

News & Views

**A Publication of the
American Public Health Association
Student Assembly**

President's Pen

By **Kristy A. Siegel**, Chair APHA-SA

Happy New Year and welcome to the 2009 APHA Student Assembly! It is with great pleasure that I assume the position of Chair for this new year. As I think about the year ahead of me, I have to pause to also think about my past and how I got here. This month marks my fourth year on the APHA-SA Board. In those four years, I have gained more experience and knowledge than I could have ever imagined back when I first applied to be the APHA-SA Programming co-chair. As some "food for thought", I put together my top ten "Things I Learned While Serving on the APHA-SA Board":

1. Time management is not a skill you gain but rather practice.
2. Nothing gets done unless there is first a vision and goals.
3. Crossing things off your To-Do List feels like a great accomplishment.
4. Patience, patience, sense of humor, patience.
5. It's not a matter of "what can you do for me?", but rather "what can I do for you to help you accomplish your goals?".
6. Public health really does have the nicest people working in it.
7. Fellow board members can quickly become good friends.
8. Every conference call, every meeting, every committee activity is a networking opportunity.
9. Wearing many hats at the same time can give you a headache sometimes. But fellow board members are always willing to take a hat or two from you (see #6 and #7).
10. If I had to do it all over again, I would do it exactly the same – I've loved every minute and look forward to the next two years.

But the greatest thing I have learned thus far is how to be a public health leader – you can't pick that up in class, and working at the national level with people located around the country (even some outside of the country!) involves very different group dynamics than your local/state organization. I am confident that the skills and knowledge I have learned while serving on the Board will be paramount to me becoming the public health professional leader I want to be when I graduate from school. If you want the opportunity to try a couple of hats on at the national level, I welcome you to apply for any of the open Board positions or even apply for one of the Executive Board positions, all of which will be announced in the upcoming weekly Opportunity emails. You might gain some invaluable skills during your tenure on the Board, or make a friend or two! If you have questions, please contact me anytime at chair@aphastudents.org. I hope you have a great semester.

Winter 2009

Editing and Layout By:

**Olivia Wackowski
and Kimberly Rogers**

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Note from the Editors...

Dear Students

Welcome to the spring semester, and this issue of the Student Assembly *News & Views* newsletter!

During the Student Assembly business meeting at the APHA Annual Meeting this past October, we discussed ideas for enhancing the newsletter and making it more informative for you, the students of APHA. We decided to try to use the newsletter to better inform and educate readers about the various committees of the Student Assembly, their activities (and how you can get involved with them) and the unique resources they provide that are available to you. Each of the committees are co-chaired by two students, and the Student Assembly often puts out calls for student applications to these leadership positions as they become vacant. So get to know our committees and the work they do—you might just end up running one of them some day!

In addition to the Executive Board, the Student Assembly has over 10 different committees, and we will be profiling 3 or 4 of them in each issue of *News & Views*. In this issue, check out our profile “spotlight” on:

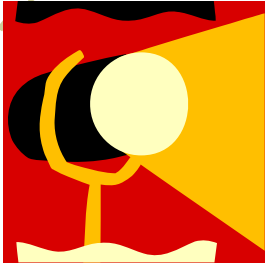
- The Mentoring Committee and its work with the National Mentoring Program, an excellent public health resource available to you
- The Action Committee, and its work on *Action Alert* & National Public Health Week resources
- The Diversity Committee, and their special included tips for completing your graduate program.

You can also learn more about these and all of our committees and positions anytime online at: www.apha.org/memborgroups/students/committees/

Also, keep an eye out for our call for articles for the next issue of *News & Views*, which will be sent out in late March. This next issue includes the Special Student Supplement, which provides students with the opportunity to submit longer articles about their personal research, health interests, etc. Don't miss it!

