

Master of Public Health Alumni Newsletter

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Boonshoft
School of Medicine
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Population &
Public Health Sciences

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PPH FACULTY AND STAFF FAVORITE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

1

Bake/decorate cookies;
Decorate house/tree.

2

Watch Christmas movies; Listen to
Christmas music.

3

Holiday lights tour.

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



Marietta Orlowski, Ph.D.

'Tis the season to give thanks, and I hope this message finds you in a place of gratitude and hope. As the Population and Public Health Sciences faculty and staff conclude this year, I reflect on the numerous joys of being back in person this semester. I am grateful for our community's dedication to bringing students back into the classroom safely and adopting new ways to learn and stay connected. It has been a joy to reconnect with our students and each other.

In addition to returning to the classroom, we welcomed back other department traditions. Thank you to our alumni who participated in the second annual Public Health Careers 101 event and to the numerous public health professionals who participated in our learning experiences. This spring, we look forward to the return of our M.P.H. capstone poster presentations and hope to see many familiar faces at the celebration.

Our goals for 2022 continue to focus on being recognized as a leader of public health initiatives for the university and region. We will expand our academic partnerships and identify key pathways for recruiting others into a rewarding career in public health. For students, our plan is to increase opportunities for research and service-learning experiences as well as update courses to reflect the changing landscape of our profession. As always, we welcome your feedback and participation in the process.

During this season, I hope that you find moments of peace as well as time to recharge your battery. Wishing you joy and happiness.

Marietta Orlowski

Marietta Orlowski, Ph.D.
Department Chair

PROGRAM UPDATE

Wright Day to Give

On October 1, 2021, the department launched its first annual giving campaign in conjunction with Wright Day to Give. The giving campaign helped to grow the new Master of Public Health Student Scholarship, started by Ken Dahms. The scholarship aims to provide financial assistance to deserving M.P.H. students each year.

In honor of Wright Day to Give, Dahms pledged to match up to \$2,000 of gifts made by M.P.H. alumni, faculty, and friends. The M.P.H. family met the challenge—\$4,380 from 14 donors. If you were unable to participate this year, the annual giving campaign will be back October 1, 2022. For more information on ways to give to the Master of Public Health Student Scholarship or other areas of the department, email Camille Edwards at camille.edwards@wright.edu.

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PROGRAM UPDATE (*continued*)

Public Health Careers 101

The Delta Omega Gamma Alpha Chapter of Boonshoft School of Medicine Master of Public Health program hosted the second annual Public Health Careers 101 panel and networking event. The event was conducted virtually, allowing for participation beyond southwest Ohio. Four M.P.H. alumni, working in various sectors of the public health field, participated in a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Michael Dohn, Public Health—Dayton & Montgomery County's medical director and former M.P.H. faculty.

Panelists for this event included Denisha Porter, M.P.H. '06, executive director, All-In Cincinnati Equity Coalition at Greater Cincinnati Foundation; Fabrice Juin, M.P.H. '20, project manager, Local Office of Minority Health, Public Health—Dayton & Montgomery County; Roopsi Narayan, M.P.H. '14, system director, Premier Health Partners, Fidelity Health Care; and Sierra Flowers, M.P.H. '20, SARS-CoV-2 epidemiologist, Ohio Department of Health.

Students from Wright State University, Miami University, Bowling Green State University, and Ohio University participated by exploring opportunities available to students, connecting with public health leaders, and learning how the Wright State M.P.H. program impacted the panelists' and other attendees' careers.

DELTA OMEGA: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Linda J. Smith, M.P.H. '11
Delta Omega '12

Linda Smith—Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative

Linda J. Smith, M.P.H. '11, Delta Omega '12, spent the past two-plus years developing a new WHO-UNICEF document for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI). The BFHI, launched in 1991 by WHO and UNICEF, is actively implemented in over 22,000 maternity facilities worldwide. A major change in the 2018 revision is in Step 2, which changed from "Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy," requiring 20 hours of training in specific topics, to "Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge, competence, and skills to support breastfeeding."

Smith and four other subject-matter experts offered to develop competency verification tools for WHO. Sixteen competencies define broad skills; 64 measurable performance indicators define knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for safe and effective practice by direct care providers. Performance indicators are assessed according to their cognitive level: knowledge (assessed by multiple choice questions), skills, and attitude (assessed by case studies and observation grids). The toolkit was launched in August 2020 and is now being translated into at least six languages. Access the toolkit at www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240008854. Most recently, Smith presented this project as a poster session at the 2021 American Public Health Association's Annual Conference.



