

CATALYST

SPRING 2022

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH



OUR “HEALTH CHAMPIONS”
IMPACT KENTUCKY
AND BEYOND!

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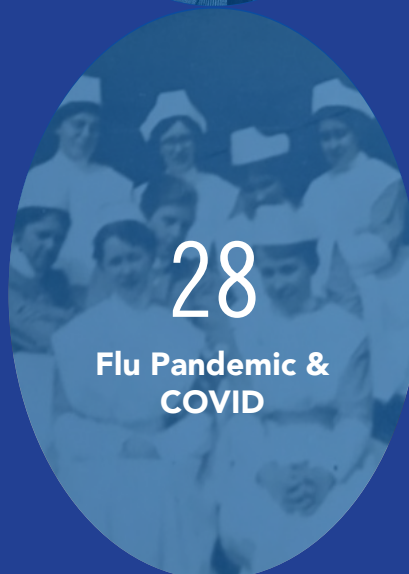
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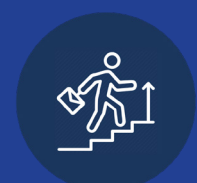
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OUR IMPACT: THE BEST IS YET TO COME

Colleagues and Friends,

First, and most importantly, we hope that all of you experienced a safe and healthy 2021. Also, our hearts go out to everyone impacted by the deadly storms that recently devastated parts of Western Kentucky and beyond. As Kentuckians, we are still grieving, but will do our part to help in the recovery efforts in this area of our Commonwealth.

Reflecting on 2021, I am so proud of our entire community. This year certainly presented many challenges; however, our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and our college partners collectively came together to make this a successful year. Looking forward to 2022, we are confident that the best is still yet to come.

Unfortunately, we continue to see the impact of the pandemic on our society, but our public health professionals, who were once behind-the-scenes, are now front-and-center. As a result, we must continue to lead in these critical public health discussions, debates, service, and research to help educate and influence the communities that we serve in Kentucky and beyond. With that said, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our public health and medical professionals, first responders, leaders in healthcare, and policy makers that are improving the lives of everyone.

Why We Are Here

That is why we are here, and this is what continues to drive our college to lead the charge on the following impact categories:

- Excellence in academic programs to students
- Robust and meaningful research
- Quality service to public health
- Strong collaborations and expanding our partnerships
- Community impact
- Career and alumni success



After reading our success stories in this issue of Catalyst, you will clearly see these impact categories represented in our amazing faculty, students, alumni, board members and other partners, and so much more.

Our Successes

Since joining the College of Public Health in 2016, we have seen incredible growth in our academic programs and graduation rates along with launching new, innovative programs. The PhD in Health Services (HSR) started their first cohort in the Fall of 2021 and the MS in Biostatistics will launch their first cohort in Fall of 2022.

Our research continues to expand. In FY2021, projects led by our faculty received approximately \$22 million in funding from federal, state, and private sources to tackle tough issues including cancer, opioid addiction, environmental health, and health disparities in rural communities, throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and across our nation. The number of research awards, sponsors, and principal investigators (PIs) all increased in 2021 and are all poised to increase further in 2022.

The college hired approximately 30 new employees in 2021, filling critical positions in areas such as: administrative support, analysts, data support and management, education and outreach, human resources, IT, marketing and communications, research, student advising, and other important staff and faculty positions.

The Best Is Yet to Come

We are in an excellent position to deliver on our mission and vision which is building “health champions” through transformative solutions to health challenges through teaching, research, and service efforts.

We hope you enjoy the Spring 2022 Edition of Catalyst, and the best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

Donna K. Arnett

Donna K. Arnett, Dean



LYMAN T. JOHNSON WINNERS

By Jillian Faith and Christopher Carney

PUBLIC HEALTH FOUND ME

Daniela Nakinoja

Lyman T. Johnson Award winner 2021

STARTED WITH FAMILY

Ambitious, goal-oriented, determined, helpful, empathetic. These are just a few words that family and friends use to describe Bachelor of Public Health (BPH) student, Daniela Nakinoja.

These words often describe many public health leaders, but how public health found Daniela started with her family.

Daniela Nakinoja was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a culture infused with religion, history, and rich tradition. After fleeing the Congo at age 5 as a refugee and living in several towns in South Africa, Daniela and her family eventually found their home in Lexington, Kentucky.

Family is extremely important to Daniela, and after her grandmother was diagnosed with cancer, it changed her perspective on life

and shaped her experiences going forward. During her grandmother's treatment, doctors discovered the cancer was hereditary and that her immediate female family were all at an increased risk for the disease. This is what initially inspired Daniela to major in biology and pre-med at the University of Kentucky.

In her biology classes, however, she found that studying cells did not inspire her or ignite her passion for helping others. "This is when public health found me," says Daniela. "I wanted to get the knowledge and training to help my family, and my community. I want to represent them. I wanted a program that would allow me to act. I found what I was looking for at the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health."

After public health found Daniela, she then found herself helping others.

HELPING PEOPLE

Daniela uses her unique experiences, skills, and perspective to meet and address the needs of others in the community. Daniela currently works at Wild Health, where she helps with COVID-19 testing and volunteers at Kentucky Refugee Ministries to assist with language and translation barriers.

In addition to her academic work and community outreach, Daniela has worked with the UK Student Government Association as a coordinator for DEI and has been an active member in other student organizations, such as the African Students' Association and Black Student Union.

Fulfilling the mission of being a "health champion," Daniela has already set some aspirational goals for herself. This past summer, she participated in the University of Kentucky's Markey Cancer Center

***“Give yourself
the opportunity
to have a
self-discovery.”***



Strong Scholars program — a program that fosters diversity in cancer research. Looking forward, Daniela still has her sights set on medical school and becoming a leader in global health after graduation.

“I want to bridge the gap between prevention methods programs and providing healthcare to those in need,” says Daniela. “It’s what happens behind the scenes that matters the most, the little things, that have the most impact in people’s lives.”

**LYMAN T. JOHNSON TORCH
BEARER AWARD**

Daniela Nakinoja is the 2021 recipient of the Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer Award on behalf of the UK College of Public Health. Each college at UK chooses an African American student whose academic achievement and ability to impact the lives of others

reflects the spirit of Lyman T. Johnson, who was a civil rights pioneer and the first African American student to attend the University of Kentucky in 1949.

In response to the recognition of the Lyman T. Johnson award, Daniella feels validated.

“I’ve previously experienced not being seen, heard, or acknowledged,” says Daniela. “My family didn’t go to college, but always hoped that I would make it. I now feel that confirmation and I know that makes my family enormously proud.”

Daniela hopes that her story will inspire more students to pursue an education and career in public health.

Daniela advises, “So many want to help, but don’t know how. Sometimes, this is out of fear or just not knowing where to start, but you

do not need to have it all figured out. Give yourself the opportunity to gain different perspectives. Put yourself in places where you can learn. Ask questions. Be inquisitive. Give yourself the opportunity to have a self-discovery.”

Daniela will graduate in Spring of 2022 with her bachelor’s degree in Public Health (BPH) at the University of Kentucky.





“I said YES to the rest of my life.”

Regina Washington
Lyman T. Johnson Award winner 2021

By Jillian Faith and Christopher Carney

Dr. Regina Washington believes in faith, family, perseverance, positivity, and education. Born and raised in Martinsburg, West Virginia, her young parents raised Regina and her siblings to be life-long learners, independent, and to serve others with passion – to say yes to life, to people, and ourselves.

“My cup is always half full,” says Regina. “I love to fill my mind and grow my knowledge every day.”

Growing up, Regina felt that she would become either a surgeon general or a military police officer. In high school, Regina was eager to find the right mix of these two interests. This exploration began with her volunteering at the local hospitals, the VA, and the psychiatric ward.

Regina enjoyed shadowing career professionals who helped patients and their communities. She once even shadowed a chief surgeon during surgery, a memory she will never forget.

After high school, Regina moved to Kentucky to attend Berea College.

While attending Berea, Regina’s grandmother and her high school softball coach were both diagnosed with colon cancer.

“I did my research and was thinking that nobody should have to die because of colon cancer,” says Regina. “In my mind, I was going to get my MD and find the cure.”

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Through Berea College’s labor program, Regina was able to learn from and work alongside several members of the college community. Shortly after graduation, Regina received a call from the Dean of Student Life asking her to return to the College and pilot new initiatives in residence life, campus activities, and student health. While this opportunity did not align with her medical school goals, Regina’s faith and family upbringing taught her to say yes to the unexpected.

After several years of working at Berea College, Regina completed her master’s degree at Eastern Kentucky University and began the journey of

studying for the MCAT exam for medical school. Although she decided not to take the MCAT exam in 2000, she still attended a University of Kentucky medical school orientation with friends who did take the exam and were accepted to medical school.

