

**APHA Student  
Assembly**

# **News & Views**

**Healthy Communities  
PROMOTE  
Healthy Minds & Bodies**



**APHA 139TH ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPOSITION  
OCT 29 - NOV 2, 2011 WASHINGTON, DC**

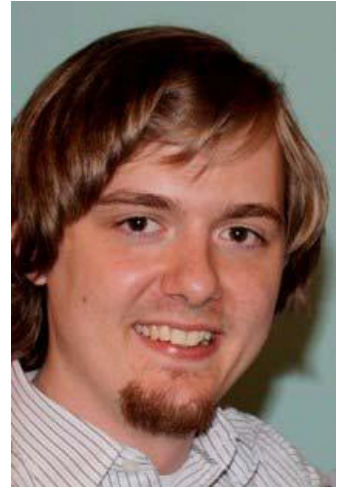
**Winter 2011**

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## President's Pen

Dear APHA-SA Members,



Regards,  
Cameron Culver  
APHA Student Assembly, Chair  
UT-Health Science Center San Antonio & UT-School of Public Health

## Use Your Yoga

Ariel Goldstein, CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter College

It's not your typical yoga class.

There are no shaping yoga clothes, no special props, no aromatherapy to set the mood. What happens at the Recovering Annex on Saturday mornings at 10AM is a result of whatever my partner Danielle and I happen to be moved by that week combined with the enthusiasm of the dozen plus attendees.

Participants of the Recovering Annex – and, by extension, of our weekly yoga class – are individuals who have conquered addiction and are now seeking the support of a community to maintain their hard-fought sobriety. The level of dedication that the members of this group bring to their yoga practice is a reflection of the eagerness with which they approach the hard work required for a successful recovery.



The humor that emerges from their mats during our practice is absolutely contagious. A wonderful joy spreads among us as we cat/cow and downward facing dog our way through pain, stress, and fear. Physical flexibility is important for maintaining a comfortable body, but emotional flexibility can help anyone from getting too bent out of shape from the slings and arrows that define the human condition. Studies have documented how a regular yoga practice can reduce relapse rates, but that should be no surprise to anyone who has found a little peace of mind and clarity on the yoga mat.

Recently appropriated by affluent society for its positive effects, yoga's roots were a humble attempt at self-healing practiced by ascetics. A person need not own the latest in yoga fashion to reap the tremendous benefits of yoga practice. Our dream was to bring yoga to those who might not feel comfortable entering the haughty world of modern yoga on their own accord, and we found new inspiration for our own practices along the way.

## Addressing the Unique Needs of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Patients

Megan Quinn, East Tennessee State University

The adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer population has recently received more attention and recognition from the National Cancer Institute and the Lance Armstrong Foundation as a specific population deserving specialized care.<sup>1</sup> However, such services are not readily available or accessible to AYAs.



In 2002, approximately 70,000 AYAs aged 15-39 were diagnosed with cancer.<sup>1</sup> Many AYAs diagnosed with cancer will be cured, but often only after intensive, toxic, and life-changing treatment.<sup>2</sup> Although a diagnosis of cancer is difficult at any life stage, the impact of cancer on AYAs seems to be greater than among other age groups. This age group consists of individuals with particular emotional, social, and psychological issues, as well as diverse levels of maturity and differing needs.<sup>3</sup> A cancer diagnosis during this life stage raises specific concerns because of the impact on normal development, disruption of school or career, loss of self-identity, and dependence on family and caregivers.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the multitude of challenges and changes that occur during adolescence and young adulthood make this population

susceptible to particular pressures and stressors, which are exacerbated by a cancer diagnosis.

Provisions should be made to ensure that AYA cancer patients have access to age-appropriate, specialized care from a multidisciplinary team that understands not only their disease but also their developmental stage. This type of care should be readily available at regional facilities across the nation to assist in meeting the unmet needs of AYA patients, ensure their satisfaction with cancer care, and raise their quality of life. Finally, it is necessary that provisions to AYA cancer treatment receive more attention in the areas of practice, research, and policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Adolescent and young adult cancer progress review group. Closing the gap: research and care imperatives for adolescents and young adults with cancer. Accessed 30 January 2011. [http://planning.cancer.gov/library/AYAO\\_PRG\\_Report\\_2006\\_FINAL.pdf](http://planning.cancer.gov/library/AYAO_PRG_Report_2006_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Clerici CA, Massimino M, Casanova M, Cefalo G, Tereziani M, Vasquez R, Meazza C, Ferrari A. Psychological referral and consultation for adolescents and young adults with cancer treated at a pediatric oncology unit. *Pediatric Blood and Cancer* 2008;51:105-109.