Sincerely,

Olivia Wackowski and Kimberly Rogers,
Editors/Newsletter Committee Co-Chairs



SPOTLIGHT ON:

The Student Assembly Mentoring Committee

By Joy Gamble-George and Anthony Guerrero-Soto, Co-Chairs

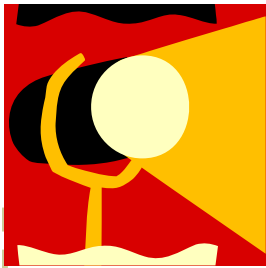
The primary responsibility of the Mentoring Committee is to work on the development of the National Mentoring Program. The National Mentoring Program (NMP), a joint initiative between APHA and the Student Assembly, pairs public health students with public health professionals across a variety of disciplines throughout the nation and helps participants develop effective mentoring relationships. The NMP goals are to (1) improve the relevancy of students' academic training; (2) increase the success and productivity of students and professionals in the public health field; and (3) strengthen the public health profession through growth and retention.

The NMP officially launched its website (www.aphamentoring.org) in October 2008 and it is used to register and match potential mentors and mentees based on several criteria including interests and vision of mentorship match. When registering, it is important for mentees to provide thoughtful, specific, and complete applications. Based on mentee applications, the mentor match brings career development through guidance, productivity, and increased opportunity. Mentors, like mentees, must be active members of APHA and willing to share their knowledge, skills, and time with mentees. Although there are no degree requirements, mentors need professional experience in public health or a related field. Likewise, there are no minimum time requirements for mentors; rather mentor and mentee matches are based, in part, on availability. We encourage the mentor and mentee to discuss and develop their own personalized goals and time commitment. It should be noted that due to the high volume of mentee interest, there may be a waiting period while a mentor match is arranged, and we are actively seeking mentors. If you know any health professionals that would be interested in mentoring, please tell them about this program or send their contact information our way.

Once a mentoring match is established, we encourage the pair to document how they established an effective mentorship and the benefits they received from the experience. Later this year, there will be a national mentoring award that honors one mentor-mentee pair based on their relationship and the contribution to the professional development of the mentee by the mentor. In order to apply for the award, mentees are required to complete an application and write a 500 word essay describing the contribution of their mentor to their work. The winning pair receives travel stipends and paid registration fees for the next APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition, a plaque, and recognition of the award winners in the Nation's Health.

By participating in the NMP, mentors have the opportunity to share their expertise and spark passion for the public health profession in aspiring students and mentees have the chance of a lifetime to build relationships with public health professionals that can steer them in the right direction of their career goals.

If you have any inquiries about the NMP or referrals for new mentors please contact the Mentoring Committee at mentoring@aphastudents.org.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

The Student Assembly Action Committee

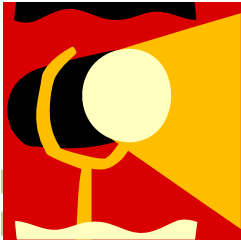
By Cherise Wong, Committee Co-Chair

The Action Committee promotes public health advocacy by keeping APHA-SA members informed about major public health policy issues as they arise and facilitating transmission of APHA-SA opinions to appropriate decision-makers/legislators. Our primary role is to provide both advocacy training and advocacy opportunities for students involved in APHA-SA. You may have seen our day-to-day activities take form in the monthly *Action Alerts* you receive each week by email, informing readers about legislative issues of importance and a range of advocacy-related actions people can take, from writing letters to political figures to bringing a menu of questions to ask at a Town Hall meeting. A large resource that we encourage you to take advantage of is the APHA Legislative Action Center, an up-to-date database that alerts individuals to public health issues (<http://capwiz.com/apha/home>). Here, you will also find a Media Guide on finding local or national contacts, be able to sign up with the Public Health Action Network, and stay up to speed on legislation activities within the Congress, Senate, or House.

The Action Committee is also involved in organizing materials, information and events related to National Public Health Week (NPHW). In the past the committee has created a guidebook to provide students with examples of what other students and student groups have done for NPHW and tips on how to organize these types of events. Last year we welcomed students to contribute to an online blog created especially for the theme of NPHW. Stay on the lookout for the upcoming few months as we gear up for this year's National Public Health Week, running April 6th-12th, themed "Building the Foundation for a Healthy America". Premised on the fact that American health care is at risk despite the nation's expenditures, NPHW 2009 aims to help close the gap between where America is and where it should be with respect to public health issues.

