



## MPH Memos Spring 2020 Edition 3

Welcome to the last MPH Memos of the Spring 2020 semester! What an unexpected semester it has been. We hope you are staying well. Please reach out with any need or concerns you have.

This edition, we will be celebrating our graduates. Please also remember to tune in to the Department of Public Health Virtual Graduation on May 7th at 4pm via Zoom. More information and the link to join is on page 2.

*This is my last Memos as editor due to graduation! Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to the Memos and helped make this a very fun and enjoyable position! I will miss you all!*

- Catherine Miller

### Important Dates

May 7, 2020	Virtual Graduation Celebration for Department of Public Health
May 9, 2020	Official graduation date for Spring 2020 graduates
May 6-27, 2020	Summer Mini Session
May 28-August 6, 2020	Summer 2020 courses
August 8, 2020	Official graduation date for Summer 2020 graduates



The Department of Public Health invites you to the **Spring 2020 Celebration of Graduation** via Zoom!

We ask **graduates to please fill out this Google Form** with information we can read about you while you "walk across stage" during the online celebration: <https://forms.gle/dDh6ZfMhTxd7b6t7A>. Friends and family are welcome to attend! Contact [kcbrown@utk.edu](mailto:kcbrown@utk.edu) with questions.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/99370740496>

Or iPhone one-tap (US Toll): +16468769923,99370740496# or +13017158592,99370740496#

Or Telephone:

Dial:

+1 646 876 9923 (US Toll)

+1 301 715 8592 (US Toll)

+1 312 626 6799 (US Toll)

+1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)

+1 253 215 8782 (US Toll)

+1 346 248 7799 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 993 7074 0496

International numbers available: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/u/aecxEkCjUO>

Or an H.323/SIP room system:

H.323: 162.255.37.11 (US West) or 162.255.36.11 (US East)

Meeting ID: 993 7074 0496

SIP: [99370740496@zoomcrc.com](mailto:99370740496@zoomcrc.com)



Spring & Summer 2020 graduates

Name: Brittany Blair

Program of study: MPH with HPM concentration

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: UT Boyd Center for Business & Economic Research

Next steps: I am excited to continue working with the Boyd Center, with the opportunity to apply my MPH skill set to public policy research.

Favorite part of the MPH program: The amazing faculty! I loved learning from all of their incredible experiences.

Name: Jess Brooks

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: Franciscan Health, Indianapolis, IN

Next steps: My field placement offered me a full-time position as their Wellness Promotion Specialist. I will be meeting with our healthcare employees one-on-one for health coaching, as well as leading wellness education classes for employees and community members.

Favorite part of the MPH program: Prior to the MPH program, I did not understand how dynamic and multifaceted public health is—I love the depth and never-ending information that I learned from the MPH program. Sharing classes with intelligent and empowering women was also another stand out of our program!



Name: Pragya Gautam Poudel

Program of study: DrPH with minor in Epidemiology

Graduation date: Summer 2020

Advanced Field Placement location: Golden Community, Research Center, Kathmandu, Nepal

Next steps: I am exploring job opportunities.

Favorite part of the DrPH program: I had the opportunity to take more statistics courses, and I really enjoyed learning new software: SAS and R programming. I have been using SAS a lot recently.

Spring & Summer 2020 graduates

Name: Nick Koncar

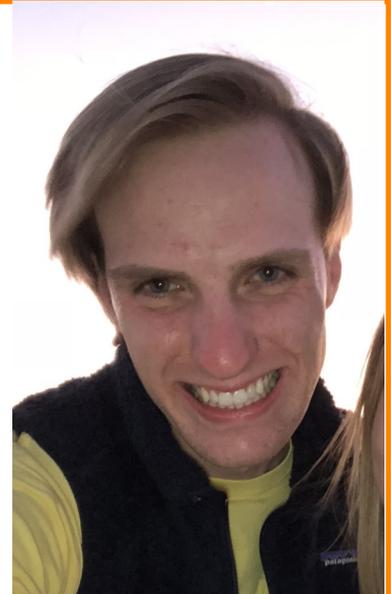
Program of study: MPH with HPM concentration

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: Knox County Health Department

Next steps: I am anticipating relocating after finding a job in process improvement, quality improvement, or infection prevention.

Favorite part of the MPH program: I thoroughly enjoyed learning about strategic planning, leadership, and management principles.



Name: David Laubach

Program of study: MPH with HPM concentration

Graduation date: Summer 2020

Field Placement location: City of Knoxville—Office of Economic and Community Development

Next steps: I'm not entirely sure what my next step will be. However, I know how far this degree, this experience and preparation, can take us, and I'm eager to see what the future holds.