Sarah Fryman, M.P.H. '20,
Delta Omega '20

Sarah Fryman—Extended Fellowship

Sarah Fryman, M.P.H. '20, Delta Omega '20, can be found working with the CDC. Fryman was recently asked to extend her fellowship with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, within the Division of Field Studies and Engineering's Health Informatics Branch.

In her current work, Fryman analyzes surveillance data to highlight the importance of work as a social determinant of health, and especially analyzing work-related factors associated with the use of opioids during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, Fryman will continue efforts to research death certificate data from the National Occupational Mortality Surveillance System to understand trends over time, occupations and/or industries with high outcome burdens, and characteristics of the decedents.

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ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS



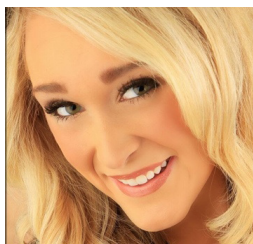
Omar Tahtamooni, M.P.H. '16

Omar Tahtamooni–Defended thesis and earned Ph.D.

Congratulations, Omar Tahtamooni, M.P.H. '16. Tahtamooni successfully defended his thesis and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh with a focus on environmental and occupational health. His thesis was titled, “The Association between Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons Exposure and Health Outcomes in Older United States Adults.”

The association between air pollutants, such as particulate matters (PM) and ozone (O³), and the risk of cognitive impairment and hypertension among different age groups was deeply investigated. However, limited studies have examined the association between specific components of air pollutants, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) with cognitive performance (CP) risk and hypertension (HTN) among older adults. The objectives of Tahatamooni’s study were to examine the association between urinary PAH biomarkers and both CP and HTN in older adults, as well as to determine if the associations between PAH and CP scores and HTN differ by individual socioeconomic status and ethnicity. With the completion of his Ph.D., Tahtamooni now seeks to find a health-related teaching position.

STANDOUT STUDENT



Whitney Jenkins

Whitney Jenkins–GA and Research Project with CITAR

Second year M.P.H. student Whitney Jenkins was hired as a graduate assistant in the Center for Interventions, Treatment, and Addictions Research (CITAR). Jenkins, under the guidance of Sydney Silverstein, Ph.D., assists on the project titled, “Crystal in the Gem City: Characterizing a Methamphetamine Outbreak in the Area of a High Prevalence of Illicit Fentanyl Use.”

This mixed-methods research study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and National Institute on Drug Abuse, aims to describe the methamphetamine outbreak in the Dayton area. The goals of the study are to understand knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors associated with using methamphetamine, and to compare subgroups through integration of ethnographic and qualitative/structured interview data. Urine toxicology is analyzed along with self-reported history of methamphetamine use and other drugs. Forensic data on collected drugs and unintentional overdose is analyzed to better understand the trends related to methamphetamine use in the Dayton area.

After her graduation in the spring, Jenkins plans to pursue a doctorate in public health while working as an epidemiologist.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

MetroParks Make a Difference Day

In October 2021, the Population and Public Health Sciences Department participated in the Five Rivers MetroParks Make a Difference Day. This is the fifth year that the department has participated in this day of service event. Faculty, staff, students, and family members teamed up to plant shrubs at Cox Arboretum. The team of 11, including three children, planted nearly 100 shrubs and plants.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Wright State Fall Commencement

December 10, 2021

The Wright State University Fall Commencement for graduate students will take place on Friday, December 10, at 7 p.m. The ceremony will be held in person in the Wright State University Nutter Center. Space is limited and tickets are required to attend. Undergraduate students will graduate the following day at 10 a.m. We are so proud of the Class of 2021!

M.P.H. Capstone Presentations

April 27, 2022

Mark your calendar and keep your fingers crossed. The M.P.H. capstone presentations are back. Alumni are invited to hear the 2022 graduating class present the results of their capstone projects. The M.P.H. graduation ceremony will follow, along with refreshments. More information to come.

For more information on upcoming events or to be recognized in the next newsletter, please email Camille Edwards at camille.edwards@wright.edu.



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3123 Research Blvd. ■ Kettering, OH 45420