It was during the medical school orientation that Regina coincidentally met and struck up a conversation with the late Dr. John Wiggs, then Director of Admissions for the university’s School of Public Health.

After learning about Regina’s passion for addressing health disparities and creating healthier communities, Dr. Wiggs asked Regina, “Have you ever considered public health?”

“That’s when I said yes to the rest of my life,” says Regina. “This is a true alignment for what I want to do. I want to impact the lives around me and I want to make their lives healthier.”

Regina said “yes” and signed up for the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)’s first cohort which consisted of 14 students. Serving as a graduate assistant for the program, Regina collaborated with faculty and other students to establish the curriculum and create policies on academics, admissions, accreditation, and student affairs.

Through the connections she made in the classroom and the help of her mentors from Berea College and Eastern Kentucky University, Regina landed herself prestigious fellowships which further advanced her research on the intersectionality of cancer, health disparities, data analytics, and patient navigation.

These fellowships included several years at the Cancer Prevention Research Center at the University of Kentucky which led to a CERTA Fellowship at the National Cancer Institute Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a couple of years at the University of Kentucky Center for Rural Health Policy which led to her being the Founder/First President of the Student Rural Health Policy Association and a member of the Foundation for Healthy Kentucky Community Advisory Council.



BECOMING A "HEALTH CHAMPION"

"There were three things that I wanted to do in public health and that's work at the city, state, and national levels," says Regina.

After graduating with her DrPH in 2006, Regina forged her own path and relied on her wisdom for bringing groups together to promote the health of marginalized populations. Regina was the first patient navigator at the UK Markey Cancer Center, Division Director for Prevention and Quality Improvement at the Kentucky Department for Public Health, a Public Health Consultant for the Coalition on America's Poor Health & Poverty, and Director of Development and Health Programs at CenterLink.

"This is what took me to the national level," says Regina. "I worked as an ally with more than 250 LGBTQ+ community-based organizations through the United States to address tobacco and cancer health disparities and to expand the cultural competencies for healthcare providers

and state and local health departments.

"Working with different communities to bring in educational tools, technical assistance, coaching, and awareness, made an impact for these communities."

TRANSFORMING LEARNING INTO ACTION

In March of 2021, Regina returned to Berea College as the Director of Rural Impact Networks in the college's Partners for Education program.

In that role, Regina uses her 16 years of experience in systems administration, health promotion, chronic disease prevention, and leadership and workforce development to address the needs of rural students and communities.

"We focus on transforming learning into action for sustainable results through place-based and collective impact approaches in rural areas," says Regina. One of the program's most promising initiatives is the Rural Library Network, which establishes local

libraries as hubs for public health education, prevention and social services, in addition to advancing educational outcomes.

"To me, public health is impacted by two major pillars which are education and income," says Regina. "We are here to make sure that our network has access to resources that they need to address disparities. That is what we do in public health. We advocate for positive change."

TRAILBLAZERS

Regina is the alumni recipient of this year's Lyman T. Johnson Torch of Excellence Award. This award recognizes one African American alum from each of the university's academic colleges whose faith, hard work, and determination has positively affected the lives of people on UK's campus, the city, nation, or beyond.

"Being recognized for this award gives me extraordinary joy," says Regina. "This work is not for the timid, for those that back down. It is for those that will lead in challenging times. They sacrifice to better the conditions for others." Lyman T. Johnson was the first African American student to attend the University of Kentucky approximately 70 years ago. The Lyman T. Johnson Torch Bearer and Torch of Excellence Awards ceremony event will occur in October of 2022.

"Lyman T. Johnson was a trailblazer," says Regina. "I always appreciate the work of others that lead with fierce courage. This recognition shows that I have made an impact and that my work has not been in vain. I am not done yet. There is more work to do, and my work will continue."

Regina was the first African American student to graduate from the UK College of Public Health. Being a person of color, Regina recognizes that having access to education, mentors, and resources is key.

Her advice is to ask questions, be tenacious, lead up and with your heart, have mentors, always leave things better than you found it and say "yes" to your life.



KIPRC WORKS WITH LOCAL, STATE AND REGIONAL PARTNERS TO MAKE KENTUCKY SAFER

By Jonathan Greene

WHAT IS KIPRC?

The Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC), established in 1994, is a unique partnership between the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) and the University of Kentucky, affiliated with the College of Public Health.

Serving both as an academic injury prevention research center and as the KDPH's designee or "bona fide agent" for statewide injury prevention and control, KIPRC focuses on injury prevention translation and practice.

This state-university partnership provides KIPRC access to expertise and support in injury and violence-related research, data, services, outreach, communications, interventions, evaluation techniques, and policy development, at both the state government and academic levels.

KIPRC's unique, mature partnership uses injury prevention research to inform and help develop targeted interventions for local and state injury prevention practice.

This ready translation of research into practice, in turn, informs further research to reduce injury and related death and disability.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

"We wouldn't be anywhere without our partners," said KIPRC Director Terry Bunn. "Without them, there is no story. Collaboration with partners on interventions is integral to all the research we conduct and practice we perform."

Bunn notes it's those partnerships across a variety of industries, agencies, and organizations that result in successful interventions. Through collaboration with the state Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities and the Kentucky Office for Drug Control Policy, KIPRC spearheaded the treatment facility locator platform *FindHelpNowKY.org* that is now expanding to the national FindHelpNow website.

The website allows individuals to find treatment facilities with openings that accept their method

of payment. The website is expanding to Tennessee, with additional states interested in participating.

Building on the FindHelpNow platform and working with the Fletcher Group, Bunn said KIPRC is developing state and national recovery housing platforms with information on openings at recovery houses, a learning management system, and recovery management system for the public and for potential and current recovery housing operators and owners.

"We want quality recovery housing with available openings. When a person is undergoing treatment, they go to that next level within the community continuum of care to enter a recovery house, build recovery capital, and reintegrate in local communities. In the end, to be productive citizens again," Bunn said.

Teen drivers across the state are also benefitting through The Checkpoints Program, which collaborates with local high schools. The schools manage the program,

with KIPRC providing funding.

KIPRC has also created commercial vehicle driver safety training videos with help from Midwest Insurance and Vertical Alliance Group. The videos have been viewed more than 200,000 times, and companies use the videos for their worker safety training programs.

PROVIDING USABLE DATA

KIPRC tracks injuries throughout the state of Kentucky with a goal of analyzing data and producing data results to inform their interventions and to present to communities for targeting the development of their own interventions. This includes occupational health, drug overdose, motor vehicle crash, and suicide data.

“When we first started looking at the drug overdose issue back in 2010, the first thing most people think of is that the population overdosing is 25 to 44 years old. That might be true, but we do have local areas where you may also have a higher proportion of those that are 65 and older who are overdosing because of medication

misuse, etc.,” Bunn said.

KIPRC produces a variety of reports and publications that examine statewide trends in drug overdose, traumatic brain injury, occupational injury, suicide, and more. KIPRC also produces localized reports for specific regions and counties per request.

KIPRC’s website features three county-level dashboards—worker injury profiles, drug overdose profiles, and general injury profiles—that provide the public with a searchable data table for information.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Throughout the year, KIPRC provides training and educational opportunities for the public and health professionals.

Each year, KIPRC helps support the Kentucky Harm Reduction Summit, which is held annually and partners with multiple organizations to highlight best practices, statutes, and policies related to implementing and maintaining harm reduction programs.

In addition to valuable keynote talks and breakout sessions, continuing education credit is provided for select healthcare professionals. More than 900 professionals from 30 states and 96 of Kentucky’s 120 counties gathered this past August for the virtual 2021 Kentucky Harm Reduction Summit.

The annual Kentucky Falls and Osteoporosis Summit features talks on a variety of topics meant to enhance the understanding of ways to support older adults. The event is open to all fall prevention professionals, to provide education and networking opportunities to participants.

To learn more about KIPRC’s six injury focus areas, programs, resources library, and recent publications, visit kiprc.uky.edu.



Start Here To Find Addiction Treatment Openings

Use this website to find an addiction treatment facility that is taking new clients right now. We work with hundreds of facilities across the state to bring you the most accurate information about their treatment offerings and availability.

Need help finding treatment? Have questions about treatment or recovery? Contact our partners at the KY HELP Statewide Call Center for a free, confidential referral specialist Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 10:00 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm EST/EDT at 1-877-318-1871.

After hours and need assistance? Call the Kentucky Opioid Assistance and Resource Hotline (KY-OAR) at 1-800-854-6813.



“KIPRC tracks injuries throughout the state of Kentucky with a *goal of analyzing data* and *producing data results to inform their interventions* and to *present to communities* for targeting the development of their own interventions.”