So what can you do and how can you get involved? Share the responsibility. Help draw attention to the issue by participating in National Public Health Week, become a partner by organizing an event or by talking with the media in your area, and alert senators and representatives to the value of public health programs through www.capwiz.com/apha/home. Resources and toolkits for understanding how to plan and publicize activities will be available on www.nphw.org. Not in the least, share your stories online by submitting them to the NPHW website and be an example to others in how to take action today.

A big thanks to our dedicated readership for their enthusiasm and commitment to advocacy for public health as we embark on this new year. Feel free to share your thoughts and contact us at action@aphastudents.org if interested in joining the action committee to help plan this year's NPHW!



SPOTLIGHT ON:

The Student Assembly Diversity Committee

By Louis Graham & Julie Suzuki-Crumly , Committee Co-Chairs

The Diversity Committee of the APHA Student Assembly recognizes the need to reach out to underrepresented students in the public health field, and, as such, is tasked with coordinating and implementing all efforts to promote the recruitment and maintenance of a diverse APHA-Student Assembly membership and leadership. Specifically, the committee works to:

1. Periodically monitor the APHA-SA membership to evaluate the percentage of students of different backgrounds (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity) who join and/or participate;
2. Compose initiatives that aim to increase the number of ethnic minorities that pursue career opportunities and/or advanced degrees in the public health field; and
3. Collaborate with the Communications Committee to select and develop culturally relevant and appropriate printed materials and website content.

In regards to the last point, the Diversity Committee has developed several fact sheets about health issues and special populations (e.g., infectious diseases along the US/Mexico border) that are available to the public on the Student Assembly website (see http://www.apha.org/membergroups/students/committees/APHA_SA_Diversity+Committee.htm). These fact sheets are developed by the committee co-chairs with help from committee student volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer to help out with future Diversity Committee programs or fact sheets, please email us at diversity@aphastudents.org!

The Diversity Committee would also like to congratulate its co-chair, Julie Suzuki-Crumly, on completing her doctoral degree in Health Education/Health Promotion at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health this past December. In honor of her commencement, we would like to offer some tips and advice for successfully completing your graduate program.

Keys to Successfully Completing Your Graduate Program (Part 1 of 3)

Set Goals. Begin with where you want to end up or where you see yourself in 4-5 years. This is really a question of why you decided to go to graduate school in the first place. It is helpful to set yearly and monthly, as well as weekly goals; and before you know it, you'll be well on your way. Also, make sure the goals that you set are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

Choose the Right Mentor. Some questions you will want to ask yourself are: What kind of mentoring style would be best for me? Is this mentor connected to useful networks? Can this mentor help get me where I want to go? Actually, you will want to create a mentoring team for yourself that includes your advisor. You might consider having weekly meetings and deliverables either with your primary mentors individually or as a group.

Choose the right TA/RA Position. Be strategic about where you work and align courses with your ultimate goal. If teaching is in your future, begin developing a teaching portfolio and philosophy, and consider teaching fellowships. Lastly, you will want to be sure that you can publish with the principal investigator of the project on which you will be working and that you have a research statement that highlights your expertise and specialty areas but that is not too narrow and is sufficiently broad.

Checkout the next issue of News & Views in the spring for more tips from the Diversity Committee!

A Guide to Getting Involved in APHA

By Giorgio Piccagli, PhD, MPH

Routes to leadership positions.

One of the benefits to being a member of APHA is the opportunity to belong to different sections or affiliates (including the Student Assembly) and to pursue leadership positions in those groups. Serving in these positions will expose you to issues and individuals you might not encounter otherwise, with possible professional benefits. Individuals can get involved with these positions by appointment (formal and informal) and election, and there are several venues for such leadership involvement:

1. Association-wide groups such as the Executive Board (EB), the Committee on Affiliates (CoA), the Intersectional Council Steering Committee (ISC SC).
2. Sections, such as Health Administration, Medical Care, Epidemiology, etc. Go to <http://apha.org/sections/> for a description of APHA Sections, caucuses, and SPIGs.
3. Affiliates. Affiliates are the State Public Health Associations affiliated with APHA. Go to http://apha.org/state_local/affiliates/ for information on the affiliate in your state.

Association-wide positions and formal appointment processes.