Favorite part of the MPH program: The uniquely brilliant and unwaveringly supportive educators who comprise the Public Health faculty.

Name: Kaela McIver

Program of study: Dual degree MPH with CHE concentration and MS-Nutrition

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities in Memphis

Next steps: Next up is the job hunt! I'll be looking for work as a Registered Dietitian either in a clinical or public health setting.

Favorite part of the MPH program: I have loved the opportunity to broaden my perspectives on the social determinants of health, because good nutrition isn't as simple as eating more vegetables. Thank you to all of my professors for equipping me to provide nutrition therapy and educate communities with social determinants in mind!





Name: Catherine Miller

Spring & Summer 2020 graduates

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration; International Children, Youth, and Families certificate

Graduation date: Summer 2020

Field Placement location: Knox County Health Department—Parents as Teachers program

Next steps: My husband and I are planning to go on staff with Campus Outreach in Columbia, SC. I plan to split my time with a public health job as well—searching now!

Favorite part of the MPH program: The relationships with the students and faculty. Thank you for the support and friendship!

Name: Molly Rigell Peek

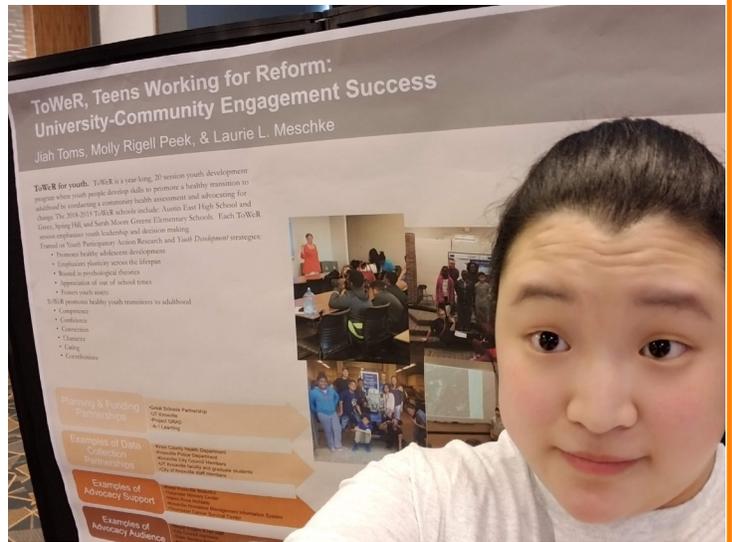
Program of study: Dual degree MPH with CHE concentration and MS-Nutrition; Minors in Epidemiology and Statistics

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: USDA

Next steps: Hopefully a statistics-related job wherever they'll hire me!

Favorite part of the MPH program: The people! My professors, my classmates, and everyone else.



Name: Anna Sachs

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration; Minor in Epidemiology

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: Vanderbilt Ingram Cancer Center

Next steps: I am fortunate that my internship has been extended through May 30th while I job search! I am currently applying to full-time time positions within Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN.

Favorite part of the MPH program: UT made Knoxville feel like a second home, and I am so fortunate to have had such an amazing two years with the MPH program. Both my classmates and professors made learning fun, constantly encouraged me to learn and grow, and were always there to support me when I faced challenges of any sort.

Spring & Summer 2020 graduates

Name: Tamarra Spalding

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration;  
Minor in Epidemiology

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: Vanderbilt for Center for Health  
Services Research

Next steps: I'd love to stay at Vandy, but I'd be happy with  
any position in the Nashville area!

Favorite part of the MPH program: The professors were  
extremely personable and cared about their students as  
people outside of school, and I have met some of my best  
friends!



Name: Jiah Toms-Calloway

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration; Health Policy  
certificate

Graduation date: Summer 2020

Field Placement location: Meharry Medical College Division of Public  
Health Practice

Next steps: Begin my career as a public health professional!

Favorite part of the MPH program: The class discussions in Health  
and Society were my favorite part of the MPH program. That class truly  
discussed many topics that can help reduce health disparities and  
helped me realize why my voice matters.

Name: Meg Zimmer

Program of study: MPH with CHE concentration

Graduation date: Spring 2020

Field Placement location: USDA Food Surveys Research Group

Next steps: Continue working with USDA Food Surveys  
Research Group. We will be developing a tutorial for applying  
the NCI method for usual intake analysis to What We Eat in  
America NHANES data, an extension of my field placement  
products.

Favorite part of the MPH program: the people!