A screenshot of the KIPRC website's search interface. It features several dropdown menus: 'Who Needs Help?' with 'Not Sure' selected, 'Gender' with a redacted selection, 'Mental Health Diagnosis' with a redacted selection, 'Location' with a redacted selection and a 'Use My Location' button, 'Type of Treatment' with 'Not Sure' selected, and 'Payment' with a redacted selection. There are 'help' icons next to the 'Mental Health Diagnosis', 'Type of Treatment', and 'Payment' dropdowns. At the bottom is a large blue button with a magnifying glass icon and the text 'Start Search'.



THE IPH CENTER TRANSFORMS SYSTEMS WITH A FOCUS ON TCOM AND PERSON-CENTERED CARE

By Diamond Darling

WHAT IS THE IPH CENTER?

The Center for Innovation in Population Health (IPH Center), established in 2019, is one of several research centers based in the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health. Shortened to the IPH (pronounced 'IF') Center, as in:

- What IPH... We could create an easy-to-use measurement system that provides actionable insights for improving health and wellbeing?
- What IPH... We could bring people to work together to address our most pressing health concerns?
- What IPH... We could establish an international collaborative to share data to advance the health of people in Kentucky, the United States, and the world?

The primary work of the IPH Center is to support clinical and workforce innovations using the Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) conceptual framework. TCOM begins with the implementation of a collaborative assessment process,

which identifies a shared understanding of why the person and/or family needs care and seeks to understand the unique components of their circumstances.

"Our mission is to engineer person-centered care through TCOM, which focuses on personal change, collaboration, and people's stories to drive systems transformation," says Dr. John Lyons, IPH Center's inaugural Director.

Dr. April Fernando, an Associate Director of the IPH Center, states, "It's important that people feel like they're at the center of their own care."

Dr. Fernando further explains that person-centered care reminds everybody, the individual receiving care and the provider, that they need to work together to make sure the focus is in the service of the individual. This helps with their engagement, feeling more satisfied with the care they are receiving, and improving their clinical outcomes.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

For use in child-serving systems, the IPH Center Team trains and implements jurisdictions on the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS). The CANS supports a consensus-based decision-making approach to understanding the complex circumstances of children and families seeking care. Currently about 80% of all children and youth served in child welfare or public behavioral health participate in the CANS approach, which is the most widely used approaches. The CANS tracks changes in the child and family's circumstances over time throughout their time in the care system.

Tools for use in systems that serve adults and families have also been created (for adults: Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment (ANSA); for families, Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST)). These tools are similarly founded on TCOM principles and emphasize the same person-centered, consensus-based decision-making strategy to conceptualize and work with adults and

families in complex care systems.

Since its development in 2004 by Dr. John Lyons, the TCOM framework has helped over 10 million people. More than 120,000 professionals train and certify in person centered assessment approaches on a distance learning platform managed by IPH Center staff. TCOM implementations can be found on every continent in the world, except Antarctica.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

The IPH Center hosts a collaborative of 17 Universities around the United States who support TCOM implementation. The goal of the TCOM University Partners is to cultivate the development of the field of TCOM work in universities and support the partners in collaboration and shared learning.

The Safe Systems team of the IPH Center leads the technical assistance efforts for the National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS). NPCS is a national quality improvement collaborative to improve child safety through the application of safety science and shared data.

Dr. Michael Cull, Associate Director of the IPH Center and Safe Systems team member, explains that NPCS leverages the learning from other safety critical settings (e.g., hospitals, aviation, highways) to the child welfare systems.

NPCS currently brings together 26 jurisdictions nationally with a shared goal of strengthening families, promoting innovations, and a public health response to reducing and preventing child maltreatment and fatalities.

The IPH Center also hosts a free seminar series, titled, What IPH (as in 'What if...?').

"We pull together people from across various fields at the University of Kentucky to offer different perspectives on similar challenges, so that we can help people be innovative in their thinking," says Dr. John Lyons.

These seminars have included faculty members in the UK Department of Theatre and Dance, the Von Allmen

Center for Entrepreneurship (VACE), the UK Department of Psychology, and more, to discuss their areas of expertise and how they can apply to the public health space.

RESEARCH

The IPH Center's Precision Analytics team provides person-centered analytical support and translational science to state and local governments and other organizations invested in improving health outcomes for youth and families. Precision Analytics focuses on finding precise solutions that consider a person's specific needs and strengths.

The body of research using TCOM and its related tools has been growing rapidly over the past few years. The aim is to make the findings of this research easily accessible and understandable for all who can benefit from this information. The IPH Center has started a video series, TCOM Research Briefs, where researchers describe their work and highlight findings of relevance to policy and practice.

In 2020, the IPH Center initiated a project to curate data from around the United States and beyond of jurisdictions using person-centered assessments within the TCOM framework.

This project, titled 'TCOM Data Reservoir,' is aimed to improve systems of care using de-identified data. The collaborative within this

project, the Data Governance Committee, are partners who share the de-identified data to address important policy and practice questions. Overall, the goal is to create applied, collaborative, useful research that is easily communicated to, and for, everyone.

RECOGNITION & PURPOSE

The IPH Center continues to find innovative approaches to the public health space. In 2021, the Center was featured as a Thought Leader at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo. APHA Thought Leaders are recognized as public health servants, researchers, and program leaders that are at the forefront of providing successful interventions, initiatives, and programs.

The IPH Center's work builds on person-centered care and safety science to develop a set of evidence-based tools to both support comprehensive consensus-based assessments and shift workplace cultures to focus on collaboration as a mechanism of accountability.

Visit the IPH Center site at iph.uky.edu.



“It’s important that people feel like they’re at the center of their own care.”



Legends & Leaders

Public Health Legend

Larry Prybil

Lawrence "Larry" Prybil has been a Professor in UK's College of Public Health since 2010, where he also served as Associate Dean and retired in June 2021 as the Norton Professor in Healthcare Leadership. He also is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Iowa where he was Associate Dean and Senior Advisor to the Dean in Iowa's College of Public Health.

Before returning to Iowa to participate in building its new College of Public Health, Dr. Prybil held senior executive positions in two of our Nation's largest not-for-profit health systems for nearly twenty years, including ten years as CEO for a six-state division of the Daughters of Charity National Health System (now Ascension Health).

Dr. Prybil received master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Iowa's College of Medicine and is a

Life Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives. He has served on the governing boards of hospitals, health systems, the American Hospital Association, and several other organizations, including the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

He is recognized for expertise in governance and executive leadership, and has authored or co-authored 120 publications including a book on governance ethics published last year by Routledge, Inc.

He has directed several national studies regarding effective governance in healthcare organizations and multi-sector partnerships focused on improving community health funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and numerous other organizations.



"During my career, I've been privileged to serve in senior executive positions in two major health systems, serve on the boards of not-for-profit and investor-owned companies, hold academic appointments in fine universities, assist hundreds of young men and women prepare for their careers, and lead research studies in two areas about which I care deeply. To be recognized by colleagues for making valuable contributions both in organizational and academic leadership is a high honor for which I am deeply grateful."

- Larry Prybil

Each year, on behalf of the Dean, the UK College of Public Health honors two individuals each for the Public Health Legend, Distinguished Alumni Leader, and Promising Alumni Leader awards.



Public Health Legend

is bestowed upon an individual who has achieved sustained success in their field and made an outstanding contribution toward the goal of health improvement for the state of Kentucky.

Distinguished Alumni Leader

is bestowed upon an individual who graduated from the UK College of Public Health more than 5 years ago and has demonstrated perseverance and excellence in their career in public health and/or health administration.

Promising Alumni Leader

is bestowed upon an individual who graduated from the UK College of Public Health within the last 5 years and has laid the foundation for a promising career in public health.

Public Health Legend

Greg Corby-Lee

Greg Corby-Lee is the Strategist for Kentucky's Harm Reduction Initiative, a joint project of the University of Kentucky and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. His current role involves introducing local health departments to what this Initiative can offer in ways of staffing and how it can cover most costs for harm reduction programs. He also coordinates the training of the local people that are hired by the Initiative to work in all of Kentucky's Harm Reduction/Syringe Exchange Programs.

Greg has been involved with HIV Prevention in Kentucky for over 35 years, starting as a volunteer and fundraiser for AIDS in the early '80s. In 1986, the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department brought him onboard as the first local AIDS Coordinator in the state. During that time, he was also a Disease

Intervention Specialist and provided over 7,000 HIV tests, as well as partner notification services for positives.

In 1992, he was promoted to HIV/STD Manager at the Lexington Health Department, and managed that growing program for 15 years. In 2007, he became the HIV/AIDS Continuing Education Director with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services/Department for Public Health.

For his last few years at Kentucky Public Health, he was the state's "point person" for Kentucky's Harm Reduction/Syringe Exchange Program efforts. When Greg took this role, there were only three syringe exchange programs in Kentucky. By his retirement from Kentucky Public Health in 2018, there were 43 counties with syringe exchanges.