Student involvement at the Association-wide level is managed through the Student Assembly and formal APHA appointment processes. The President of the Student Assembly sits, ex officio, as a non-voting member of the APHA Executive Board. Student Assembly representatives to the Committee on Affiliates (CoA) and the InterSectional Council Steering Committee (ISC SC) are selected by the President-elect and Executive director of APHA and confirmed by the Executive Board. Details of these nomination processes are available from the Student Assembly and on the APHA website.

“Informal appointment” processes.

In contrast, there are many more opportunities (almost limitless) for involvement in the sections and the affiliates. These operate by election and also “informal” appointment processes (i.e., often simply requiring the decision of the committee or section chair), and can happen throughout the year as vacancies arise.

First steps.

The easiest way into greater involvement is through the informal process. Find an unmet need in your section or affiliate and offer to fill it or send in an application as positions become available. The Student Assembly, for example, has over 20 different positions between its various committees and executive board, and sends out calls for position applications quite regularly. Note that it's easier to be appointed to a committee that needs members than to be elected to office, and that such an appointment can help set the stage for a later chance at election. You learn more about the unit and its needs, you demonstrate commitment, you can establish a record of accomplishments, and you have occasion to build name recognition, a seemingly important determinant in section elections.

Election.

Elected positions in a section include: chair, secretary, section council, governing council; in an affiliate, president, president-elect, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, or governing council member. If you're interested in elected positions in a section or Affiliate, there are two stages to focus on: getting on the ballot, and getting elected.

Getting known and getting on the ballot.

Most units have a nominating committee. Rather than waiting for a general call for nominees, talk to one or more members of the unit's nominating committee about your interest in serving and solicit their advice for how best to go about it. While some units have a hard time generating enough nominees and will be delighted to have interested members, others may want more “seasoned” people on the ballot and that may require a little advance work on your part. Thus, it may be beneficial to try go get involved with the unit (e.g., by volunteering for a certain committee or project) before the elections. This may be doubly

A Guide to Getting Involved in APHA (*continued*)

advantageous in “getting your name out there”, as name recognition can be a major factor in some section/unit elections.

Getting elected – five steps to improve your chances.

The section ballot is uniform across all sections and currently has a place for a candidate’s statement. Affiliate elections vary from affiliate to affiliate in the process they use. The candidate statement is always very important for section elections, but more so when you are relatively unknown. Five steps will improve your candidate statement and your chances of being elected:

1. Know the duties of the office for which you are running.
2. Provide a vision of what you will do or what the section might be like with your involvement.
3. State your vision in terms of the units’ concerns and needs, not yours. “The unit wants (needs) XYZ, and I can...”, rather than “I want to gain experience.”
4. In stating your experience, highlight your strengths, not your weaknesses. Review your history to see what leadership positions, formal or informal, you have held and what you accomplished. It is often very useful to have someone else look at you from the outside and reflect your strengths; sometimes our strengths are not obvious to ourselves.
5. Write your statement with care. Although word limits can be constricting, with thoughtfulness and effort, it’s often surprising how much information you can cram into short statements.

Last words.

Finally, it helps to look at getting involved as a multi-year effort. Don’t get discouraged if you don’t get a certain position on your first try. Use your losses as learning opportunities, not as reasons to quit. And of course, don’t forget to have fun! Getting involved at this level provides you with access to information, experiences and relationships you are unlikely to get elsewhere!

Nineteenth Annual APHA Public Health Materials Contest

The APHA Public Health Education Health Promotion section is soliciting your best health education, promotion and communication materials for the 19th annual competition. The contest provides a forum to showcase public health materials during the APHA Annual Meeting and recognizes professionals for their hard work.

All winners will be selected by panels of expert judges prior to the 137th APHA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA. A session will be held at the Annual Meeting to recognize winners, during which one representative from the top materials selected in each category will give a presentation about their material.

Entries will be accepted in three categories; printed materials, electronic materials, and other materials. Entries for the contest are due by March 27th, 2009.

Please contact Kira McGroarty at kmcgroar@jhsph.edu for additional contest entry information.