## Departmental News: Fall 2020 Course Offering

Are you interested in studying the COVID-19 pandemic in the classroom as part of your MPH coursework? Join in the fall for a new course offering:

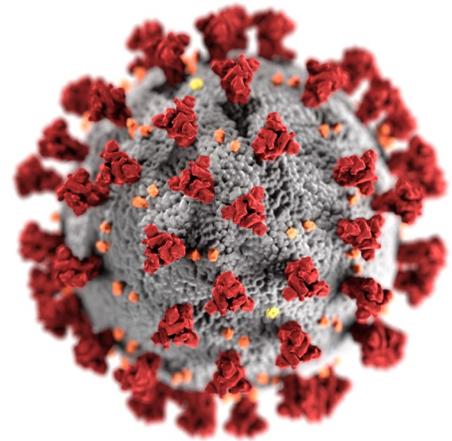
### **PUBH 495 & 580: Special Topics COVID 19: Emerging history**

2 credit hours

Hybrid course delivery

Friday 10:10am – 12:05pm

Course description: COVID –19 brought about a dramatic and profound impact to life as we knew it. This course will draw on the experience of those involved and affected to explore the challenges COVID-19 has generated for leadership, ethics, economics and communities.



Contact Dr. Brown at [kcbrown@utk.edu](mailto:kcbrown@utk.edu) with questions.

You can enroll when Fall 2020 enrollment opens—but, remember to always consult with your academic advisor first.

## Departmental News: Senator Briggs in PUBH 509 Seminar



It is important for students of public health to be aware of their local governance and to understand the impact of legislation and policy on public health.

Dr. Richard Briggs is a Senator in the TN General Assembly, representing District 7, which is part of Knox County.

Senator Briggs shared a legislative update on the Medicaid expansion in TN, the permit-less gun carry legislation, and the COVID-19 response with the PUBH 509 Graduate Seminar on March 12th with Dr. Carole Myers.

# Student Highlight: Matthew Pettepher

Hey Matthew! You were nominated for an MPH Memos highlight. Please introduce yourself.



I am currently a first year MPH student with a Health Policy and Management concentration and considering adding the Food Safety Certificate. I received my B.S. in Biology from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa (Roll Tide!). After I graduated, I received the opportunity to be an intern at a Big Cat Sanctuary in Arkansas. I'm sure everyone has seen Tiger King by now, but my experience was nothing like the show and I would be happy to share all my stories!

For fun, I like to really do anything active. I have hiked out west and hiked Half Dome, Angels landing, and many other extremely beautiful places. I enjoy exploring new places with friends, huge sports fan (happy to watch all sports with whoever), skydiving, and am now a dog dad. I have a 17-week-old puppy and we are figuring life out and finding ways to stay busy during these times.

I am currently working as a GRA for Dr. Meschke, on a HRSA funded grant called Project HOPE. We have the goal to help those with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) through prevention, changing the stigma, providing tools and to better the health resources in the rural areas that are lacking. We are doing various different projects such as creating trainings, creating databases, working with community members in ten rural counties, and many other tools. Through this project I have learned more than I could imagine and am grateful for each experience.



So many neat things! Why did you choose to pursue an MPH?

I chose to pursue my MPH because it gives me a better opportunity to advance into veterinary school. While becoming a veterinarian is my career goal, I have many interests in epidemiology, environmental health, one health, and food safety, and I feel public health allows me to continue towards my career goals and interests.

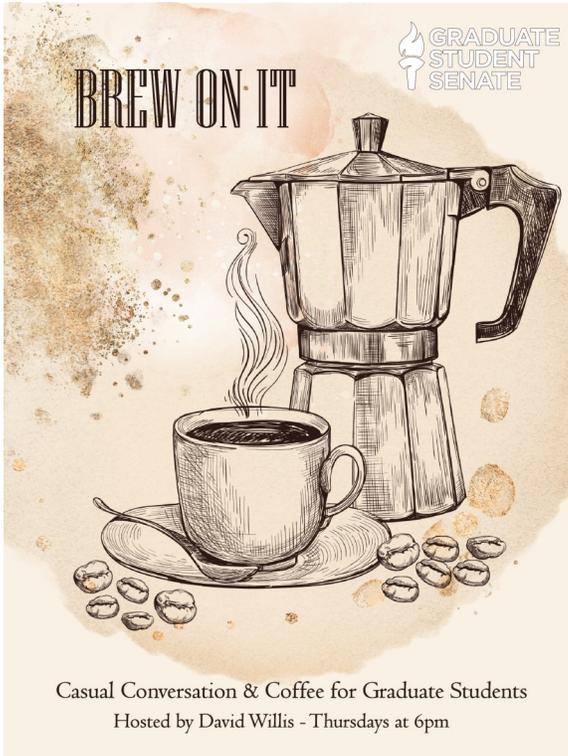
Awesome. What kind of public health work most interests you?