"I am very humbled to have my peers and mentors call me a public health legend. I guess this reflects on my empathy and long-term commitment to serving marginalized people. Not only for their sake, but also for the betterment of us all. I love the people that I am working with and I can honestly say that this has always been the case in public health. Most of all, I genuinely care for the people that we serve. I learn from them still, and that's how I discover how we can serve them best."

- Greg Corby-Lee

Esias Bedingar, who graduated with a Bachelor of Public Health in 2018, is currently a PhD student in the Population Health Sciences at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, based at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in the Global Health and Population Department. He specializes in Health Systems, Economics, and Decision Sciences.

As a doctoral student, Esias is interested in identifying health system priorities in Chad and designing community-based health insurance schemes and measuring their impact on access and quality of care. Additionally, he aims to create a think tank in Chad to generate and scale up innovative solutions to health system issues, especially supporting African governments in the reform of their health systems.

"Receiving this award is such an honor for me as it recognizes the work I have done, but also testifies of the trust that the College of Public Health has in me. I was able to take advantage of all the resources available at the College, which has paved my way to graduate school. Therefore, being a young alumni leader is an opportunity for me to give back to my community and help others at the College who may be interested in global health work."

- Esias Bedingar

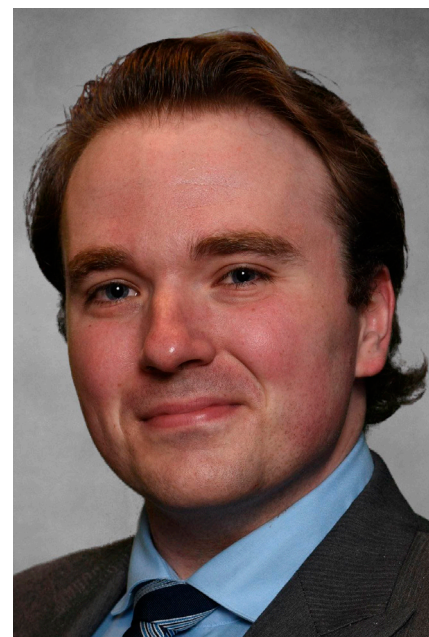


Young Alumni Leader
Esias Bedingar

During his time at the College of Medicine, he held multiple leadership positions, including serving on the National Advisory Committee of the Nexus Summit 2021 and the American Interprofessional Health Collaborative's Student Engagement Committee. Furthermore, he served as President of both the interprofessional student collaborative Medical Rehabilitation Education Development (MedRED) and the Vascular Surgery Interest Group, a student group officially chartered by the Society for Vascular Surgery. Additionally, he presented original research at international conferences such as the Nexus Summit 2020, the American Thoracic Society's International Conference, and the American Society of Nephrology's Kidney Week. Finally, he was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society in recognition of clinical excellence in medicine, compassionate care, and exemplary service.

Neil is currently completing his preliminary internship in general surgery at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, where he currently serves as the PGY-1 class representative on the residency leadership council. Recently, he was co-author of an abstract presented at the Society for Vascular Surgery's Vascular Annual Meeting 2021, and further published as a manuscript in the Annals of Vascular Surgery.

Neil received a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and Master of Public Health in Epidemiology from the University of Kentucky. During his graduate studies in Public Health, he completed both a NIOSH/OSHA fellowship in Occupational Epidemiology at the Central Appalachian Regional Education and Research Center (CARERC) as well as a Pathways to Practice Fellowship at the Region IV Public Health Training Center at Emory University. Shortly after receiving his MPH, he was inducted into Delta Omega, the honorary society in public health.



Young Alumni Leader
Neil Horsely

"Being a young alumni leader is simply about recognizing the public health challenges occurring in your community and then engaging the many public health experts in your community to bring about positive change. As practitioners of public health, we possess a fundamental desire to bring about positive change in the health of our communities."

- Neil Horsely

Dr. Erin Abner is an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology with joint appointments in the UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging and the Department of Biostatistics. After completing her MPH in Biostatistics in 2006, Dr. Abner joined Sanders-Brown as a researcher the same year. She then completed her PhD in Biostatistics and Epidemiology from the College of Public Health in 2013 and became an assistant professor at the college.

Dr. Abner is currently an MPI or co-investigator on multiple NIH-funded grants, including the NIH/NIA Alzheimer's Disease Center at the UK Sanders-Brown Center on Aging, where she is the Co-Leader of the Data Management and Statistics Core. She also serves on the Data Core Steering Committee and Scientific Review Committees for the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center, and she is Vice-Chair of the Clinical Trials Advancement and Methods Professional Interest Area for the International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment. Her current research is focused on assessing how medical conditions like hypertension and diabetes are related to cognitive impairment and neuropathology.

She is author or co-author of more than 100 peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Abner teaches primarily graduate-level methods courses for the Department of Epidemiology, including Advanced Research Methods in Biostatistics and Epidemiology and Introduction to Causal Inference.



Distinguished Alumni Leader
Erin Abner

"I am grateful to CPH for the training and opportunities it has provided me, and while I am proud to be an alum, I will never think of myself as "distinguished." My life's work is to help others: my family, my students, and my community are my priorities. As a CPH alumni, I hope that I can continue to serve the people of Kentucky and offer a path forward for others who are looking to do the same."

- Erin Abner

Dr. Angela Dearing is the Assistant Dean of Graduate Medical Education with a focus on accreditation, and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, with a focus on Wellbeing and Professionalism, at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. Dr. Dearing is board-certified in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and General Preventive Medicine and Public Health.

Dr. Dearing received a Doctorate of Medicine from the UK College of Medicine in 2001, and following a residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, she earned a Master of Public Health degree from the UK College of Public Health in 2007. She holds faculty appointments in the department of Internal Medicine (UK COM), and the department of Health Management and Policy (UK CPH).

At the University of Kentucky, Dr. Dearing has been involved in clinical care, graduate medical and public health education, and public health services research. She was the founding director of the Kentucky Public Health Research Network, one of the first five public health practice-based research networks.

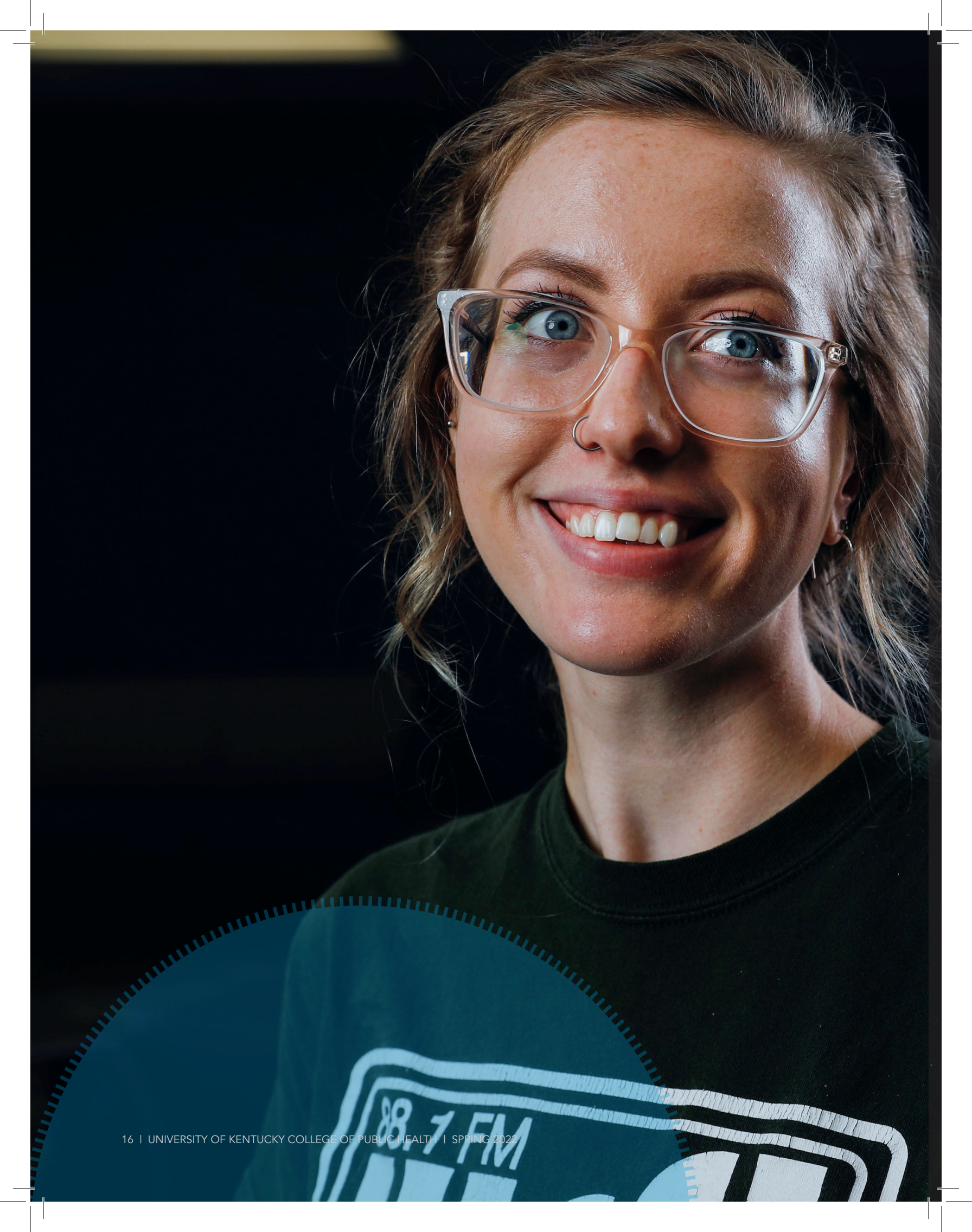
She also served as the director of the UK Preventive Medicine residency program, and as the Associate Chief of Staff for Education at the Lexington VA Healthcare System. Dr. Dearing served as the Kentucky Public Health Commissioner in 2019-2020. Dr. Dearing is currently the vice-president elect of the Lexington Medical Society and is a member of the KMA Commission on Public Health.



