



# Pathways

TTUHSC Department of Public Health Newsletter, Fall 2016, Issue 1

## Welcome!

After a short hiatus, we are happy to present the return of the TTUHSC Department of Public Health Newsletter, with a new name - *Pathways*. The name signifies not only our current activities and outreach, but also represents our aim to develop new and innovative pathways for training public health practitioners and understanding health disparities regionally, nationally, and globally.

## Abilene Public Health Building

On September 13th, the Abilene TTUHSC campus held the grand opening of the new Public Health building. TTUHSC President Dr. Tedd Mitchell served as master of ceremonies, welcoming community leaders and TTUHSC administrators, faculty, staff, and students to the ribbon cutting and thanking the many parties who helped see the building to completion.

The new building is a major step toward the future School of Public Health at TTUHSC, and provides current faculty and students an outstanding space for learning and collaboration, as the department grows and expands its impact on the health of the west Texas region.

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*“If those who care about health equity can make their voices heard, [...] then there is an opportunity to do things differently.”*

*-Sir Michael Marmot, PhD, MPH*

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TTUHSC Abilene Public Health building ribbon cutting, Sept. 2016 (photo: Mark Hendricks)

## In This Issue

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MPH student Margaret Vugrin guides medical students through Steps to Success: an interactive social determinants game she developed in collaboration with Megan Mikesell, Keino McWhinney and Abrar Bardesi

## **Congratulations to our Fall 2016 MPH Graduates!**

**John Dodge**

**Sara Eaker**

**Veronica Escalona**

**Joseph Gabriel**

**Rose Izuchi**

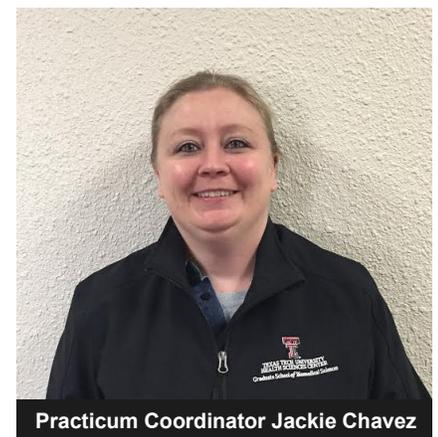
**Erica Smith**

## **Announcements**

- Spring registration is now open. Current students should contact their faculty advisor for guidance on spring classes.
- As a reminder, the Fall 2017 application deadline is June 1, 2017.
- Congratulations to Jony Palaparathi, MPH student, class of 2017, who received the Rural Health Scholarship!
- Congratulations to Dr. Julie St. John, who received the President's Excellence in Community Engagement Award from TTUHSC President Dr. Tedd Mitchell!

## **Staff Spotlight - Jackie Chavez, M.Ed.**

Jackie serves as Practicum Coordinator for the DPH, having been in that position since June 2015, and with TTUHSC since 2011. Her roles include meeting with community members (potential preceptors) to ensure practicum opportunities are available to students, making sure all paperwork is submitted, ensuring deadlines are met by all parties involved, and that final grades are submitted. She also functions as the department recruiter, assisting with recruitment of potential MPH students. She holds a BA in English, Secondary Education, from Texas Tech University and an M.Ed. in secondary education from Lubbock Christian University. She is currently pursuing an MS in Human Sciences from LCU.



**Practicum Coordinator Jackie Chavez**

## Inter-Professional Education Event

On November 4th, DPH students and faculty participated in the all-day IPE event, featuring guest speaker Dr. Zubin Damania (ZDoggMD)

DPH participants in the afternoon IPE case study included:

Dr. Theresa Byrd

Dr. Jeff Dennis

Dr. Julie St. John

Dr. Courtney Queen

Cherissa Abdul-Hamid

Barbara Ballew

Summre Blakely

Leslee Castro

Dr. Greg Hannabas

Dijo John

Sarah Mende

Megan Mikesell

Desiree Ojo

Margaret Vugrin



MPH student Summre Blakely participates in the IPE case study

## Fall 2016 Faculty Activities

- **Drs. Byrd, Gittner, & St. John**, along with **Dr. Billy Philips** and **Dr. Debra Flores**, participated in the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association in Denver, CO.
- **Dr. Byrd** presented her AMIGAS project at the “Buena Salud Americas Meeting” and the ACCION for Rural West Texas project at the Health Equity summit in Panama City, Panama.
- **Dr. St. John** attended the Harvard Macy course, “Teaching in the digital age,” at Harvard Medical School in Boston, MA.
- **Dr. Lee Rosenthal** (Co-PI, TTUHSC, SOM El Paso) and **Dr. St. John** (Co-PI) received a \$286,000 grant funded by Sanofi Aventis U.S. (6/16-11/17). The C3 Project is a national research project working to foster a national consensus on the core roles, skills, and qualities of the CHW workforce.
- **Dr. Khan** received a grant to research breast cancer differences in different ethnic populations from the Laura W. Bush Institute and UMC Women’s Health Research Grant Program.
- **Dr. Khan** was involved with 3 peer reviewed publications, 5 accepted abstracts and 6 paper presentations, including a number of MPH student co-authors.
- **Dr. Dennis** & medical student Camille Forbes presented on social disparities in pediatric emergency department admissions at TTUHSC Pediatrics Grand Rounds.

