart, Amy Adams, Courtney Williams, and Michelle Wright have enjoyed serving as your PHGSA officers this year. We would like to welcome the new 2016 PHGSA officers:

**Jessica Waddell**, President  
**Jessica Jurcak**, Vice President  
**Kaitlin DeWitt**, Secretary  
**Nicolette Rosa**, Treasurer  
**Anniece Weaver**, Philanthropy Chair

The PHGSA is currently collecting items for the Big Red Bow Project to benefit Alzheimer's Tennessee. Donated items will be given to individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in East Tennessee. Donations will be accepted through December 8th. Please bring all items to the front office in HPER 390. See the following link for a complete list of items. <http://www.alztennessee.org/bigredbowproject/>.

The PHGSA also invites students and faculty to join us Saturday, December 12th at 11:00am for brunch at Café 4 in Market Square.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to all students who passed the Public Health Comprehensive Exam (COMPS) this semester, and congratulations to those graduating in December. The Department of Public Health wishes you good luck and great success as you move forward to new endeavors!

If you plan to take COMPS this spring, email Dr. Brown (kcbrown@utk.edu) before the holiday break to let her know. Date of the examination and more information will be announced soon after the break.

Deadlines for Travel Awards are fast approaching for the Spring 2016 travel. For A&S and EHHS, they are due on December 15th by 5:00 p.m.

*Happy Holidays and enjoy your winter break!  
Take good care. Rest up. Refuel!*

Share your news in MPH Memos with **Amanda Letheren**, editor. Email [alethere@vols.utk.edu](mailto:alethere@vols.utk.edu)

### 2016 DPH RESEARCH DAY SAVE THE DATE

Calling all Public Health Students!

Save the date to attend and present\* at the 2016  
Department of Public Health Research Day.

**When: 9:00 —2:00, Friday, February 12th, 2016**  
**Where: Black Cultural Center**

\*Don't have current research? Don't worry. Talk to your faculty about getting involved TODAY!

Questions? Don't miss out. See Dr. Jabson.