



Pathways

TTUHSC Department of Public Health Newsletter, Fall 2017, Issue 3

New 15-Month Online MPH

The Department of Public Health is happy to announce that beginning in summer 2018, it will offer an accelerated online MPH option. The 45-hour degree will start in summer term, continue through fall and spring, and conclude at the end of the following summer. The degree is aimed at attracting students who wish to take off one year between a Spring undergraduate graduation and a fall graduate program the following year. All requirements of the MPH will be fulfilled as before.

Dr. Byrd Honored at APHA

Theresa Byrd, DrPH, MPH, RN, department chair and associate dean, was honored with the Distinguished Career Award by the Public Health Education and Health Promotion Section of the American Public Health Association, at the APHA national meeting in Atlanta, GA, in November, 2017. Dr. Byrd was nominated by TTUHSC Executive Vice President Billy Philips, Ph.D., who also was in attendance to present the award.

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

-Mother Teresa



Left to Right: Section Chair Dr. Heather Brandt, Dr. Theresa Byrd, Dr. Billy Philips (Nov. 2017)

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Dijo John, Ashley Edling, Elena Sanchez-Freeman, Drew Rasmussen, Dr. Theresa Byrd, & Dr. Jeff Dennis represented the MPH Program at the GSBS Picnic at At'1 Do Farms. (Sept. 2017)

Congratulations to our Fall and Summer 2017 MPH Graduates!

**Mahlet Afesse
Barbara Ballew
Summre Blakely
Greg Hannabas, M.D.
Jony Palaparathi
Hannah Wilhite
Danna Wolfe**

Announcements

- Spring registration is now open. Current students should contact their faculty advisor for guidance on spring classes
- Application deadline for Summer 2018 is March 1
- Application deadline for Fall 2018 is June 1
- Applications must be completed by March 15 for consideration for the Early Applicant General Scholarship
- TTUHSC Student Services approved the new Student Public Health Association chapter

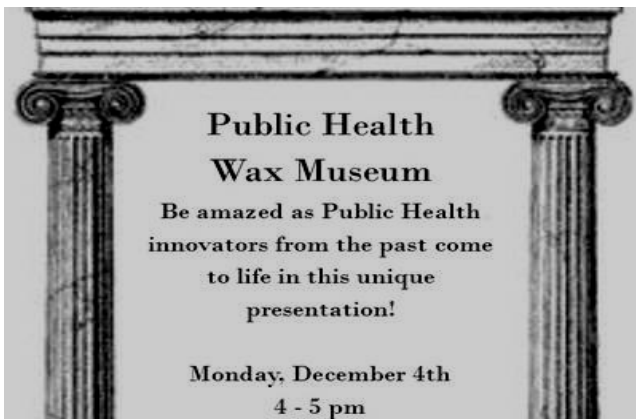
Faculty Activities & Honors

- Julie St. John, DrPH, and colleagues in Massachusetts received the 2017 Award for Excellence in Program Innovation at the APHA Conference.
- Dr. St. John has been invited to submit a Community Health Worker textbook.
- Hafiz Khan, Ph.D., spent the summer recruiting in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Dr. Billy Philips is leading the search committee for the director of the Texas Tech Mental Health Institute.
- Brie Sherwin, J.D., Ph.D., was granted tenure by the Texas Tech University School of Law.

All faculty and their affiliations are listed on the website [here](#).

Research & Grants

- Dr. Billy Philips and Dr. Kenneth Stewart presented on Effective Approaches to Community Health Assessment at the CPRIT Innovations V Conference.
- Dr. Jeff Dennis presented “Evaluating birth outcomes in Native American mothers” at the American Public Health Association meeting in Atlanta, GA.
- Dr. Duke Appiah presented "A Mother’s Heart: The Influence of Pregnancy Complicated by Gestational Diabetes on Cardiac Structure and Function" to TTUHSC Internal Medicine Grand Rounds, May 2017.
- Dr. Dennis presented “Social & behavioral contributors to health outcomes” to first year medical students at TTUHSC during P3-B Week.
- Dr. Julie St. John gave three oral presentations at the American Public Health Association meeting in Atlanta, GA:
 - C3 Project: Understanding community health workers’ roles and skills in clinical and community based settings
 - Results from a national CHW survey
 - Lessons learned: Utilization of Community Health Workers to conduct Assisted Home Safety Assessments to prevent falls among older adults.
- Dr. Zuber Mulla presented “Predictors of Oophorectomy in Girls Hospitalized in Texas with Ovarian Torsion” with TTUHSC El Paso colleagues at the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research Meeting.
- Drs. Dennis and Gittner (co-PIs), in collaboration with Lubbock County Detention Center (CPT Johnny Jaquess, PI) and Dr. Nathaniel Wright (co-PI, TTU), were awarded a Category 1 Mental Health Grant by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to assess mental health diversion efforts at the Lubbock County Detention Center.
- Dr. Debra Flores and Dr. Philips received a Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Grant from HRSA.
- Dr. Hemachandra Reddy received a 5-year R01 grant from the NIH for research on the efficacies of mitochondrial drug molecules to improve neuronal survival and synaptic functions in Huntington’s disease neurons.



