

Fall 2009

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### MPH Program Mission

The mission of the graduate Master of Public Health (MPH) program is to enhance the health of our communities through the development of future public health leaders via multidisciplinary education, research, community practice, and service.

### MPH Program Vision

Our vision is that the Thomas Jefferson University's MPH program is recognized as a center of excellence for integrative population health training throughout the greater Philadelphia region and beyond.

### MPH Program Goals

#### **Instruction Goals**

To provide all MPH students with quality graduate level education in core and elective courses and in community-based learning opportunities via Clerkship and Capstone projects that facilitate student mastery of public health competencies.

#### **Research Goals**

To provide opportunities and train all MPH students in the development and translation of public health research through coursework and the Capstone research project.

#### **Service Goals**

To provide structured service-learning opportunities for students through Clerkship, Capstone and other continuing education initiatives as formal and informal components of the MPH program and to encourage faculty to participate in the public health community.

# Public Health Link

JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH  
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH E-NEWS

## MPH Spotlight

Priscilla Sepe, MD/MPH Student

This summer, I had the opportunity to travel to two villages in Rwanda as part of an interdisciplinary student group from Jefferson. The students I traveled with were from the schools of medicine, nursing and pharmacy, and our projects were geared toward improving public health. Many of our projects were educational. Continuing the work of previous years, we used a "train the trainers" model to teach a health committee basic concepts about nutrition, HIV prevention and care, prenatal care, family planning and intestinal worms. The health committee then committed to sharing their knowledge with other residents of the village by teaching classes themselves. In addition to these projects, we also initiated an income generation project to raise rabbits, and we trained some members of the health committee to become HIV counselors as well as establishing a buddy system to assist HIV positive people in the village. We also trained the health committee to identify and treat malnourished children with a simple formula made from locally available ingredients.

One of the best parts about the program is that it is student-directed. This means that everyone who participates has the opportunity to be part of the assessment of needs in the villages, and the design and implementation of a public health project from the bottom-up. It is a great learning opportunity. There are also opportunities for research, and this year I conducted my capstone project research while in Rwanda. There is the opportunity to work with other students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, learning from their knowledge and experiences, and we are always looking to expand that. We work closely with a

group of Rwandan medical students, and there is the chance to learn from them as well.

This trip was an opportunity to put into practice much of what I had learned while studying public health. We conducted needs assessments, designed and implemented projects and conducted research. I am currently in my second year of medical



school, but in the end, I hope to practice medicine with a focus on public health. I chose to do a MD/MPH degree because I wanted to commit myself to a focus on social justice in my practice of medicine, and also because I want to work with communities as well as individuals. Much of the public health training focuses on recognizing the bigger factors that affect the individual's health, and how to address those issues. That is what we considered in our work in the villages, and what I hope to bring to my medical practice in the future, whether in Philadelphia or Rwanda or anywhere else.

I would recommend this trip to anyone who has the opportunity to be a part of it. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in learning more about it, we would love to include some public health students next year.  
Priscilla.sepe@jefferson.edu

*Editor's Note:* If you are interested in learning more about the Jeff HEALTH/Rwanda work and traveling to Rwanda next summer during our break between terms, please contact James Plumb MD, MPH at 215-955-6340, or [james.plumb@jefferson.edu](mailto:james.plumb@jefferson.edu)



## Re-Accreditation Update

The Jefferson School of Population Health's Master of Public Health (MPH) program was recently granted a **seven-year national accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)**. The accreditation comes after an extensive 18-month period of self-study, a site visit, and program improvements.

For Jefferson's MPH program, accreditation enhances its national reputation and represents recognition among similar programs. For prospective students, accreditation provides assurance that the program has been evaluated and has met accepted standards by and with the profession.

The School of Population Health thanks all those at Jefferson who have and continue to play an integral role in the success of its MPH program, especially the College of Graduate Studies for its leadership and support as the home of the MPH program since its inception in 2002.

## PULSE

Reminder: Always check your Jefferson Email or have it forwarded to a personal email account.

Also, keep checking the MPH Organization on Pulse for various announcements for jobs and opportunities.

## Students Advocate for Public Health Education at National Summit in D.C.

The Health Education Advocacy Summit was held on February 21-23, 2009 at the L'Enfant Hotel in Washington D.C. Five MPH students from Jefferson, and MPH Director, Dr. Rob Simmons, attended the summit and participated in Capitol Hill visits to meet with their respective legislators. The goal of the summit was to educate the participants about the importance of advocacy and to teach skills that improve the efficacy of the "ask." The participants varied in levels of education, hometown, and advocacy experience, which provided an additional learning experience for all who attended. Katie Thomas represented the Jefferson MPH program by participating in a national panel of public health students who shared their experiences from the 2008 Summit. Below are our MPH student views on the summit:

"The Summit provided me with a simple, yet significant realization about our political system: our legislators are accessible and very receptive to our concerns. As a beginner advocate, I had a lot to refresh about the structure of our government and the process of legislation. I quickly learned that my senators and representative relied on people like me who have specific knowledge in a particular field to share their perspective and suggestions in order for them to make educated voting decisions. It is important for all constituents to understand that their legislators work to serve them, and are open to phone calls, emails and visits. One of the most valuable lessons that I am walking away with came from a guest speaker who compared advocacy to the story of Sisyphus. He stated that the rock was health promotion and it must be rolled up the hill of politics. Advocacy represents moving forward up the incline, but allowing the rock to roll back down signifies apathy. The strength that is required to push the rock up the political system is commitment and passion. In order to make progress and effect change, one must convey their message and be persistent."