Student Assembly Call for Abstracts for 2009 Annual Meeting

By Christopher Michael Fisher, Programming Committee

The Student Assembly of the American Public Health Association (APHA-SA) invites abstracts from students in public health or other related fields presenting results of scientific research, program evaluations, policy analysis, and lessons learned from research or practice. We also invite abstracts pertaining to public health student issues in general (such as education, curricula, training, employment trends, student leadership, advocacy, etc.)

The theme of the 2009 Annual Meeting is “Water and Public Health: The 21st Century Challenge,” and abstracts that reflect this theme are particularly encouraged. Other themes for which APHA-SA encourages submissions include:

- Current Topics in Student Research - any current research or intervention being conducted by a student
- Ethical questions & challenges in public health
- Right to health – e.g., access to care, environmental justice (clean air, water, or food), & social justice
- Rights of vulnerable populations – e.g., health disparities, right to education, Native American health issues, children's health issues, & border health
- Sexual and reproductive health – e.g., HIV/AIDS disparities, trends in sexual health education, & right to contraceptive choice
- Student Training and Education - any innovative practices, training, activities, or curriculum at universities
- Violence & health – e.g., war, domestic violence / intimate partner violence, race / religion intolerances, & bullying in schools

Abstracts of 250 words or less may be submitted for oral or poster sessions. The deadline for submission to APHA-SA is **February 13th, Midnight PST** (it is recommended authors not wait until the last minute to submit abstracts due to potential technical issues). Late abstracts cannot be accepted.

For more details or to submit an abstract, please visit:

<http://apha.confex.com/apha/137am/sa.htm>



American Public Health Association



APHA 137TH ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO
NOVEMBER 7-11, 2009
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Abstract Writing Guidelines for Conference Submission

By: Kristy A. Siegel, MPH, CHES, Student Assembly Chair

Attending a professional or scientific conference meeting is an important part of any student's education; however, presenting at one is an even more valuable experience. But difficulty arises in getting an abstract accepted for presentation. This should not hinder your decision in submitting an abstract.

To prepare an abstract you must first know and understand the purpose of an abstract, which is an accurate representation of the contents of a document in an abbreviated form. This "snapshot" is the only thing reviewers have to judge the worthiness of your project. Therefore, it is up to you to **make your project appear innovative, exciting, relevant, or whatever the criteria might be**. Having said that, the components of the abstract are title and authors, background, methods, results, and conclusions, and sometimes learning objectives.

The title is the first thing reviewers see on your abstract – immediately creating an impression. Therefore make sure the title is descriptive enough to let the reviewer know what to expect but not too wordy to turn the reviewer off. Follow conference guidelines on preparation of the title – sometimes action sentences are required, sometimes just the first word is capitalized, etc.

In the body of the abstract, **the background is the first section that reviewers make decisions about your work**. The background of the abstract answers the question, "why did this project occur?". In two to three sentences maximum, set the introduction and explain the importance of the project. To increase your abstract's chances of acceptance, this is the opportunity to make any linkages to conference theme. For most conferences, you should write this section with the belief that readers will be familiar with the topic. So just introduce the project, not the topic.

The next section of the abstract is the methods. **As briefly as possible, explain how your study was conducted**. Be sure to include how the sample was gathered (e.g., convenience, random) and some demographic characteristics of the sample. Explain how you gathered your data (e.g., conducted a focus group, collected hair samples). Make sure this section is thorough, yet concise.

The results section is the number one section that causes many abstracts to be rejected. As succinctly as possible, explain what your findings were. Make sure to use the statistical analyses employed and whether the results were statistically significant or not. Only state the most important findings that would be relevant to the conference, its theme, and the attendees. If your abstract is based on practical applications, your results should include evaluation results (e.g., process, impact / outcome, number of people reached).

After completing the background, methods, and results, the last section in the body of the abstract is the conclusion. If you had not already made any linkages to the conference theme, you can do so now. In the conclusion section, the most important thing you can say is how your findings contribute to current knowledge; in other words, **explain the implications of the findings**. For the readers, state what the take home messages are from this presentation.

Many conferences require learning objectives to accompany the abstract. Be sure to follow the guidelines of the conference for constructing learning objectives. This is not the time to write things that did not fit into the abstract, only write what is required for learning objectives. This is the last part of the abstract that can reduce your acceptance because programmers will select abstracts that complete the requirements of submission and complement their sessions. **If the learning objectives are not written correctly, the programmer would have to rewrite them** – creating more work for an already busy programmer, and might reduce your selection for presentation. Ensure your learning objectives are measurable.

