Welcome to Rocky Top!
If you haven’t met yet, my name is Emma Barnes and I serve as the Public Health Graduate Student Association (PHGSA) President. The board and I sincerely hope that you are becoming well-acquainted with campus/the Knoxville area and are enjoying your first semester here in the Department of Public Health. We will have several events throughout the semester that will help with studying, becoming involved, and getting to know one another! Keep an eye out for emails, be sure to like our page on Facebook, and let any of us know if you have suggestions/comments about future events. Our door is always open to you. I look forward to meeting you - GO VOLS!

PHGSA Trivia Night!

On Tuesday, September 19 PHGSA’s trivia team came in 4th place at the Blackhorse Pub & Brewery Trivia Night! Congratulations!
Check out these public health related podcast channels!

“Ann Thompson reports on the latest trends in technology and their effects on medicine, safety, the environment or entertainment.”

“Only Human is a show about health that we all can relate to. Because every body has a story.”

“Public Health Minute (PHM) is a one minute segment in which the creator and host, Dr. William Latimer, interviews researchers and medical professionals about a wide variety of public health topics.”

“Animal Airwaves is a daily radio series that features one-minute segments relating to animal health.”

Source: NPR Podcasts - Health

Comprehensive Exams and Admission to Candidacy Information

- Comprehensive Exams are on **Friday, November 3 | 9 am - 3 pm**
  - For more information and to sign-up contact Dr. Brown
  - Soon you will receive a Canvas request from Dr. Brown to join the Comps group - please accept this request

- Admission to Candidacy Forms are due before Comps
  - Link to the form: Admission to Candidacy Form
  - Chairperson = Your Advisor
  - Committee Memebers = 2 faculty from the department of your choosing
  - Director of Graduate Studies = Dr. Brown
  - Suggestion: When your form is complete, walk it to the Graduate School [111 Student Servives Bldg]
Tennessee Public Health Association Annual Conference  
September 13 - 15, 2017

Thank you to all the faculty and staff that attended TPHA this year and represented our department!

The theme of this year’s conference was Cultivate, Innovate, Elevate: Health Across The Spectrum. At the annual conference, attendees heard about about any number of important public health issues including efforts to control the Zika virus, how Tennessee is addressing opioid abuse and the lessons learned from the Gatlinburg and Sevier County wildfires.

Current TPHA President and Department Head, Dr. Paul Erwin with Sharena Domingo, MPH student and 2017 recipient of the Evelyn Vaillencourt Memorial Scholarship.

(from left to right) Dr. Brown, Julie Grubaugh, and MPH students Skyla Smith and Kelsey Gordon at the opening ceremony.

(from left to right) MPH students Skyla Smith and Kelsey Gordon man the UT Public Health booth.
Public Health In Action!

“Hello, everyone! Everytime I go home to visit my 95 year old grandad we discuss current events and he always wants to know how public health is involved, whether we are discussing healthcare bills or natural disasters. These conversations sparked an idea - why don't we include a “public health in the news” segment to the memos? This semester we are trying something new - let me know what you think!”

- Rebecca Elias

While many states have been affected by Hurricaness Harvey and Irma in the past few weeks, Florida and Texas are facing the most challenging public health crises in dealing with the aftermath of these hurricanes. Below are some public health considerations each state is currently facing.

In Houston and in cities throughout Florida, public health officials are battling many threats including contaminated waters, mosquitoes, lost medicines, mold, and the spread of infectious diseases. An estimated 30% of Harris County (Houston) was submerged in water polluted with contaminants, such as oil, grease, and many other toxins. With some of the flood waters remaining stagnant, these environments have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes that carry a variety of disease such as West Nile virus, Zika virus, chikungunya, and dengue.

Additional environmental concerns come from the mold in flooded homes which will require complete rebuilding of homes and may affect individuals’ allergies and asthma. With the crowding of individuals in shelters across the state of Texas, the spread of infectious diseases may increase - such as norovirus. Lastly, as people evacuated many left important medical equipment (i.e. dialysis and oxygen machines) and medications in their homes.

Beyond physical ailments, mental health issues are also of concern with those affected by these tragic natural disasters. We thank all of the emergency first responders, medical staff, and public health workers who have aided those affected and are continuing to work towards rebuilding these areas.

Source: MarketWatch - Americans in the path of Hurricanes Irma and Harvey face disastrous health risks

View of Hollywood Beach, Florida (Wilfredo Lee, AP)

Flooding on freeways in Houston (Thomas B. Shea/AFP/Getty Images)
Faculty Spotlight: Julie Grubaugh

For 13 years I have served students at The University of Tennessee, beginning at the Office of Disability Services as a sign language interpreter. I provided communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing students and mentored interpreting interns.

After seeing how much where we work affects our health, I earned an MPH from UT in 2010 with a special focus on worksite wellness and health literacy.

In 2011, I joined the Department of Public Health as the Academic Health Department (AHD) Coordinator, a joint appointment share equally with the Knox County Health Department. My primary focus was to develop a centralized, high quality student intern experience and coordinate shared activities related to workforce development (staff training) and practice-based research.

In July, my role increased to 80% at UT (4 days per week) and 20% (1 day per week) at Knox County Health Department. I still oversee the MPH internship and conduct alumni and employer outreach and engagement. In addition, I am more deeply contributing to the UT DPH’s student recruitment, accreditation, and development activities.

Why do I show up to work every day with a smile on my face and leave work with a sense of satisfaction, joy? The people! Our leadership supports and respects each employee’s growing and learning. The students bring diverse perspectives. It’s a joy to see students discover their career path.

My advice to students is to do what makes you come alive, and when that things changes, be brave and follow the joy.

Share your news with MPH Memos editor, Rebecca Elias.
email: relias@vols.utk.edu