Distinguished Alumni Leader
Angela Dearing

"I am truly honored and humbled to be thought of as a UK College of Public Health distinguished alumni leader. I began my public health studies at CPH right after I completed my residency in internal medicine and pediatrics. What I learned through my public health education, though, changed the way I thought about medicine and taking care of not only my individual patients, but also populations. I am a better doctor because of the public health education I received at UK."

- Angela Dearing





Master of Science in Biostatistics to Meet Public Health and Industry Demands

By Christopher Carney

BIostatisticians ARE IN DEMAND

In response to public health and industry demands, the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health has approved and is now accepting applications for the new Master of Science in Biostatistics (MSBST) program which will launch its first cohort in the Fall of 2022. The MSBST program will produce highly trained, in-demand biostatisticians for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the region, and beyond.

"As the conversation continues to advance regarding the most effective ways to collect, analyze, and package research data that impacts public health, we are excited to launch the new MS in Biostatistics," says Amanda Ellis, Director of the MS in Biostatistics program at the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health.

The 33-credit, two-year MS in Biostatistics degree will equip students with the knowledge and methodological skills that will drive better decisions for public health, health care, and biomedical research. Candidates will learn how to design studies, create analysis plans, and develop methodologies to answer the most complicated and critical public health questions to improve population health.

ACADEMIC DELIVERABLES

The MSBST curriculum will consist of valuable core biostatistics courses and customizable electives in areas of programming, data design and data mining, methodology, modeling and more.

In addition, the capstone experience will give students the experiential learning opportunity to have real-world experiences through unique collaboration practices in interdisciplinary research teams.

"One of our biggest strengths as a public health college is leveraging our partnerships, comprehensive expertise, and knowledge with the other health colleges and research centers at the University of Kentucky," says Heather Bush, Biostatistics Chair at the UK College of Public Health. "We have unparalleled access to significant data resources, unique among all institutions in the Commonwealth, if not the nation, ready to be capitalized for research, education and service missions related to health science."

Some of these data resources include CCTS Enterprise Data Trust, the Kentucky Cancer Registry, the Kentucky Health Data Trust, and the Kentucky Research Data Center. Some of the partnerships include

the UK Center for Clinical and Translation Science (CCTS) and the UK Biostatistics, Epidemiology & Research Design (BERD).

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Ideal candidates for the new MSBST program will include those with a moderate mathematics background or STEM background along with a commitment to public health and biomedical science. Working professionals in the health-related workforce seeking additional advanced training in the design, analysis and communication of biomedical data are also encouraged to learn more.

Fall 2022 applications are now open for the MSBST program. Visit us at cph.uky.edu/MSBST to learn more.





“WE ARE VISIBLE”

MHA Program helps students become difference makers in their communities

By Jonathan Greene





MORE THAN A DEGREE

Many in health care and public health embody a quiet humbleness: There's always people to take care of and problems to solve; just keep working and avoid the spotlight.

Dr. Maureen Jones, Director of the University of Kentucky College of Public Health's Master of Health Administration (UK MHA) program, wants to focus the spotlight on the program's students and alumni who are making a difference in their communities.

"Our students don't leave here with just a degree," she said. "They leave here with a set of relevant leadership skills they can apply right away. They accept positions across Kentucky and the country at UK HealthCare, Norton, Ascension, Duke, the Veteran's Administration, UC Health, Rush, Mayo and more. But in the process of getting meaningful positions, they're making differences in their communities."

Dr. Jones continued, "We need to be visible, because that helps our students get better careers, draws high quality students to UK, and will help industry leaders know that they can call on the University of Kentucky College of Public Health for expertise in this area. We are recruiting students who are focused on innovation and creativity to make a meaningful impact on today's health care problems."

THE MHA PROGRAM

The Masters of Health Administration program is a professional degree program, which is different from most master's programs, Dr. Jones noted. The program grounds its teaching in theory but does not stop there. Our faculty craft courses where students apply concepts to real-world problems.

"Students are engaging with industry experts in strategy, operations, business development, finance, human resources and working through current organizational challenges. This allows them to solve actual problems while they're in the UK MHA program, better preparing them for when they get out there," Dr. Jones said.

The UK MHA Program is competency-based. Each course exposes students to a specific set of skills and abilities. Within each course, students demonstrate their progress by becoming proficient with the prescribed competencies.

"We layer these skills over the curriculum to allow for practice, feedback, and development over time," Dr. Jones said. "The competency model was developed with input from faculty and industry executives to assure we are targeting the most relevant set of skills, and is reviewed regularly to assure it aligns with industry needs."

TWO OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS

There are two options for the UK MHA program — a full-time two-year route and a part-time four-year plan. Both are 50 credits including an internship.

The program features a prescribed set of sequenced courses and room for a few electives. For part-time students, the set of courses is similar, but students take, on average, two or three classes a semester.

All students without significant administrative experience complete a 400-hour internship that pairs them with a healthcare leader mentor for 12 weeks over the summer between their first and second year. Students with administrative experience may develop an administrative internship within their own organization that requires activities beyond their existing job responsibilities.

UK MHA students and alums are clearly visible and are making an impact in the world of public health. Learn more at cph.uky.edu/MHA.





PHD IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH LAUNCHES FIRST STUDENT COHORT

By Christopher Carney



In the Fall of 2021, the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health started the first student cohort in the new PhD in Health Services Research (HSR) program, which prepares professionals for a career in conducting data-driven health services research.

"Our program had a successful inaugural year," says Dr. Min-Woong Sohn, Director of Graduate Studies for the PhD in Health Services Research program. "Each student completed their first semester, and we are working with them to identify research interests, current and future projects, and dissertation topics."

The PhD in HSR prepares graduates to address the practical challenges of conducting health services research in the multidisciplinary research environments of academia, government, consulting, and industry. The mentored research program will prepare independent

researchers at designing and conducting health services research, leveraging a variety of study designs, primary data collection approaches, and primary and secondary databases to inform healthcare delivery and health policy.

"This unique program strongly emphasizes applied health services research skills, including study design, data management, statistics and other quantitative methods," says Dr. Sohn. "There are opportunities to organize coursework based on interests such as health economics or health outcomes."

In the first 3-4 years, students are in a full-time residential study while completing coursework in four core areas, grant writing, and dissertation work. The program offers students a choice between two disciplinary concentrations: health economics or health outcomes.

PhD in HSR students participate in a directed research study in their chosen substantive areas of health services research and will work under the direction of a faculty member on an ongoing research project.

Students will engage in major components of the research process, including synthesis of existing literature, development of theoretical and empirical models and hypotheses, development of research protocols and instruments, collection and analysis of data, and interpretation and translation of study findings.

For more information on the PhD in Health Services Research, visit cph.uky.edu/programs/hsr-phd.

“ ”

“Our goal is to grow the program with a national and international reputation for training successful and influential researchers in health services research,” says Dr. Sohn.





UK College Public Health Students Selected for 2022 SPARK Program

By Christopher Carney

SPARKLERS

Princess Magor Agbozo and Meron Lemma, undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Kentucky's College of Public Health, were both recently selected to participate in this year's SPARK program (Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky), which is a collaboration between the University of Kentucky's Center for Health Equity Transformation and the Office of Undergraduate Research.

SPARK trains undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds in how to conduct research, from designing a study and submitting Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications to presenting their findings at a conference. Out of the six students selected, two represent the UK College of Public Health.

Accepted participants, called "SPARKlers," design, implement, analyze data, and present findings from health equity research in their home communities with training and mentorship from UK experts and community partners.

SPARKlers also receive a generous stipend for their summer research

work, in addition to funding for their research.