—Megan Morris

"For me, the Health Education Advocacy Summit was potentially life-changing. Prior to the summit, I was not entirely sure about what my post-MPH plans were going to be. I knew I was not interested in medical school but I was considering pursuing a career in research. However, I still didn't know in which area or in what type of institution. When I was in D.C. for the summit, I chose to advocate for DASH, which is the Division of Adolescent and School Health of the CDC. To prepare for my Hill visit on Monday, I researched the topic extensively and as a result became very interested in

the idea of school health programs. It was surprising to me how quickly I became passionate about the program but I soon discovered that I did become passionate about it because it was everything that I wanted to do but hadn't realized it until then. As a result, I am now completing my clerkship in an area very similar to this and it has created a number of ideas as to what I am looking for in a career. Before the summit, I really had no idea how to begin looking for a job but now I feel like I have clear objectives and goals and it has truly made me excited about the next chapter in my life. Had I not gone to the summit and learned about DASH, I may have never known about this. I highly recommend attending an advocacy summit because you never know who you will meet or what you will learn, and it could make a huge impact on your life."

—Ashley Bowersox

"Upon arriving in Washington D.C. in late February, I approached the 2009 Health Education Advocacy Summit with a sense of skepticism. I did not believe a graduate student could make a significant impression upon the mindsets of individuals working in the political arena. This was especially true for me, since I lacked any sort of political advocacy skills. However, the conference proved me wrong. Through a number of engaging workshops and stimulating panel discussions, I was able to acquire a sense of the conference's ultimate purpose. The goal was to empower conference goers with a set of advocacy skills they could use to promote for the greater public health. The summit pushed for appropriations to be made to specific Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs, such as certain preventive health service and after school programs.

On the final day of the conference, some of my colleagues and I went to Capitol Hill to meet with some legislative aides of our respective Congressmen. I was surprised by how receptive they were to our opinions. Many of them possessed an impressive knowledge on many vital public health issues.

My experience at the 2009 Health Education Advocacy Summit was truly rewarding. After having been initially skeptical, I left the Health Summit with a sense of accomplishment and a set of skills I will be able to utilize during my public health career."

—Eugene Goeser

"My experience at the conference was great. I had done some advocacy for different programs before and really liked how they catered to various levels of experience. I got to meet my state representative from my district. This was great because my father works as a school nurse there, and I got to discuss some of the challenges he faces every day with the health aide. My representative was already in favor of the conference's goals, so talking about how my representative could help my father and my hometown neighborhood was insightful and impressive. I want to thank Rob Simmons and the Jefferson Public Health community for setting everything up.

All in all I got to meet with six health aids from various parts of my home state of Massachusetts. During the meetings we talked briefly and the health aides knew everything about what we were trying to do, and all of them were extremely positive."

—Boudou Bingay



From left to right: MPH Students—Boudou Bingay, Megan Morris, Katie Thomas, & MPH Director, Dr. Rob Simmons

## Department of Health & Human Services Region III Office— Clerkship Experience

Beginning in April, five Jefferson public health students began their clerkships with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Region III Office in order to gain practical experience in the public health field. The DGGs is the principal federal department addressing public health. We worked closely with the Regional Health Administrator and Deputy of the Region 3 office, with responsibility for six states in the mid-Atlantic region. The DHHS serves the community by providing grant funding, health promotion and education activities, and communicates information from the President and Secretary of DHHS. Megan Morris and Eugene Goeser were involved in a project to develop and pilot a regional website that will provide a comprehensive directory for employees in Region 3, as well as links to existing agency sites into a user-friendly format. It will be the first regional website for DHHS.

Brianna Germain worked with the emergency system coordinators to develop and test the efficiency of each federal agencies' Continuity of Operations Plan. Ashley Bowersox collaborated with the Office of HIV/AIDS to organize a youth education summit through the "Pass It Forward" program to educate them about safe sexual practices and HIV prevention. Shilpa Jadhav helped plan the Healthy People 2020 planning meeting in November in Philadelphia to develop the new health objectives and strategies that will be incorporated in the national Healthy People 2020 plan which will be disseminated in early 2010.

Some of the interns had the opportunity to work on additional projects, including: a CDC household survey to assess the H1N1 influenza outbreak in a Pennsyl-

vania elementary school; reviewed grant proposals for the Healthy People 2020 Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Agenda, developed PowerPoint projects on "hot" public health topics for internal office use; and worked on a committee to plan a Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise.

Overall the DHHS clerkship has introduced us to the organization of the federal public health sector. The last few months have taught us that community outreach is essential in maintaining the health of our nation.