Continued on p. 13

Public Health Students Gain Experience, Promote Health

By Adam Leonard and Kristen Godfrey, University of Minnesota School of Public Health

At the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, students have the opportunity to put public health skills to practice as volunteers at the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic (PNC). The Phillips Neighborhood Clinic is a free student-run clinic in a medically underserved area in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Students from the five schools at the Academic Health Center (Public Health, Medicine, Physical Therapy, Nursing, and Pharmacy), as well as the School of Social Work, use an interdisciplinary approach to provide comprehensive primary care services. Under licensed preceptor supervision, PNC student volunteers provide free, high quality services to community members who would not otherwise have access to care.

Public health students from various disciplines organize and implement services to improve the health of the community. Public Health Nutrition students offer education and counseling to patients, including eating healthy on a budget, nutritional management for diabetes, and personalized dietary plans. Social Work students provide basic needs assistance, support and advocacy, and mental health counseling. Public health students serving as Community Health Workers assist patients in applying for Minnesota Health Care Programs and offer referrals to other neighborhood services. In addition to these roles, public health students help in clinic coordination, serve as interpreters, assist with patient intake, perform community outreach, and fill administrative board positions.

Overall, the PNC provides public health students with a venue to apply classroom concepts to real life situations. However, it provides more than just experience; public health students get the opportunity to serve and help improve the health of people in their community. For more information on the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic, please visit <https://www.student.med.umn/pnc/>.

World AIDS Day at the University of California, Irvine

By Bradley D. Jong , University of California, Irvine

On November 24, 2008, the University of California, Irvine's Health Education Center and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center co-hosted a one day event in honor of World AIDS Day. Instead of solely focusing on the biomedical components of HIV/AIDS (as past studies and events have done), this event addressed HIV/AIDS in its psychological and social aspects as well. Therefore, the occasion featured a panel consisting of four individuals representing different communities affected by HIV/AIDS, including representatives from the Asian and Pacific Islander community, Hispanic/Latino community, African American community, and the LGBT community. Each panelist addressed how HIV/AIDS has affected their particular subgroup, and stressed the importance of culturally tailoring HIV/AIDS prevention methods and health promotion efforts in order to be successful in decreasing the spread of disease. The event garnered support from numerous public health student organizations, as well as faculty members who encouraged their students to attend; as a result, a capacity crowd enjoyed the festivities. Participants left the event being equipped with an increased knowledge regarding methods to get involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Public Health Activities at New York Chiropractic College

By Alexander J. Rinehart, New York Chiropractic College

In 1995, chiropractic found its place in the APHA with the formation of the Chiropractic Healthcare Section. Chiropractors are positioned to meet primary, secondary, and tertiary roles in public health. According to *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (2005), medical expenses for back and neck pain increased from \$52.1 billion in 1997 to \$85.9 billion in 2005. Over the same period, medical costs increased from \$4,695 to \$6,096 per person per year. Chiropractors offer cost-effective solutions for back and neck pain and are uniquely positioned to support other forms of community action beyond musculoskeletal pain.

To promote sustainability, New York Chiropractic College's (NYCC) Public Health Club developed a leadership structure involving multiple committees. Club activities included promoting the use of community supported agriculture programs, spreading awareness of a new recycling program, pushing for double-sided laser printers on campus, and holding public speaking workshops. The club is in the process of setting up a speaking program with a local high school that will hopefully be sustained for future years. The club also initiated a drive to collect toiletry items for disadvantaged families and volunteered for a local Christmas project, helping to distribute gift boxes to qualifying families.

The club is still in its infancy and it has taken students time to understand chiropractic's full role within public health. Students must be patient with their institution's rules on starting an organization, while making sure to set up an appropriate leadership structure. It is the hope of NYCC's Public Health Club to serve as a template for other chiropractic colleges to follow.