Princess and Meron share similar motivations in how they found themselves wanting to pursue an education (and future career) in public health. The journey began in their home countries when they noticed an obsolete and inequitable health care system.

FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCES

Growing up in Ghana, Princess experienced first-hand family members that were ill and not getting the appropriate health care in their West African country. A few years later when Princess moved to Qatar, which had a more modern approach, she was able to compare two completely different health systems. Intrigued by this discovery, Princess asked herself some powerful questions.

"I asked myself how other governments and countries are approaching the health and safety of their people," says Princess. "I also believe that there's a lot of misinformation being communicated. I want to get the right information and be an advocate for a better health care system."

In Ethiopia, Meron had similar experiences growing up and noticed a disappointing health system in East Africa. This motivated Meron to set a course in obtaining the education and global perspective to make a difference.

"Developing countries deserve better," says Meron. "My career goal is to make an impact on global health systems and bring more education and resources to these areas of the world."

Princess and Meron eventually decided to pursue their education at the University of Kentucky. In the beginning, they both were taking numerous science classes. Through speaking with advisors and faculty mentors along the way, they made the choice that public health was the best combination of their passions for science, health, and helping people.

"It's not just about understanding the science behind health, but how it impacts people's lives," says Princess.

SPARK'S IMPACT

Through the SPARK program, Princess and Meron can now advance their passions for

researching global health equity and environmental health to make sure that all communities have equal access to care and how factors in the environment affect human health and disease.

"SPARK's research focusing on minorities and disadvantaged communities really intrigued me," says Meron. "Most research is based on the majority, but there are social determinants of health that impacts the minority disproportionately. This research is a wonderful opportunity to make an impact on health equity and learn from mentors."

BECOMING A HEALTH CHAMPION

At the UK College of Public Health, we build "health champions" every day that improve the lives of everyone in Kentucky and beyond through robust research, transformative learning, and service.



PRINCESS MAGOR AGBOZO

When asked what a "health champion" means, Princess says, "It's about action and advocacy. Champions must use their knowledge to inform and educate everyone." Meron adds, "It means producing ideas and policies that impact global health. Health champions must help developing countries and that is what I plan to do in my career."

Princess and Meron are very thankful for their advisors, student ambassadors, and professors at the UK College of Public Health who were all there to give them timely advice, get acclimated, and provide mentorship for success. Meron recalled one of her favorite professors, Dr. Rafael Pérez-Figueroa, who helped her learn more about the SPARK program and provided an inspirational perspective in her global health class.

"In his class, I felt understood and he plugged me in to so many



MERON LEMMA

opportunities on campus," says Meron. "I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to learn so much from him while he was a professor at the University of Kentucky."

When communicating the value of an education and a career in public health, it begins with wanting to help people; however, it is more than just science according to Princess and Meron.

"Look at your strengths and how you can best serve others," says Princess. "Then get out in the community and see what others are seeing every day. Start surrounding yourself with others that have the skills and knowledge."

Meron is a junior double majoring in Public Health and Environmental Sustainability Studies. After graduating, she plans to pursue a master's degree in Global Health and work on global health and environmental sustainability. Her professional goals include careers impacting health equity and environmental justice.

Princess is a sophomore and is also on the pre-medical track. Her academic goals include earning MD and MPH degrees. For her career, she wants to work in the global health field to improve healthcare accessibility for impoverished and underserved communities.

Learn about us, the programs, and our "health champions" at cph.uky.edu.





EARLY CAREER FACULTY RECOGNITION

By Christopher Carney

The UK College of Public Health has recently hired some exciting new “early-career” faculty members that are involved in impactful research projects – presently and in the future.

Aaron J. Kruse-Diehr, PhD

Since joining CPH in 2019 in the Health, Behavior and Society department, Dr. Aaron J. Kruse-Diehr has engaged in multiple research activities, mostly centered on increasing colorectal cancer screening rates in populations with disparate outcomes. He has taken on various roles, including co-investigator of an NCI Cancer MoonshotSM funded multilevel intervention to increase screening rates in primary care clinics in Appalachian Kentucky.

In addition, Dr. Kruse-Diehr is principal investigator of a CCTS/ Markey Cancer Center-funded Early Career Investigator pilot award to explore facilitators and barriers in screening among African Americans in partnership with five African American churches in Louisville.

In 2020, Dr. Kruse-Diehr was accepted to, and completed, the NCI Training Institute for

Dissemination and Implementation Research in Cancer (TIDIRC) and the University of Pennsylvania Implementation Science Institute multi-day workshop, both of which bolstered his skills in applying implementation science theories and frameworks to his own research.

Over the next year, Dr. Kruse-Diehr is putting together an R01 proposal that builds upon his pilot work with the goal of adapting and implementing community-based colorectal cancer screening interventions in collaboration with African American churches and local organizations throughout Louisville.

He is also partnering with a colleague, Dr. Brittany Smalls at the UK College of Medicine, to adapt and test a community-based peer support intervention to improve clinical outcomes related to type

2 diabetes among rural Kentucky residents. Most recently, in February 2022, Dr. Kruse-Diehr assumed the role of director for the CCTS Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK).



Rachel Hogg-Graham, DrPH

Dr. Rachel Hogg-Graham is a current health services researcher in the Health Management and Policy department at CPH. She focuses on cross-sector collaboration and the integration of health care delivery systems with public health and other community organizations to address population health goals. Dr. Hogg-Graham serves as a PI on an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) funded K-award examining models of public health, social services, and hospital integration as a mechanism for addressing the social determinants of health that contribute to hospitalizations and readmissions.

Dr. Hogg-Graham is an MPI on a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded study looking at Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO) efforts in

Kentucky to build partnerships with community-based organizations and to address unmet social needs in enrollees. This project's Study Advisory Board (SAB) has played a critical role by bringing together representatives from KY Medicaid MCOs, the KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services, advocacy groups, and community partners.

Going forward, Dr. Hogg-Graham wants to continue expanding her collaborative research focused on the relationship between cross-sector collaboration and improved health outcomes and well-being. Her goal is to break the silos, and to identify new strategies for building strong and effective partnerships that will make a positive impact on population health. She wants to further research and understand how organizations are working together

to build an infrastructure that effectively moves individuals through a broader system of care to inform future multisector strategies for improving population health.



Anne Elizabeth Ray, PhD, MEd

Since joining the Health, Behavior, and Society department at CPH in the Fall of 2019, Dr. Anne Ray's work broadly focuses on understanding and preventing high-risk substance use among adolescent and young adult populations. More specifically, in how we can use technology to adapt, improve, and extend the reach of evidence-based programming, and how we can draw from dissemination and implementation science frameworks.

One of Dr. Ray's current projects – Project FRESH – is focused on alcohol use in first-year college students. Dr. Ray's team is building an app for students to use in their first semester that integrates content on alcohol use and risky sexual behavior and allows them to monitor their

feedback over the course of the semester. Each week, they will get personalized feedback on their behaviors, based on the information they share. This project involves both students and student affairs staff on campus in the development process. The goal is to improve existing evidence-based programs for first-year college students while employing methods to bridge the ongoing gap between research and practice at the university level.

Project FRESH is in its second year currently and is a 5-year, NIAAA funded project. Going forward, Dr. Ray's primary focus is to continue building collaborations with colleagues in other research areas at the University of Kentucky and beyond. Furthermore, Dr. Ray wants to investigate incorporating content into prevention programming that

highlights the link between alcohol use and breast cancer, which is particularly relevant for young adult women.





MEET ALUMNA, CHIOMA OKAFOR, PRIDE AND PASSION FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

By Jonathan Greene and Jillian Faith



THE MOMENT THINGS CHANGED

For Chioma Okafor, public health was not something she was focused on during her undergraduate studies. Everything changed when she attended an event her senior year of college that featured a public health physician discussing his work in Haiti. She was inspired by the physician's efforts to build AIDS clinics and community health services in rural areas of a country with high needs and low resources.

"The pride and passion the physician displayed stood out to me and I thought to myself, 'I want to feel this way about the work that I do,'" she said.

Chioma personally identified with some of the topics the physician discussed. Growing up in Nigeria in the 1990s, she said HIV/AIDS was a disease that was spoken about in hushed tones and was often recognized as a death sentence once a person was diagnosed. She remembers the physician speaking about how the clinics were able to treat and provide other services for patients who were able to go on to live healthy lives. This realization was the starting point for Chioma's career in global health.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) alumna ('13) is currently working as Country Program Manager at PACT, an international non-profit based in Washington, DC. Chioma's project at PACT supports HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment initiatives in eight countries with the goal of achieving and sustaining epidemic control in targeted populations. Since the project began

implementation last year, over 61,000 orphans and caregivers as well as 53,000 adolescent girls and young women have been provided with comprehensive services that address their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Okafor gives credit to several of her courses at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health for her knowledge of resolving global health disparities. It was in these courses that she learned that global public health is focused on resolving large-scale health inequities that are rooted in the social and transnational determinants of health.

