

Wright Solutions

Master of Public Health Newsletter

Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine

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MISSION

To serve as a model community-based interdisciplinary graduate education program for the present and future public health profession's leadership in Southwest Ohio and beyond.

VISION

Public health and health-related professionals of southwestern Ohio will have increased knowledge, competencies, and skills.



From the Director

by Jim Ebert, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H.

It is my pleasure to put forward our first MPH newsletter since officially becoming MPH program director. It is both an honor and an exciting challenge to be made director of this outstanding program, as well as the Oscar Boonshoft chair and director of the Center for Global Health Systems, Management, and Policy effective January of this year.

As WSU's MPH program enters its fifth year of operations, we can now boast of 63 graduates and a total of 101 students currently enrolled in the program. Since January of 2009, we have more than doubled the number of faculty members committed to participating in culminating experience supervision, which opens a variety of new opportunities to students in the program. We have also increased the number of practice placement sites. The total number of faculty members who teach courses has also increased.

This summer, we launched a whole new era in the program by beginning collaboration with the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC). CHC has been improving health services and conducting important research and evaluation in southwestern Ohio for over 20 years. Their mission, experience, and faculty are a great match with our MPH program. Collaborations involving the Center for Global Health and CHC already include an ongoing sponsored study of the health safety net in the State of Ohio. Going forward, there will be even more joint ventures that will contribute substantially to the program's education and research missions, as well as improving the health of the region.

A significant challenge that lies ahead is the conversion of the MPH degree from a quarter-based to a semester-based program. This change has been mandated by Governor Ted Strickland's administration and will affect the entire university, undergraduate and graduate, as well as all state-supported institutions of higher learning. Beginning in the fall of 2012, all WSU courses will become semester courses. Much of the transition planning will be complete by the spring of 2010. This will keep the MPH faculty busy during the next few months. WSU has made a commitment to keep the cost of any semester-based program, as well as the completion times required, the same under semesters as under quarters. We will certainly be able to achieve this in the MPH program. Most current students will have either completed their entire program by fall 2012, or will be in the practice placement or culminating experience phases where class scheduling is not an issue. For students entering a year from now and later, we are committed to providing templates that will make it possible for students to complete the program, including some quarter-hour and some semester-hour credits that will meet accreditation requirements and keep total required classroom hours approximately the same. Students entering in the fall of 2012 and beyond will be completely in the semester system.

Our goal is to implement this transition smoothly, and end up with an even stronger, more student-focused and community-centered program than already exists. We will carefully examine all offered courses, the MPH competencies addressed in those courses, as well as our variety of electives and concentrations offered. Several of our faculty members have indicated an interest in developing new courses to expand our elective offerings. This is clearly the time to do it. More to follow in the next MPH newsletter!



WRIGHT STATE
UNIVERSITY

WSU MPH Special
Points of Interest

Did you know?

- **18 new students started the MPH program Fall 2009!**
- **WSU Fall Commencement will be held on Saturday, November 21st, at the Nutter Center. Go to <http://www.wright.edu/commencement/faq.html> for commencement FAQ's.**
- **Graduation application deadline for Winter quarter is December 15th and March 15th for Spring quarter.**
- **Research Methods and Design seminars (part of CMH 820/821 but needed to 'Pass' CMH 810) will be held at 6 PM on Dec. 1, 3, 8, 10, & 15 at the Center for Global Health. MPH students should RSVP to Lori Metivier at: 937-258-5547**
- **Winter quarter begins January 4th.**

For more information on WSU's Master of Public Health Program visit our Web site at:
www.med.wright.edu/mph

If you have any questions regarding this newsletter, please contact Catanya Stager at (937) 258-5550 or via e-mail at catanya.stager@wright.edu

Spotlight on the Summit

James Gross, MPH Health Commissioner Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County



Jim Gross is one of our first graduates from the Wright State University MPH program. Jim is the Health Commissioner at Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County. On March 11, 2009 we held the **Summit on Public Health** which was co-sponsored by Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County and the Center for Global Health Systems, Management, and Policy, in conjunction with the Center's ninth annual conference. We asked Jim a few questions regarding a new public health program, his active lifestyle, and his experience in the MPH program.