Public Health in Medical School: Putting Education into Practice

By Joseph Pare, MSIII, University of Vermont College of Medicine

While all would agree that community based efforts to improve public health are important, a practical approach to preventative medicine is often not developed for physicians in training. In 2004 at the University of Vermont, in an effort to improve upon how education is delivered, the Public Health Projects course was developed. This two credit course, under the direction of Dr. Jan Carney, partners small groups of medical students with faculty mentors and community programs aimed at making a difference in the community. With the help of the United Way of Chittenden County Volunteer Center, programs are identified and selected to participate in student-led public health projects.

With non-profit organizations such as the American Cancer Society, medical students have worked to identify patient barriers negatively affecting colonoscopy screenings to determine if Vermont has the capacity to screen all recommended patients for colonoscopies. Other community projects have focused on discovering barriers to obtaining health insurance or improving nutritional status in a homeless population. Students get to step out of the classroom to develop the skills to design a research project, perform statistical analysis of data, and present original research. While medical programs continue to update curricula to ensure accreditation, this is an active way to address preventative medicine and ensure participation in service-learning opportunities. As a student of this curriculum, this is a unique opportunity and worthwhile approach to public health that benefits students and communities in a useful and interactive way. For more information on this course (including a class description), visit the Vermont College of Medicine's website, www.med.uvm.edu.

Save the Date! Change is Coming to Washington, DC— And So Should You!

NBCCF Annual Advocacy Training Conference & Lobby Day

By Shukri Sheikh-Salah, A.T Still University, School of Health Management

Unlike any event of its kind, the National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund (NBCCF) will hold its 2009 Annual Advocacy Training Conference and Lobby Day May 2 - 5, 2009, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Each year, hundreds of breast cancer advocates come together to network with one another, hone their advocacy skills, and hear the latest news in breast cancer science, research, and policy.

Erica Pfeiler, college student and past attendee of the NBCCF's conference, stated, "Hundreds of women from all over the world gather in Washington, D.C. for this conference to train and prepare for the big day of lobbying at Capitol Hill. I got the chance to hear some wonderful speakers, and I thought it was great that there were first time classes perfect for first time attendees like me."

The National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund is a grassroots organization dedicated to ending breast cancer through the power of action and advocacy. The Coalition's main goals are to increase federal funding for breast cancer research and collaborate with the scientific community to implement new models of research, improve access to high quality health care and breast cancer clinical trials for all women, and expand the influence of breast cancer advocates in all aspects of the breast cancer decision-making process.

Register Today! For more information on registration deadlines and fees, visit www.StopBreastCancer.org or call 1866-640-0969.

Call for Abstracts!

"Teaching and Learning in the Community"

ASPH/Pfizer Academy of Distinguished Teachers to Publish Theme Issue in JPHMP

The *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, in collaboration with the ASPH/Pfizer Public Health Academy of Distinguished Teachers, will publish a theme issue in May 2010 on "Teaching and Learning in the Community." A call for abstracts will be released and posted online at <http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=1008> by Friday January 30. **Abstracts will be due Monday, March 16.** An electronic submission form and other details about the issue will be posted on the ASPH site as well by January 30. For more information in the interim, contact Ms. Liz Weist at eweist@asph.org or (202) 296-1099.

Announcements

January is Radon Action Month in New Hampshire

By Owen David, University of New Hampshire-Manchester

January is designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as National Radon Action Month. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Radon Program will be presenting a number of public health outreach events in January to increase the awareness of radon. In addition to having a radon display area in the lobby of the NHDES building (which will provide health education materials on radon), presentations on the subject to local schools and real estate organizations are also planned.

New Hampshire is known as the “Granite State,” as it has a high abundance of radon gas—a radioactive decay product of uranium and radium. Radon gas is a known human carcinogen¹, and the USEPA estimates that 21,000 radon induced lung cancers occur in the United States annually². The USEPA states that residential homes with a radon level greater than 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter of air) should be mitigated², and homes with levels between 2.0 pCi/L and 4.0 pCi/L, should be considered for radon mitigation². Radon can build to very high levels in the environment, and is difficult to detect without a test, as it has no taste, odor, or color. Thus, all New Hampshire residents should perform a radon test to find out the radon level in their living space, and perform radon mitigation based on the USEPA guidelines. Radon test kits can be purchased from most major hardware stores and via the internet; discounts are occasionally available through the EPA, National Safety Council, and the American Lung Association. For more information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/radon/>.