During and after her time as a student, Chioma pursued opportunities to address health disparities in her home country of Nigeria. In her roles as Clinical Services Associate and later as Technical Officer at a health consulting firm, Chioma was able to collaborate with the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), and the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health to address HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Chioma also held roles at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supporting injury prevention and environmental health programs both in the US and globally.

"These solutions required the buy in and input from the communities they were being implemented in and showed me the importance of investing in community-based, participatory approaches that shift attitudes and promote the uptake

of prevention and treatment strategies," she said.

HEALTH CHAMPIONS

The UK College of Public Health believes in developing health champions. Okafor describes a health champion as an advocate for equitable health care that utilizes the tools at their disposal to solve challenges faced by the vulnerable. Her definition of a health champion extends to those on the frontlines of COVID-19.

"As we battle the current COVID-19 pandemic, the bravery and commitment of frontline health care workers across the globe in treating the sick and showing their commitment to the health of their patients cannot be overestimated," she said. "They are the true champions of health and must be provided with adequate personal protective equipment and prioritized for vaccination as well as safe working conditions and adequate compensation."

Outside of her work, Okafor finds time to give back in a variety of ways. She volunteers with the Capitol Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C. and serves on the Board of Directors of the Bokamoso Foundation, a South African non-profit which mobilizes financial support, mentorship, and guidance to the staff and young people of the Bokamoso Life Centre in Winterveldt, South Africa. Additionally, she is a mentor for recent graduates and emerging professionals in public health through the American Public Health Association and the Women in International Affairs Network.



THE FLU PANDEMIC OF 1918 TO COVID: AN IMPACT ON GENERATIONS

By Jonathan Greene

A FAMILY'S HISTORY OF SERVICE

Deb Johnson has a family history with health care. The UK College of Public Health alum ('66) worked as an RN, following her mother, who was a psychologist, and her grandmother, a nurse during the pandemic of 1918. That interest has even passed to Johnson's daughter, who attended nursing school and is currently practicing as an RN.

"We are linked to other generations," Johnson said.

Johnson, who graduated with a triple major in health, physical education, and recreation, was recently published in the November 2021 edition of the *American Journal of Nursing* (AJN). Her historical feature, "The Flu Pandemic of 1918: A Nurse's Story," dives into her grandmother's experiences as a nurse, and those of thousands of other nurses, during the 1918 pandemic and the correlations to nursing during COVID-19.

"I want nurses, in particular those on the front lines, to understand

that we are linked," Johnson said. "The similarities illustrate the relevance of one generation's nursing experience to that of subsequent generations—and the importance of history and learning from it."

Johnson said that, while retired, as an RN she could see what was happening with the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the stories she heard from other health care workers about the stresses they were enduring resonated with her, especially because of the stories her grandmother had shared from the 1918 pandemic.

So Johnson began comparing the two—looking at what is going on now and what she remembers from her grandmother's stories. She also had journals that her mother had kept.

"My mother thought that what [my grandmother] had gone through was very remarkable and that the part my grandmother played was something she'd like for others to know," Johnson said. "My mother actually journaled about a lot of the things that happened during the

1918 pandemic."

As she worked on comparing the pandemics, she found several striking similarities, including a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), a lack of medical interventions such as vaccines and technical supportive equipment to begin with, and staffing shortages, with students used to fill gaps.

One of the biggest similarities though was the use of basic health care tenets, such as those espoused by Florence Nightingale, that have been at the forefront of nursing for generations and the value of having a health care worker at the bedside of the ill.

"I applaud their courage, applaud their caring, and their being at the bedside during a very trying time," Johnson said. "I think of when my friends have said, 'Every time we go to work, we know we're putting ourselves and our families in harm's way. We do it anyway. Because that's what we do.'"

"That's what we do as health care workers. We help people."

GETTING INTO HEALTH CARE

Johnson had always been interested in health care because of her grandmother's experiences and her mother's career.

"I had always been interested in health and the human condition," she added.

Working in health care also allowed Johnson flexibility, as her husband's—also a University of Kentucky graduate—engineering job would take them to different cities due to transfers.

After working a variety of roles across her career, Johnson completed her RN degree later in life and became a labor and delivery nurse.

UK MAKES AN IMPACT

"The University of Kentucky offered me a pathway to follow into health care," she said. "My undergraduate education really allowed me to enter into a variety

of roles. UK had prepared me extremely well. I was ready just to hit the ground and be enthused about a career in nursing."

Johnson recalls many of the lessons she learned from UK, with the most important, she said, being the importance of listening to your patient.

THE TRUE FACE OF HEALTH CARE

Johnson said nurses and those in health care need to be visible so people know who they are and what they do.

"Nurses and people in health care will read The Flu Pandemic of 1918: A Nurse's Story in the November edition of AJN and they'll all understand it, but I believe that the public needs to understand what goes on to provide them and their loved ones with a safe environment," she said. "Nurses provide proper treatment of those people, not just medically and not just technically, but on a caring

level, especially in times when sometimes they can't be in the hospital with them."

Johnson said many worry about their loved ones and if they are being treated with care, love, and compassion. She said letting the whole community, not just those in public health, know what they do, how they do it, and why they do it is important to help dispel that worry.

"We really care," she said.

For those interested in reading Johnson's AJN feature, it is available for purchase at:





I have a disability. I'm blind. I know what you go through.

By Christopher Carney and Jillian Faith

Since growing up in Frankfort, Kentucky, every day presents some challenges for Sydney Clark. She was born with a genetic condition that resulted in losing her vision over time. However, Sydney never allowed her disability to stop her from achieving her academic and professional goals, which was to attend the University of Kentucky and become a public health influencer and champion.

"I've always been passionate about disability and emergency preparedness," says Sydney. "With 25% of our population having a disability, disabilities should not be an after-thought. They should be thought of beforehand."

When she first enrolled at the University of Kentucky, many instructors were unaware of the resources and considerations needed for students who are blind. Fortunately, Sydney had a great support system at the UK College of Public Health that helped her navigate her way through a myriad of science courses and graduate.

"I loved everyone at the University of Kentucky and at the College of Public Health," says Sydney. "The professors really care, and they all made a sincere effort in helping make classes more accessible."

After graduating with her Bachelor of Public Health in 2017 from UK, Sydney then got her Master of Public Health at Western Kentucky University and did research on disability inclusion, and emergency and disaster preparedness. After working as an epidemiologist for the state of Kentucky, she now is a Disability and Preparedness Specialist for the Tennessee Department of Health, which is a state agency with the mission of protecting and improving the health of people in the state of Tennessee.

"We are researching and bridging the gaps between disabilities and emergency preparedness every day," says Sydney. "I'm excited to be collaborating and communicating with stakeholders that will help us give voice and

solutions to those that sometimes are forgotten."

Sydney is working on building partnerships with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, which represents the public health agencies of all states in the U.S and the approximately 100,000 public health professionals those agencies represent. In addition, some of her specific projects include examining emergency plans for inclusivity, providing preparedness for people that need electronic medical devices, and creating a database of preparedness contacts and influential stakeholders.

Being a health champion, personally and professionally, and standing up for people that are not being heard are all important to Sydney.

"I have a disability. I'm blind. I know what you go through," says Sydney. "Public health should be universal and equitable. I'm in a position where I can get people connected that can help make a difference."

The recent tornado storms that devastated areas of Western Kentucky have heightened the importance of inclusion and accessibility for Sydney.

"I was contacted about helping to find accessible shelters for individuals with disabilities having difficulties finding a place to stay," says Sydney. "This shouldn't be an issue, but when disasters take place, inclusion and accessibility aren't on the radar – it shouldn't be that way."

Regarding a career in public health, Sydney advises, "This is a versatile career path. There is so much you can do to make an impact. If you want to help people and make a difference, I cannot think of anything better."





CLASS NOTES

Alexis Nuara

BPH 2020

Started a new position as Senior Network Operations Analyst at Helion.

Anu Annabathula

MHA 2020

Started a new position as Research Coordinator at Center for Health Equity Transformation at University of Kentucky.

Armed Gabriel Bahala

BPH 2019

Started new position as Administrative Resident at Mercy Health in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ben Ridder

MHA 2016

Started new position as Chief Executive Officer at Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Brenton Craggs

MHA 2020

Started new position as Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator at Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Brooke Logsdon

MHA 2021

Started new position as Administrative Fellow at Medical University of South Carolina.

Carmen Stiles

MPH 2006

Started new position as Senior Director of Clinical Analytics at Clinipace.

Carrie Rudzik

MHA 2020

Started new position as Vice President of Clinical Operations at Appalachian Regional Healthcare in Lexington, Kentucky.

Charity Andrews

MPH 2013

Started a new position as Pharmacist at Tailormade Compounding.