Wax Museum

The TTUHSC Abilene campus hosted a live “Public Health Wax Museum” Dec. 4th, in collaboration with Hardin Simmons University. Students depicted famous public health figures throughout history. Planned to be an annual event, the wax museum serves as an educational resource and recruitment tool.

Interprofessional Education Event

On November 3rd, the Dept. of Public Health participated in the all-day IPE event, featuring guest speaker Marcus Engel.

Abilene and Lubbock DPH participants in the afternoon IPE case study included:

Dr. Theresa Byrd

Dr. Jeff Dennis

Dr. Rubini Pasupathy

Dr. Julie St. John

Summre Blakely

Samantha Curtis

Ashley Edling

Hridoy Haq

Steven Lara

Christine Lucio

Chris O'Dell

Janet Mendenhall

Damilola Owoade

Kandi Quesada

Drew Rasmussen

Jaffer Samad

Joshua Sanders

Stephanie Sariles

Kirsten Scarborough

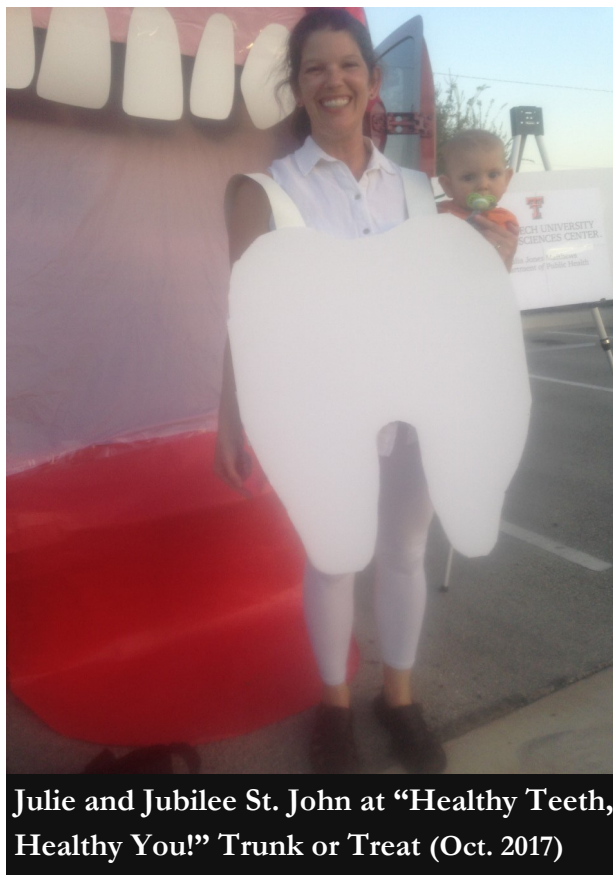
Dr. Allie Smith

Ashlee Spann

Justin Sudduth



**MPH Faculty and Students attending the 2017 IPE Symposium
Front Row: Dr. Byrd, Ashley Edling, Drew Rasmussen, Summre Blakely and Samantha Curtis
Back Row: Dr. Dennis, Hridoy Haq, Jaffer Samad, Chris O'Dell and Justin Sudduth (Nov. 2017)**



Julie and Jubilee St. John at "Healthy Teeth, Healthy You!" Trunk or Treat (Oct. 2017)

Project Spotlight—Danna Wolfe’s ILE

Danna Wolfe completed her Integrated Learning Experience with Camp Able in Buffalo Gap, TX, a P.A.T.H. certified equine therapy and horse rescue ranch. Approximately 6,000 children in the Big Country have a disability which can be served by Camp Able’s equine therapy programs. Photovoice, or digital stories, gives children a vehicle to communicate via photography. Danna’s ILE focused on having the children at Camp Able create their own digital stories by using a Participatory Visual Methods approach. Her qualitative data analysis involved giving each child an



Danna Wolfe working with Starfire during her ILE project at Camp Able

easy to use digital camera with the simple direction to take pictures of: “what makes you happy when you are at Camp Able.” The children later described the contents of their photos. Danna created a three-minute marketing video which Camp Able will use to raise awareness of the benefits of equine therapy.

Please contact your faculty advisor to learn about practice opportunities for your APE or ILE!