References

1. National Research Council (U.S.). Committee on Health Risks of Exposure to Radon., *Health effects of exposure to radon. BEIR VI*. 1999, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. xiv, 500 p.
2. United States. Environmental Protection Agency. Indoor Environmental Division., *A citizen's guide to radon the guide to protecting yourself and your family from radon*. 2007, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Indoor Environments Division: Washington, D.C. p. 15 p.

Abstract Writing Guidelines (continued from p. 9)

Now that you have completed the abstract, here are some other tips to consider before submitting your abstract.

- When preparing your abstract, **review abstracts from past conference events**. This will allow you to see what type of abstracts were accepted and the format that was used. You can also see if your abstract is similar to previous presentations, permitting you to make your abstract unique.
- **Structure, structure, structure**. Follow some structure when developing your abstract – use headings within the abstract, if space allows. But make sure all parts of the abstract are present.
- **USE SPELL-CHECK!!!!** In this day with word-processing, it is unacceptable to have misspellings and typos. There is also no substitute for human eyes. Make sure to request someone not involved in the project to proofread the abstract. After checking for spelling and grammar, ask the reviewer to explain to you the study and its findings. If they cannot explain it, rewrite it.
- **Follow submission guidelines** every step of the way. If there is a 250 word limit, only use 250 words. Make every word count – both when reaching the limit and when under the limit. If your abstract is at the word limit, reread the abstract to ensure every word is necessary and all sections of the study are discussed. Likewise if your abstract is considerably under the limit, reread to make sure all parts of the study are discussed in sufficient detail.

If you would like to get an insider’s look at the review process, **join the programming committee** of the conference. Most organizations have two calls during the year – one for committee members and one for abstract reviewers. You do not have to be experienced in programming or abstract reviewing to join, most committees welcome new members and will give adequate instruction to complete the reviews. In the end, you will gain experience and knowledge of which abstracts are champions and which are not – improving your chances of getting your abstract accepted in the future.



American Public Health Association

Student Assembly

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The American Public Health Association's Student Assembly is the nation's largest student-led organization dedicated to furthering the development of students, the next generation of professionals in public health and health-related disciplines. APHA-SA represents and serves students of public health and other health-related disciplines by connecting individuals who are interested in working together on public health and student-related issues.

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chair@aphastudents.org

Chair-Elect: Mariza Hardin
chair-elect@aphastudents.org

Past Chair: Tamar Klaiman
past-chair@aphastudents.org

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secretary@aphastudents.org

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secretary-elect@aphastudents.org

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treasurer@aphastudents.org

Treasurer-Elect: Julie Hayek
treasurer-elect@aphastudents.org

Abstracts Committee: Vacant
abstracts@aphastudents.org

Action Committee:
Cherise Wong
action@aphastudents.org

Advancement Committee:
Elizabeth Reitano & Kate Callahan
advancement@aphastudents.org

Campus Liaison Committee:
Allen Suh & Yoran Grant
campusliaison@aphastudents.org

**American Public Health
Association's Student
Assembly
800 I St. NW
Washington, DC 20001-3710**

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[www.apha.org/membergroups/
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Development Committee: Jamie Lok
and Yoonhee Ha
development@aphastudents.org

Diversity Committee: Julie Suzuki-
Crumly & Louis Graham
diversity@aphastudents.org

Membership Committee:
Ana Maria Guzman
membership@aphastudents.org

Mentoring Committee: Joy Gamble-
George and Anthony Gurrero-Soto
mentoring@aphastudents.org

Newsletter Committee: Olivia
Wackowski and Kimberly Rogers
newsletter@aphastudents.org

Nominations Committee:
Cameron Culver
nominations@aphastudents.org

Opportunities Committee: Vacant
opportunities@aphastudents.org

Programming Committee:
Christopher Fisher
programming@aphastudents.org

Student Meeting Director: Vacant
studentmeeting@aphastudents.org

Website Committee: Allan Chiunda,
Suzanna Lee, Tamar Klaiman
website@aphastudents.org