## New Faculty & Staff

*“No diabetes drug is associated with a 3-fold difference in mortality rates, as applies to education.”*

*-Steven Woolf, MD, MPH (2009)*



Dr. St. John receives the President's Excellence in Community Engagement Award from Dr. Tedd Mitchell

**Duke Appiah, PhD** - Dr. Appiah joined the DPH in December as an Assistant Professor. He is trained in Epidemiology, with specialization in cardiovascular disease and diabetes research, and comes to TTUHSC from a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Minnesota.

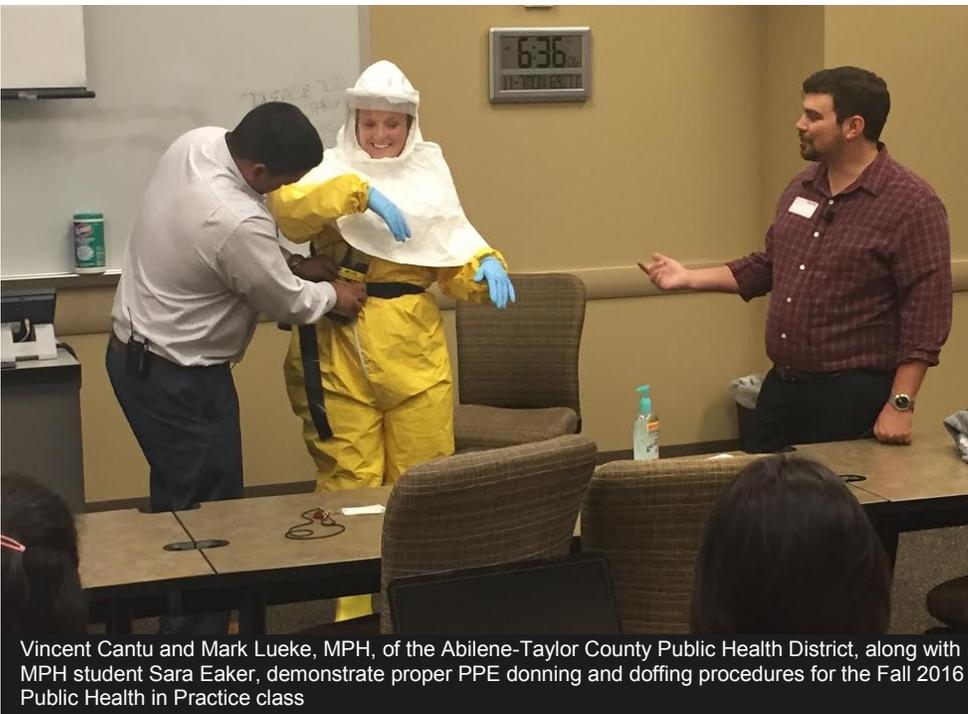
**Irene Arellano, PhD** - Dr. Arellano joined the DPH in September as Associate Director of Degrees and Programs. She received her PhD in Higher Education Research from Texas Tech University.

**Sean Beaty** - Sean joined the DPH as an IT Support Technician III for the Abilene campus. He has 10 years of experience in networking and system administration and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering and Psychology.

**Jeff Dennis, PhD** - Dr. Dennis joined the DPH in August as an Assistant Professor. He specializes in Social Epidemiology and Population Health, and comes to the DPH from research faculty in the TTUHSC Department of Internal Medicine.

**Courtney Queen, PhD** - Dr. Queen joined the DPH in September as an Assistant Professor. Her background is in Community Research and Global Health, and most recently, she comes from the Department of Global Health and Tropical Medicine with the Organization for Tropical Studies at Duke University in Costa Rica.

**Tracy Miller** - Tracy joined the DPH as a Senior Administrative Assistant in September 2016. Prior to TTUHSC, she spent 15 years as an advertising manager for BELO television group in Dallas, TX.



Vincent Cantu and Mark Lueke, MPH, of the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District, along with MPH student Sara Eaker, demonstrate proper PPE donning and doffing procedures for the Fall 2016 Public Health in Practice class

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