—*Brianna Germain, Eugene Goeser,  
Megan Morris*

*Editor's Note:* This is the first time Jefferson public health students were placed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region III office for a public health Clerkship experience. We want to express our appreciation to the DHHS Regional Administrator and Associate Administrator, Dalton Paxman and Michelle David for their accommodation and support of our students. Their feedback on the professionalism and quality of work of four students have been very positive and they welcome future Jefferson public health students to do their Clerkships with them. We expect that some of these Clerkship experiences with the DHHS will lead to MPH Capstone projects and future public health career development opportunities. We also express our appreciation to Dalton and Michelle for their ongoing support of our MPH program, serving on our MPH Community Advisory Board and for their encouragement in our successful bid to host one of only three national planning meetings for Healthy People 2010 this November.

## Fall Bag Lunch & Learns

**Hamilton 210,  
12-1pm  
Pizza Served**

The MPH program is hosting a monthly Lunch & Learn series. The topics of the fall Lunch & Learns will be based on elective course options being offered in spring 2010.

**Oct. 8th—  
Dimensions of  
Global Health**

**Nov. 19th—  
Epidemiology of  
Chronic  
Conditions:  
Obesity &  
Diabetes**

**Dec. 10—  
Health  
Communication &  
Social  
Marketing**



## National Public Health Meetings in Phila this Fall

This fall, we are fortunate to have two national public health meetings right here in Philadelphia, back-to-back. We encourage our public health students to attend one or both of these meetings. For further information and special opportunities, please check pulse.

The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) will be holding its 60<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on Nov. 5-7 at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel (17<sup>th</sup> & Race Streets). The theme this year is "An Invitation to Innovation". Participants will explore strategies to develop and execute new ideas and approaches in the public health education profession. They will discover new evidence-based best practices and tools from new and innovative approaches to health education. Plenary presenters include Reed Tuckson from United Health Group, Nancy Whitelaw from the National Council on Aging, and Gail Christopher from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, among many others. Student registration is \$165 and includes socials and other conference activities. For more information, go to [www.sophe.org](http://www.sophe.org) or contact Dr. Simmons, the SOPHE Immediate Past President.

The American Public Health Association will be holding its 137<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Philadelphia Nov. 8-11 at the Convention Center and downtown hotels. The theme this year is Water and Public Health. Over 10,000 public health professionals are expected to attend the annual meeting which includes over 1000 scientific sessions, over 700 booths of public health information, products, and services, and a wide variety of networking opportunities. Several Jefferson faculty and students will be presenting. Keynote speakers include Jean-Michel Cousteau and many others. Come visit the Jefferson School of Population Health booth, featuring our MPH program. Student registration is \$210. For more information, go to [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org). Note that public health students may attend the Public Health Expo of exhibits at no cost on Wed. Nov. 11, the last morning of the conference at the Convention Center.

## Public Health Policy & Advocacy Opportunities



The MPH program will provide a new public health policy course this academic year, entitled, Public Health Policy and Advocacy. The course will introduce students to the core subject of public health policy and provide strategies for public health advocacy. The

course will address legal and regulatory structures that support public health policy, and explore the role of advocacy in the process. Students will learn how to do policy analysis and will gain experience in thinking about policy options through exploration of specific public health subject areas.

MPH students will be encouraged to participate in the 13<sup>th</sup> annual national public health education advocacy summit in Washington DC., March 6-8. Join over 200 public health professionals and students from around the country to learn about national public health priorities, public health advocacy strategies and tactics, over the weekend, and then practice advocacy skills with health legislative aides and of key Senators and Representatives (including your own representatives) on Monday as we advocate for key public health legislation in the 2010-2011 federal budget. Read the descriptions from Jefferson MPH students who participated in last year's national public health summit in the accompanying article in this newsletter. For more information, visit: [www.healtheducationadvocate.org](http://www.healtheducationadvocate.org)

## Fall Health Policy Forums

Monthly Health Policy Forums are held in Bluemle 101 at 8:30-9:30 am with a light breakfast served. These are the upcoming forums for the fall:

### September 9

Innovative Approaches to Medical Education  
**Speaker:** M. Brownell Anderson, MEd  
*Senior Director, Education Affairs*  
Association of American Medical Colleges

### October 14

Philadelphia's Public Health Priorities and Initiatives: Implications for Improving the Health of Vulnerable Populations  
**Speaker:** Donald Schwarz, MD, MPH  
*Deputy Mayor, Health and Opportunity*  
Philadelphia Department of Public Health

### November 11

Building Patient Centered Medical Homes in America's Poorest City — Camden, NJ  
**Speaker:** Jeffrey Brenner, MD  
*Medical Director*  
Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

### December 9

Achieving Cultural Competency: Using a Case-Based Approach for Teaching and Learning  
**Speaker:** Lisa Hark, PhD, RD  
*Project Manager, Online Medical Education*  
Wills Eye Institute  
**Speaker:** Horace M. Delisser, MD  
*Associate Dean, Spirituality & Cultural Competency*  
University of Pennsylvania, School of Medicine