Q. At the summit, you presented the new "GetUp Montgomery County" program. Please describe this exciting new community project.

A. We are working with the entire community in an effort to enhance the health of Montgomery County citizens by increasing physical activity and improving their diets. The goal of **GetUp Montgomery County** is to develop a unified, county-wide initiative to address childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles for children and their families. The current objectives are to:

1. *Reach the greatest number of children in the shortest period of time with the most efficient and sustainable use of resources;*
2. *Create a culture throughout the County in which children and their families have the motivation, ability, and opportunity to lead healthier lives;*
3. *Develop and support sustainable policy, practice, and behavior changes in places where children live, learn and play.*

Meeting these objectives will require community engagement and participation, and commitment on behalf of all partners to think long-term regarding strategies. Further, an evaluation framework proposed by the Institute of Medicine will be applied to assess the quality and effectiveness of policies and interventions.

I realize this description fails to paint a vivid picture of GetUp. Therefore, I suggest everyone go to the Public Health - Dayton & Montgomery County website at www.phdmc.org for additional information and inspiration. Simply click on the GetUp logo on the home page!

Q. This year's Summit on Public Health was focused on Improving Life Styles in the Miami Valley. You are well known as a strong advocate for healthy lifestyles. Everyone who knows you indicates that you practice what you preach. Could you elaborate on this?

A. It is important to first understand that approximately one-half of our health is determined by what we do on a daily basis. The other three determinants of health - genetics, environment, health care - are important, but the lifestyle piece is the key to creating a healthier Montgomery County. This fundamental premise is the underpinning of my advocacy for healthy lifestyles and includes the focus areas: tobacco use, exercise, and diet.

Both physical activity and a healthy diet have been important to me for decades. While I played mostly baseball and basketball through my high school years, I got the running bug in my mid-20s. Since that time I have made running a priority in my life for both competitive and health-based reasons and still fit a run in my daily schedule, managing roughly 40 miles per week. It is important for my physical and behavior health to move my body each and every day. I also strive to hit the gym 6-7 days a week for strength and flexibility training. As we grow older, strength training is more important to our health. Cardiovascular workouts are not enough!

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Spotlight on the Summit with Jim Gross, Continued from Page 2

Two daily workouts can be challenging at times. However, I can squeeze them in on most days because they are a priority in my life. I start my day at roughly 4:30 a.m. and either run or go to the gym. This enables me to reach the office by 7:30 a.m. The second workout depends on my schedule and may include a noon-time run on the Dayton River Corridor or a workout after I leave the office. The workouts continue on the weekends and usually include a longer run on trails at the SugarCreek Reserve. I hope to increase my level of fitness in 2009 and attempt to be competitive once again. Interestingly, this has been an annual goal since I graduated from the MPH program, but I keep getting side-tracked by other aspects of life.

People have poked fun at my diet for a long, long time. Basically, I try not to make food a priority in my life, although I'm very picky what I eat. I believe part of society's problem with nutrition is that it places too much emphasis on food in our daily life. For example, do we really need donuts at meetings?

I eat a low-fat, low-sugar, really boring diet which many would find unfathomable; but, it's really easy for me because I've done it for so long. I suspect I eat 7-10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, a bushel full of whole grains, and an assortment of protein which may or may not include animal protein. If I do eat animal protein, the sources are chicken, turkey, or fish. Red meat has not been a part of my diet for 30 years. I avoid all fried foods and most desserts. Additionally, I tend to graze most of the day so my portion sizes at meals are relatively small. The grazing keeps me from getting very hungry. Pretty exciting, huh?

I prefer boredom over morbidity and mortality. I also believe it is vitally important for me and others who claim to be ambassadors for healthy living to lead by example. Role models possess tremendous power to influence others.

Q. You are one of the first two students to complete the Master of Public Health degree from WSU. What are your personal favorite experiences from this program?

A. My most memorable experiences involve people. I will always cherish the relationships I made during my MPH experience. These relationships include the entire cast of characters: the director, faculty, staff, guest speakers and fellow students. Upon reflection, it is the connection with people that made my time at the Center so special. These relationships are as strong, if not stronger, today than they were in 2004-2005. I continue to have frequent contact with many of these people and am very fortunate to have established these relationships when I was a MPH student. The older I get, the more I realize that success is primarily about the relationships you establish along life's travels.