Crysta Meekins

BPH 2019

Started new position as Healthy Beginnings Program Coordinator at Albemarle Regional Health Services in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Daniel Cooper

BPH 2020, MPH 2021

Started new position as Data Analyst at The Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine.

Deena Ombres

MPH 1993

Started new position as Chief Compliance Officer at U.S. Behavioral Partners.

Elizabeth Graves

MPH 2021

Started new position as Trusted Process Specialist at Syneos Health.

Elizabeth Phelps

BPH 2019

Started new position as Operations Manager at Crothall Healthcare in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Hannah Bowling

BPH 2021

Started new position as Clinical Research Associate at University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center.

Hannah Clifton

MPH 2018

Started new position as Senior Statistical Analyst at ICON plc.

Jessalyn Ubellacker

MPH 2011

Started new position as Assistant Professor of Molecular Metabolism at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Jing Li

DrPH 2020

Started new position as Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis.

Jordan Ellis

MHA 2014

Started new position as Director of Operations of Value Based Care at Baptist Health in Louisville, Kentucky.

Jorge Masson

MPH 2018

Started new position as Healthcare Navigator at The Family Healthcare Foundation in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Justine Biragane

BPH 2020

Started new position as COVID-19 Intake Coordinator at Jessamine County Health Department in Nicholasville, Kentucky.

Kayla Kranske

MHA 2021

Started new position as Administrative Fellow at Norton Healthcare in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kayla Wilfong

BPH 2018, MHA 2020

Started new position as Coordinator Strategic Initiatives at St. Elizabeth Healthcare in Edgewood, Kentucky.

Kelley Conley

BPH 2020

Started new position as Clinical Data Manager at Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Cancer Center.

Kim Pennington

MHA 2010

Started new position as Chief Business Officer at Bluegrass Care Navigators in Lexington, Kentucky.

Kovel Walker

MPH 2008

Started new position as Senior Supply Planner Manager at Merrick Pet Care, Inc.

Kristen Van Buren

DrPH 2016

Started new position as Associate Service Fellow at National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Kristin Boone

MHA 2020

Started new position as Project Delivery Analyst at Deloitte.

Laura Bellnier

MPH 2021

Started new position as Research Associate at University of Kentucky.

Lauren Seaton

MHA 2018

Started new position as Director of Population Health at Ascension St. Vincent in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Logan Bryer**MHA 2020**

Started new position as Manager of Operations and Business Development of Occupational Health at Henry Ford Health System.

Logan Carroll**MHA 2021**

Started new position as Administrative Fellow at Carle Health in Urbana, Illinois.

Logan Sedoris**BPH 2018**

Started new position as Safety Professional at John Deere.

Lucas Brooks**MHA 2019**

Started new position as Director of System Integration and Government Programs at Appalachian Regional Healthcare.

Mabruk Ouabili**MPH 2012**

Started new position as Strategic Workforce Planner III at Cleveland Clinic.

Madeline Aulisio**DrPH 2020**

Started new position as Assistant Professor at Transylvania University.

Madelyn Kaehler**MHA 2020**

Started new position as Manager of Supportive Care Navigation and Integrative Medicine at Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut.

Maggie Brooks**MPH 2020**

Started new position as Clinical Research Associate at University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center.

Megan Richardson**MHA 2009**

Started new position as Chief Financial Officer at Elmwood Inn Fine Teas in Danville, Kentucky.

Megan Tully**BPH 2018**

Started new position as Field Safety Advisor at Amerisafe Group.

Meghan McCormick**MPH 2012**

Started new position as Lecturer at University of Rhode Island.

Micaela Hazlewood**MHA 2020**

Started new position as Quality Supervisor at Columbus Springs in Columbus, Ohio.

Moaz Abdelwadoud**DrPH 2017**

Started new position as Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University.

Molly McKenna**MHA 2020**

Started new position as Administrative Fellow at Duke University Hospital.

Natalie Littlefield**MPH 2018**

Started new position as Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring Program Director at Kentucky Department for Public Health.

Pramila Rai**MPH 2018**

Started new position as Teaching Associate at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

Quantez Crowe**MPH 2019**

Started new position as Health Informatics Specialist III at Texas Department of State Health Services.

Regina Washington**DrPH 2006**

Started new position as Director of Rural Impact Networks at Partners for Education at Berea College.

Renee Thomas**BPH 2019**

Started new position as Public Health Advisor with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ripley Lucas**BPH 2020, MPH 2021**

Started new position as Data Analyst at March of Dimes.

Rithvi Melanta**MHA 2017**

Started new position as Operations Manager of Hospital Operations & Critical Care at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.

Shelby Ferrell**BPH 2017**

Started new position as PGY-1 resident at Indiana University Health.

Sherrie Walker**MHA 2004**

Started new position as Assistant Director for Outpatient Services at VA North Texas Health Care System in Dallas, Texas.

Steven Hiestand**MPH 2015**

Started new position as Legal Counsel at Beam Dental in Columbus, Ohio.

Swannie Jett**DrPH 2011**

Started new position CEO of Park DuValle Community Health Center, Inc in Louisville, Kentucky.

Sydney Adkisson**BPH 2020**

Started new position as Junior Analyst at Coastal Cloud.

Tara Batus Hood**BPH 2016**

Started new position as Pediatric Occupational Therapist and Clinical Director at FUNctional Pediatric Therapy in Platte City, Missouri.

Taylor Schmieder**BPH 2016**

Started new position as Transitional Work Program Coordinator at GE Appliances in Louisville, Kentucky.

Thomas Corbett**MHA 2020**

Started new position as Senior Financial Analyst and Project Manager at MUSC Health.

Virginia Valentin**DrPH 2017**

Started new position as Director and Chair of Physician Assistant Studies program at University of Kentucky.

Vishal Nathu**BPH 2016**

Started new position as Senior Manager of WHS Programs at Amazon.

Want to have your class notes in the next Catalyst? Contact Jillian Faith, Senior Alumni Coordinator.



DEAR COLLEGE
OF PUBLIC
HEALTH ALUMNI
COMMUNITY,

Over the last six months, many of you have experienced impressive professional accomplishments which included local and state recognition for your arduous work, groundbreaking research in prestigious academic journals, guest speakers in our courses, and much more. In addition, many of you have experienced personal lifetime milestones such as engagements, childbirth, and retirement.

Despite the pandemic that continues to surround our lives, our alumni community continues to achieve, succeed, and grow. Our alumni are truly paving the way forward and are leading by

example. We are no longer operating from just behind the scenes, we are now out in front and more visible than ever before.

In appreciation of our most exceptional public health leaders and alums of our college, we are excited to announce our “Legends & Leaders Awards Ceremony” in May of 2022. We hope you can join us at this event to honor and appreciate these public health champions.

As we continue to explore opportunities for increasing our alumni connection and networking, I encourage you to follow us on social media and check out our new alumni page to stay up to date on all alumni news, events, and other engagement opportunities at cph.uky.edu/alumni.

I look forward to meeting you in person later this year and as always, please continue to stay in touch with us and each other.

Go CATS!



Jillian Faith
Senior Alumni Coordinator



Thank you to our Board of Advisors!

Donna Arnett

Winston Griffin

Jonathan Nalli

Sheila Schuster

Ben Chandler

Colby Hall

Edith Parker

Phillip Scott

Scott Davis

Ardis Hoven

Louis Prichard

Ashli Watts

Adam Edelen

Alex Howard

Lawrence Prybil

Stephen Williams

DEAR FRIENDS & FAMILY OF CPH

First, thank you to our entire CPH community for your generosity over the years. Your gifts, no matter the size, have truly made a difference in transforming lives, developing “health champions,” and leaving a legacy for generations.

As we continue to build for the future, at present, we are already making an impact. We are no longer behind the scenes. We are right in the mix with our boots on the ground and our CPH community is more visible than ever before.

Our graduates are now managing healthcare systems, serving in public health departments, fighting the current (and future) pandemic, reshaping policies that promote health equity, researching preventive measures, injuries, the opioid epidemic, overall population health, and so much more.

All of us, the public health community, are the key to building a healthier future for our communities, state, and world – for everyone.

We know there is more work to do; however, we are committed to our goal of becoming the primary source of public health knowledge and to be the partner of choice in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond.

To help us reach this goal, we have several opportunities to support current and future public health leaders and champions, which include:

- College of Public Health Excellence Fund
- College of Public Health Scholarship Fund
- College of Public Health Student Support Fund
- Faculty Scholarship for the Future of Appalachian Health
- John Wiggs Scholarship
- MHA Scholarship Fund
- Along with other giving opportunities.

I invite you to contact me so we can invest in you investing in us.

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Sincerely,



Shelley Ward
Director of Philanthropy and Giving
shelley.ward@uky.edu
859-323-4551



“WE COME TOGETHER”

cph.uky.edu/giving



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