There are many fields in public health that interest me. The most interesting is One Health. To me being able to work through an approach that connects human health with animal and environmental health is very fascinating.

Within one health, I would really enjoy being a public health veterinarian and also have the opportunity to do some work internationally with food safety and other public health issues.



## GSS: Graduate Student Conversations



Graduate students can join the GSS President, David Willis, for weekly discussions on topics relevant to graduate students! Thursdays at 6PM:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/96960451865>

Or iPhone one-tap (US Toll):

+16468769923,96960451865# or

+13126266799,96960451865#

Or Telephone: Dial: +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll) +1

312 626 6799 (US Toll) +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)

+1 253 215 8782 (US Toll) +1 301 715 8592 (US

Toll) +1 346 248 7799 (US Toll) Meeting ID: 969

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[tennessee.zoom.us/j/96960451865](https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/96960451865)

Or an H.323/SIP room system: H.323: 162.255.37.11

(US West) or 162.255.36.11 (US East) Meeting ID:

969 6045 1865 SIP: [96960451865@zoomcrc.com](mailto:96960451865@zoomcrc.com)

## Campus Connections: Career Center

All students, and especially graduating students, don't forget about all the services available through the UT Career Center. Visit <https://career.utk.edu/> for resources and contacts, like

- One-on-one virtual resume and cover letter review sessions
- The Career Consultant newsletter with upcoming events, opportunities, job and internship postings
- Adulting 101 Series
- Handshake platform, UT's referral source for jobs, internships, and professional opportunities, free for students. Sign in, network, and find your next position: <https://career.utk.edu/handshake/>
- If you missed it, you can go back and watch the Environment & Sustainability Career Panel, which included professionals from the TN Department of Energy and Conservation, Keep Knoxville Beautiful, and Knox CAC AmeriCorps! <https://youtu.be/XqRmGbAFdZI>



## Faculty Highlight: Dr. Kintziger



We thank Dr. Kintziger for sharing in the MPH Memos this edition! You can find out more about her and her research and how to contact her here: <https://publichealth.utk.edu/people/kintziger/>

Hello, everyone! Allow me to introduce myself! I am an Assistant Professor and an epidemiologist by training.

I have been in Knoxville since 2016, and am originally from FL – but have lived all over the south, including GA and SC, too.

In these strange times that we are in, I am quarantining at home with my husband, 3-year old daughter, and 3-month old son. Because we are at home more than normal, I am teaching my daughter how to bake and garden, and she has ‘helped’ me sew, too. Mostly, she licks the bowl, digs in the dirt, and pushes buttons while I try to get the jobs done!

My research is normally spent on environmental epidemiology related projects, and usually related to how climate impacts human health. However, because I also have experience with infectious disease epidemiology, I am doing a lot for the university related to COVID-19 right now.

If anyone is interested in learning more about environmental epidemiology, please contact me! I have an ongoing project related to sub-county life expectancy in Tennessee and also am working on getting funding for several projects measuring micro-climates and personal heat environments.

*Students interested in environmental epidemiology—did you read that?!*

Thank you for your service to the University and community in this time!, Dr. Kintziger!

Which is your favorite course to teach?

Even though I really do enjoy all of the courses I teach, PUBH 540 – Principles of Epidemiology – is my favorite course. I think the reason for that is two-fold.

First, I try to find ways to make it interesting and get people excited about epidemiology – since for most, this is the first time they are being introduced to epi concepts. For this summer, I am (of course!) planning on adding a module about COVID-19 and expanding on the concepts I cover in the outbreak and surveillance module.

Second, this course attracts people from so many different disciplines. I really enjoy seeing how epidemiologic methods are being applied in other areas.

That sounds like a really interesting course this summer. Thank you so much for sharing with us, and congratulations on the newest Kintziger!

## Departmental News: Student Awards

**The Department of Public Health will be awarding the following student awards at the virtual Celebration of Graduation on May 7th** (information & link to join this event are on page 2):

**Dr. Charles Hamilton Award – for excellence in Health Policy and Management**

This award recognizes an MPH student in the Health Policy and Management concentration. The awardee is recognized for consistently high levels of engagement through research and service throughout their tenure as a graduate student.

**Dr. June Gorski Award – for excellence in Community Health Education**

This award recognizes an MPH student in the Community Health Education concentration. The award winner has demonstrated excellence in any or all aspects of health education including, community assessment, program development, and evaluation.

**Gary and Becky Blauser Award – for excellence in Epidemiology**

The Gary and Becky Blauser Award is given to an MPH graduate student who has declared a minor in Epidemiology who has demonstrated great competency and application of epidemiological techniques as demonstrated through employment, volunteer efforts, coursework, or other relevant paths.