Q. What skills and knowledge gained from our MPH program have been most applicable in your current role as PHDMC health commissioner?

A. This is difficult to answer because the benefits from the MPH experience extend far beyond skills and knowledge. As I mentioned earlier, I benefited immensely from the relationships I made during my time as a student. For example, when I met with Dr. Richard Schuster (MPH director during my MPH program) I would listen to content, but I would study and analyze his historical perspectives and personal approaches to difficult situations. The same holds true for every instructor in the program. I also reaped the benefits from my fellow students - those with years of public health experience as well as those with fresh, innovative ideas.

In a nutshell, I'm benefiting the most from my exposure to wise people involved with the MPH program and the perspectives they presented during classes and private conversations. Their wisdom has been beneficial to me because the majority of my major decisions require leadership, strategic-thinking, and unwavering commitment.

Q. From your perspective in the field of public health, where are the "hot spots" regarding current and future career opportunities?

A. In light of our nation's poor health,

public health officials will need to reach beyond their traditional roles if we are going to make a difference. Therefore, I believe the future in public health will be a combination of traditional public health services and chronic disease prevention programs. Initiatives such as GetUp Montgomery County will not be a temporary service spike. To provide healthy lifestyle services, we will need a public health workforce which understands population-based chronic disease prevention programs. Health education will play a critical role as we move forward. For example, I am relying on teachings from Dr. Langlois-Orlowski to educate the community on how to approach the human behavior challenges. Another area of emphasis for us is the whole arena of outcome measurement. We have developed an outcome-based budgeting system and are implementing it with our 2009 budget. The demand for justifying how we spend taxpayers' money will intensify over time. This new emphasis on accountability will serve the public health system and our citizens.

Q. With respect to these careers, what are the primary benefits of attaining a Master of Public Health degree?

A. The benefits are far-ranging if the student pursues opportunities. The MPH degree provides a global perspective of the entire public health system which also includes the health care delivery component. From national policy development to food service inspections, the program lays the foundation for a total understanding of public health. As mentioned earlier, the personal relationships and the wisdom gained from others should be embraced by all students. If students merely focus on "book lessons," they are not taking full advantage of the MPH experience.

While the MPH experience opens doors to opportunity, the degree does not automatically place an individual in the desired position. The person must earn that position based on overall qualifications, including job performance. Obtaining the MPH requires considerable focus and perseverance. That "next job" requires the same.

Public Health in Practice by Ken Dahms, JD, MA

MPH student Chloe Robbins has always been interested in the health of senior citizens. Thus, it seemed only natural that Chloe would choose to do her practice placement at a facility like St. Leonard in Centerville. St. Leonard is a not-for-profit senior residential community sponsored by the Catholic Church. Assisted living arrangements like those offered by St. Leonard are an increasingly popular option for senior citizens. Assisted living offers a means whereby the needs of seniors can be met while promoting independence and dignity and allowing seniors to age in a home-like environment. (St. Leonard's statement of philosophy emphasizes the dignity, individual rights, and independence of its residents.) Chloe spent most of her practice placement hours helping out in St. Leonard's assisted living wellness program where residents can join in group exercise classes, take "road trips" to the movies or to get ice cream, and otherwise participate in activities designed to assist in improving and maintaining their physical, mental, and social well-being. Chloe's site preceptor was activities coordinator, Judy Potter.

Many seniors die or are seriously injured from falls or other accidents each year. Consequently one of Chloe's main learning objectives for her practice placement was to determine how St. Leonard tries to reduce

accidents and otherwise attempts to ensure the physical safety of the assisted living residents. One of the most effective methods of prevention is through improving the physical fitness of the residents. Thus St. Leonard offers a wide variety of physical fitness activities designed to improve the strength and balance of the residents. At one time or another, Chloe helped with the following physical fitness activities: chair exercises designed to strengthen specific muscle groups, chair Pilates, chair ZUMBA (don't ask!), Wii Sports activities, and exercise ball tossing. According to Chloe, these activities, coupled with St. Leonard's scrupulous attention to other safety factors, ensure the physical safety of the residents.