Dr. Khan presenting in Dhaka, Bangladesh (Summer 2017)

TTUHSC Student Public Health Association		
Lubbock 2017-2018 officers	SPHA is a student organization that promotes community service and involvement for public health students. SPHA is happy to announce that there is a new chapter of the organization in Abilene.	Abilene 2017-2018 officers
President – Tiffany Torres Vice President – Dez Ojo Treasurer – Mahlet Afesse Social Chair and Public Relations – Justin Sudduth		President - Christine Lucio Vice President/ Public Relations - Kirsten Scarborough Secretary/ Treasurer - Janet Mendenhall



Lex Hurley being recognized for his work with Marine Reserves at Dyess Air Force Base (Summer 2017)

MPH Students: By the Numbers

Fall 2017 brought in **8** new MPH students in Lubbock, and **4** new MPH students in Abilene

Five new medical students began the M.D./MPH program in Summer 2017

Three students began the Public Health certificate in Fall 2017

Currently, **74** total students are enrolled in the MPH program

Thirty students are currently enrolled in the M.D./MPH dual degree

December 2017 graduation brings our number of total MPH graduates to **35**

Where are they now? A look at our graduates

- Cecelia Nicole Gatea, (MPH, May 2017) is working on a Master's in Physician Assistant Studies at TTUHSC Midland.
- Cathy Hudson, (MPH, May 2017) serves as director of Rural Research for the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural Health.
- Veronica Escalona, (MPH, Dec. 2016) who has served at the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District for 11 1/2 years, was promoted to Health Management Coordinator and Project Coordinator for Texas Healthy Communities, June 2017.

**Congratulations to all of our
incredible graduates!**

New Faculty & Staff

Rubini Pasupathy, Ph.D. joined the DPH faculty as an associate professor on September 1, 2017. She comes to us from the TTUHSC School of Health Professions, and her specialization is health care management.

Aaron Brooks joined the DPH in December 2017 as an IT Support Specialist III for the Abilene campus.

Nancy Cook joined the DPH in January 2017 as the administrative assistant for the Abilene campus. She graduated with a degree in biochemistry from Texas A&M University and worked as a laboratory technician in the fields of smooth muscle physiology, oral biology, Alzheimer's disease and cotton genetics. Her more recent work experience is in church administration.

Student Recognition

- Summre Blakely, Ashley Edling, Hridoy Haq, Damilola Owoade, Drew Rasmussen and Jaffer Samad presented research posters in collaboration with Dr. Khan and Dr. Gittner's research team at the National Science Foundation Cloud Autonomic Computing (NSF CAC) Industry Advisory Board Meeting Conference on October 23rd.
- Lex Hurley, (MPH, May 2017) received recognition for his 5 month health intervention on Dyess Air Force Base.
- Summre Blakely, (MPH Dec. 2017), was accepted to TTUHSC medical school.
- Two of our MPH students, Dr. Dixon Santana and Dr. Allie Smith, who also serve on faculty at TTUHSC and TTU, respectively, were involved with teams awarded the Texas Tech President's Collaborative Research Initiative Award.
- Ashlee Spann and Stephanie Sariles are the new Abilene SGA Senators.

Thank you!

A special thanks to Dr. Samira Kamrudin for her contributions to the Department of Public Health. Dr. Kamrudin was the first DPH faculty member hired by Dr. Byrd, and her work during the first three years of the program was instrumental in building the program we have today.

DPH faculty, staff, and students were well-represented at the 2017 American Public Health Association Meeting in Atlanta, GA, November 4-8.

Attendees included:

Dr. Theresa Byrd

Dr. Brandt Schneider
(GSBS Dean)

Dr. Julie St. John

Dr. Jeff Dennis

Dr. Hafiz Khan

Dr. Lisa Gittner

Dr. Billy Philips

Michael Mitchell,
MPH

Summre Blakely

Danna Wolfe

Cathy Hudson (MPH,
May 2017)

Staff Spotlight - John Baker

John Baker has served as the Student Affairs Advocate for Public Health at the TTUHSC Lubbock campus since July 2014. His duties include student registration, course section building, ensuring that students are staying on track to graduate and resolving any issues that students may encounter. He holds a Bachelors in Business Administration from Wayland Baptist University.



DPH and the Community

The Student Public Health Association participated in a health fair providing sexual health education.

A TTUHSC collaborative will travel to Nicaragua in Summer 2018. MPH Students interested in participating should contact Dr. Byrd as soon as possible. This trip may be used for an Applied Practice Experience.

Dr. St. John and Abilene MPH students participated in the Abilene Taylor County Public Health District Emergency Preparedness event—Zombie Apocalypse—October 12, 2017.

Samantha Curtis & Dr. Dennis are collaborating with the Texas Hunger Initiative, Lubbock office, to develop a stakeholder newsletter for South Plains Hunger Solutions, a consortium of organizations working to reduce food insecurity in west Texas.

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Dr. Khan's Research Team presents posters at the NSF CAC Industry Advisory Board Meeting Conference

Dr. Susan Mengel, Dr. Lisa Gittner, Hridoy Haq, Dr. Ravi Vadipalli, Drew Rasmussen, Dr. Hafiz Khan, Jaffer Samad, Damilola Owoade, Summre Blakely and Ashley Edling (Oct. 2017)



Laura Coe, Santhi Hariprasad and Dr. St. John receiving the Archstone Award at APHA (Nov. 2017)

Newsletter Information

The Fall 2017 newsletter was written and designed by

Samantha Curtis, MPH student and DPH graduate assistant, and

Dr. Jeff Dennis

To submit pictures or other items for future newsletters, submit details to

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