**Dr. John New Award – for excellence in Veterinary Public Health**

The John New Award is presented to a VPH student who has the highest GPA in MPH courses. and demonstrates excellence in all aspects of their work.

## Departmental News: Equity & Diversity Committee

Please consider joining the Equity and Diversity Committee for the 2020/2021 academic year! The Equity and Diversity Committee is seeking new members!

The Equity and Diversity Committee is a standing committee in the department that is specified by the Department of Public Health Bylaws. Each year the Department of Public Health Equity and Diversity Committee undergoes changes as members roll off of this committee and new members elect to join. Students, faculty, and staff are all welcome and encouraged to participate.

Examples of previous activities that the committee has completed include:

- Provide educational workshops and seminars for departmental members about equity, diversity, and inclusion topics
- Conduct review of course syllabi and curricula for integrating and improving equity and diversity content
- Host and facilitate book club
- Conduct department climate survey
- Engage in shared learning and thinking about equity, diversity, and inclusion topics in our field and the department

If you are interested in participation, please consider contacting current leadership: Jennifer Jabson Tree ([jabstree@utk.edu](mailto:jabstree@utk.edu)) or Darrian Nash ([dnash6@vols.utk.edu](mailto:dnash6@vols.utk.edu)) or Aubrey Ray Dalana ([aray33@vols.utk.edu](mailto:aray33@vols.utk.edu)) for more information.

Dr. Meschke will serve as the new Chair of the committee. Please welcome her in her new leadership role on the committee. You can contact her at [imeschke@utk.edu](mailto:imeschke@utk.edu).

## Student Highlight: Rachel Klenzman

Hey Rachel! You were nominated for an MPH Memos highlight. Tell us about yourself!

I am finishing up my second year of the dual MS in Nutrition - MPH program. I will graduate in May of 2021 after completing my dietetic internship that Spring!

I received a Bachelors of Science in Dietetics from Ashland University in 2018 before I moved to Knoxville. I was born and raised in Central Ohio, but Knoxville is my home! My free time is spent playing with my pup, Baloo, and wedding planning with my fiancé, Tyler!

Congrats! Why did you choose to pursue a dual MS-MPH?

I chose to do the dual program because it is just such a great opportunity to develop myself into a more well-rounded public health professional. I want to work with the maternal and infant population, specifically on programs relating to pregnancy and lactation support. The MPH CHE concentration provides in-depth education and training in program development, implementation, and evaluation, which I think will be extremely beneficial to my future career.

Awesome! Can you tell us about what it means to be a Maternal & Child Health Nutrition Leadership Trainee?

The Maternal & Child Health Leadership Training Program here at UT, funded by the Human Resources and Services Administration's Division of Maternal and Child Health Workforce Development, provides graduate training emphasizing public health nutrition efforts in the maternal and child health population.

As a trainee, I get to work on several projects and programs, such as the biannual Promoting Health Weight Colloquium 3.0 series, the East Tennessee Childhood Obesity Coalition, Peer Mentoring Network, and much more!

I also get to attend several conferences, including the Annual MCH Nutrition Grantee meeting and Association of State Public Health Nutritionists annual meeting.



# Scholarship Opportunities

Graduating students, consider the following scholarship opportunities through TPHA (Tennessee Public Health Association). Applications are due MAY 8th.

## Evelyn Vaillencourt Memorial Scholarship

Are you a student pursuing a formal education in the field of health education? Do you plan to practice in Tennessee following your graduation? If so, you may qualify to apply for the Evelyn Vaillencourt Memorial Scholarship. One scholarship of up to \$1000 will be awarded this year.

Learn more about eligibility and how to apply here: <https://tnpublichealth.org/announcements/the-tennessee-public-health-association-has-scholarship-opportunities/>

## TPHA General Scholarships

Up to \$1000 in scholarships available to be awarded to workers in Public Health who meet the following criteria:

- a) Three or more years of full time employment in Public Health in Tennessee
- b) A member of TPHA whose dues are current and who has been a member for at least one year

Learn more about eligibility and how to apply here:

<https://tnpublichealth.org/announcements/the-tennessee-public-health-association-has-scholarship-opportunities/>.

If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Thomas at [Carrie.Thomas@knoxcounty.org](mailto:Carrie.Thomas@knoxcounty.org).

*Congratulations* to the Spring and Summer 2020 MPH and DrPH graduates!

Be sure to join us for the virtual Celebration of Graduation on May 7th at 4pm to celebrate together. Information and the link to join are on page 2.