Chloe was also extremely interested in St. Leonard's provisions for assisted living residents with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Between one-third and two-thirds of the residents in the assisted living facility had at least some form of cognitive impairment. Chloe learned that St. Leonard has a state-of-the-art dementia unit which is located just outside of the grounds of the main facility. The wellness program also offered several activities specifically designed to improve the mental acuity of the residents such as story reading, current events and trivia quizzes, joke sessions, and arts and crafts

activities. Social activities, such as monthly birthday parties and meetings of the Red Hat Society, also added to the mental and social well-being of the residents.

In the end, it was certainly apparent that a mutual admiration society had developed between Chloe and St. Leonard. According to Chloe, she was able to build several friendships with the residents and staff during the course of her practice placement, and her experiences motivated her to research more public health issues within this subject matter area. It was obvious that St. Leonard was extremely sorry to see Chloe leave. Melissa A. Wareing, supervisor of volunteer services at St. Leonard wrote me a special letter praising Chloe's work at St. Leonard. The letter stated in part, "Chloe learned a lot about geriatrics and we learned a lot about professionalism and dedication from her. She truly was a blessing to have on our campus and to have as a part of our volunteer team. It is individuals like Chloe that help St. Leonard fulfill its mission and uphold its core values." High praise indeed and a fitting tribute to a job very well done!

To discuss your practice placement project or to volunteer to be a practice placement site, please contact Ken Dahms, JD, MA at (937) 258-5555 or ken.dahms@wright.edu.

County's cancer death rate prompts study by James Hannah, Associated Press Writer

LONDON, Ohio — Concerns about the high death rate from breast cancer in central Ohio's Madison County have triggered a study by investigators at Wright State University.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, about 40 people per 100,000 residents die of invasive breast cancer in Madison County compared to the statewide rate of 27.5.

Robert Indian, chief of the department's comprehensive cancer program, says the higher mortality rate could be due to several factors, including late-stage diagnosis.

Sara Paton, an epidemiologist at Wright State, says investigators will be looking at risk factors associated with breast cancer such as smoking and alcohol consumption. She says the study will take about six months.

Culminating Experience Update by Cristina Redko, Ph.D.

In December 2008, Dr. Ray Ten Eyck accepted a full time position with the Department of Emergency Medicine to direct and establish a state-of-the-art simulation center. With Dr. Ten Eyck's departure, I was named the culminating experience course director for the Master of Public Health program. During the fall of 2008, the winter and spring of 2009, our MPH students have completed some wonderful and high quality research projects.

Jim Ebert, who is now our current MPH program director, studied the "Anthropometric and Demographic Characteristics of a Population Presenting to a Community Health Fair." One of the great things about Dr. Ebert's effort was that he took an important community service project - a health fair for the underserved - and found a scholarly approach to take. He, therefore, was able to both serve this underserved population and advance our knowledge of their problems.

Karen Levin did a thorough analysis of a major mass media social marketing campaign in Dayton. Between 2001 and 2004, the \$1M "Know Your Numbers" campaign was run by a large community coalition. The target population was middle-aged women, who have a major risk of cardiovascular disease and are generally not aware of that risk. Karen did a special analysis of the impact of the campaign on African American women.

Tara Blackley compared two approaches for increasing immunization coverage in children ages 24 to 25 months. There was no difference in immunization rates between the outreach and tracking method and the more traditional assessment and referral method.

Reshonda Eldridge completed a very interesting study on modifiable risk

factors associated with low socioeconomic status (SES) pregnant women. Data from her study revealed significant differences in STD rates between African American and Caucasian women. The data will be used in conjunction with a previous MPH culminating experience by Lorena Royer (MPH '06) for a scientific publication.

Jessica Alt decided to look at the problem of child obesity among the third grade students in the town where she grew up. Her findings showed similarities to a larger study conducted by the Ohio Health Department which associated a lower SES with a higher risk of children being obese.

Chloe Robbins was fascinated by the marvelous life stories that senior citizens shared with her during her practice placement. This experience stimulated Chloe to use qualitative methods in her research so she could listen to more stories. Chloe gained a better understanding of the perceptions that elderly who live in assisted living facilities have of exercises programs and whether exercising regularly helped them prevent unintentional falls.

Brad Haverkos chose to enhance his skills in health economics. His study evaluated the changes in the benefits provided by the stand-alone Medicare Drug Plans in Ohio from 2006 through 2009. To further understand the market dynamics of prescription drug plans, Brad also compared the trends found in Ohio to the national data.

Kathleen Clarke investigated a very current topic: "Environmental Justice Law." She observed and actively participated in grassroots efforts involving environmental justice issues occurring in Ohio. Kathleen's final oral presentation was done through video

conferencing, so people from Cincinnati and Dayton were able to attend; both rooms were very full.

Matt Pellerite identified modifiable risk factors associated with pregnancy from birth certificate data. He then used this data to compare to women who had low birth weight babies, to see how these modifiable factors differed between groups.

Katie LaRue-Martin examined the relationship of perceived stress to physical activity levels among WSU graduate students. She explored factors that may influence perceived stress in this student population, such as program of study, gender, age, employment, and marital status. Katie concluded that students who perceived higher levels of stress usually engaged in less physical activity.

Jennifer Rammel investigated the relationship between online health-seeking behavior and health anxiety among WSU undergraduate students. Jenn discovered that the Internet plays a major role in how students make health care decisions and that it tends to be the first source they turn to when they or someone close to them has a health issue.

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the guidance committee members who shared their time, expertise, and experience to help our students achieve their research goals in the MPH program. It is exciting to have over 45 faculty willing to be involved in our students' CE projects!

For more information about the MPH Culminating Experience Project, please contact Cristina Redko, Ph.D. at (937) 258-5555 or cristina.redko@wright.edu

Student and Faculty Recognition....

Christina Arestides (MPH '08) and MPH faculty **Dr. Sara Paton** both presented at the 19th annual CityMatCH Urban Maternal and Child Health Leadership Conference held in New Orleans, LA in August 2009.

V. Lorainne Cheek (MPH '08) co-authored an article entitled *Assessment of Local Public Health Workers' Willingness to Respond to Pandemic Influenza through Application of the Extended Parallel Process Model* which was published on July 24, 2009 by PLoS ONE.

Regina Clarke, current MPH student, gave birth to Elijah Clarke on May 15, 2009. He weighed 6 lbs., 4 oz. and was 20" long.

Chris Eddy (MPH '08), assistant MPH program director, presented at the Ohio Environmental Health Association's 63rd Annual Educational Conference in Columbus (April 2009), the National Environmental Health Association's 73rd Annual Educational Conference in Atlanta (June 2009), and the Ohio Association of Health Commissioners' Annual Conference in Columbus (September 2009).

Shaun Hamilton, current MPH student, has been named to the Forty Under 40 Class of 2009 by the Dayton Business Journal (DBJ). This is the 12th-annual award program to honor the area's up-and-coming leaders. It is one of the most popular awards programs the DBJ does each year.

Brad Haverkos and **Matthew Pellerite** are dual degree MD/ MPH students who, after completing the five year Boonshoft Physician Leadership Development Program, graduated this past spring. Brad started residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Matt is in Pediatric residency at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

Carole Huddleston (MPH '06) co-authored a journal article entitled "Symptom Prevalence of ADHD in a Community Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program" which has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Attention Disorders* on April 13, 2009.

Cristina Redko, PhD, culminating experience director, received a joint appointment with the WSU Emergency Medicine Department as a result of her interest in disaster mental health. Dr. Redko was also recently selected to become a member of the WSU Internal Review Board (IRB) Committee.

Chloe Robbins (MPH '09) was awarded the Student Excellence Award in June 2009. Chloe was nominated by the MPH faculty for this award.

Philip Van Atta (MPH '08) co-authored a journal article entitled "Water System Preparedness and Best Practices for Pandemic Influenza" which was published in the *Journal of the American Water Works Association* in January 2009.

Jeffrey Webb (MPH '07) co-authored a journal article with MPH faculty **Dr. John Czachor** entitled "MRSA Prevention and Control in County Correctional Facilities in Southwestern Ohio" which has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Correctional Health Care* on July 17, 2009.

....Congratulations to All!

NOTE: WSU MPH graduates, students, & Faculty - remember to submit any happenings, i.e. promotions, presentations, new job, publications, to Catanya Stager at catanya.stager@wright.edu.