<sup>3</sup> Zebrack B, Bleyer A, Albritton K, Medearis S, Tang J. Assessing the health care needs of adolescent and young adult cancer patients and survivors. *Cancer* 2006;107:2915-2923.

## Why International Volunteering is Important

Lisa Sheldon, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Life in the slum of Banjara Basti is not easy – some might even say that it is not a life. No running water, no sanitation, tent homes, rats, and abject poverty mean that people living in this neighborhood struggle against nearly insurmountable challenges. And yet...there is hope and resilience.

I was professionally ready to provide health education and conduct health surveillance, but nothing could have prepared me emotionally for this rich and life-changing volunteer experience. It challenged my assumptions about resiliency in children and their ability to cope with perhaps the most difficult living circumstances on the planet.

The children whom I met were happy, welcoming, and utterly charming. Deprivation and poverty had not dampened the enthusiasm of these amazing children. Joy was found in simple and unexpected ways – clapping games, being held, and singing. They craved attention and love – asked not for toys or money but for hugs and smiles. They laughed with wild abandon and spread genuine cheer and exuberance in ways that will remain with me for many years to come.



We could learn much from these children; they have mastered the art of being happy. This is not to say that they are unaware of their poverty or of what they lacked, but they live like it doesn't matter. I will forever remember the harsh conditions in which these children and their families struggle but choose to focus on their spirit.

In public health, we sometimes forget to appreciate the ability of humans to cope and find value and meaning in their lives when they face nearly insurmountable difficulties. My volunteer experience has forever reminded me that life is complex, wonderful and filled with joy and compassion in unlikely places. People, no matter their situations, can and do find routes to happiness and fulfillment.

## **Students Launched the First Online Public Health Newsletter in Nepal**

Amrit Banstola, Pokhara University

Public health students from Pokhara University made a new resolution this year: to launch the first online public health newsletter in Nepal, Public Health Perspective (PHP).

PHP is a monthly newsletter published online through the Banstola Medical Hall website. The newsletter provides information about public health events, health policy, global health issues, and epidemiologic investigations, among others.



All people should have knowledge of public health issues. However, Nepal lacks an efficient health information system. Recognizing this gap, public health students decided to create PHP in order to raise awareness about health concerns throughout the nation.

PHP provides a forum for individuals to not only share information but also experiences, ideas, solutions, and success stories that can help with policy change, program planning, and future research.

In addition, the newsletter aims to increase the professional development of public health students, as well as provide a platform for seasoned public health professionals to share their expertise.

PHP is entirely free, and the first two issues are currently available for download. We look forward to you reading and contributing to the newsletter!

## Perchlorate: What it is and why it matters

Tammer Elmarsafi, New York College of Podiatric Medicine

Our most *abundant* resource is water. Our most *valuable* resource is water. And some would suggest that our most *contaminated* resource is water.

It is no wonder that aggressive sanitation, high public scrutiny, and strict Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations have historically kept us relatively safe from water contaminants ranging from industrial back-wash, commercial solvents, insecticides, and even bacterial overload. But a new and rather peculiar chemical has found its way into the lime light: perchlorate.

Though perchlorate is one of the many toxic substances monitored by most U.S. states, the increasing health concerns related to this chemical and the advent of a greater understanding of its health implications have brought this relatively unknown contaminant into the public eye.

Recent information regarding the relationship between perchlorate on the one hand and fetal development and thyroid dysfunction on the other raises notable concern about the perchlorate regulations that currently exist. And many questions still remain: how much perchlorate is present in our ground and surface water supplies? How many municipalities are affected? What levels of perchlorate are considered to be unsafe?

Obtaining the answers to these pivotal questions will undoubtedly prove to be challenging. As new, more precise tools for measuring perchlorate levels emerge and more scientists address related health concerns at a larger scale, we will need to make educated decisions about our water usage and remain patient until researchers obtain more conclusive evidence about the health effects of perchlorate.

So what can you do? Visit your state and local government websites. Know where your drinking water, including bottled water, comes from. Do your part to ensure that clean water remains in our future. And most of all don't stop drinking water. After all, we can't live without it.

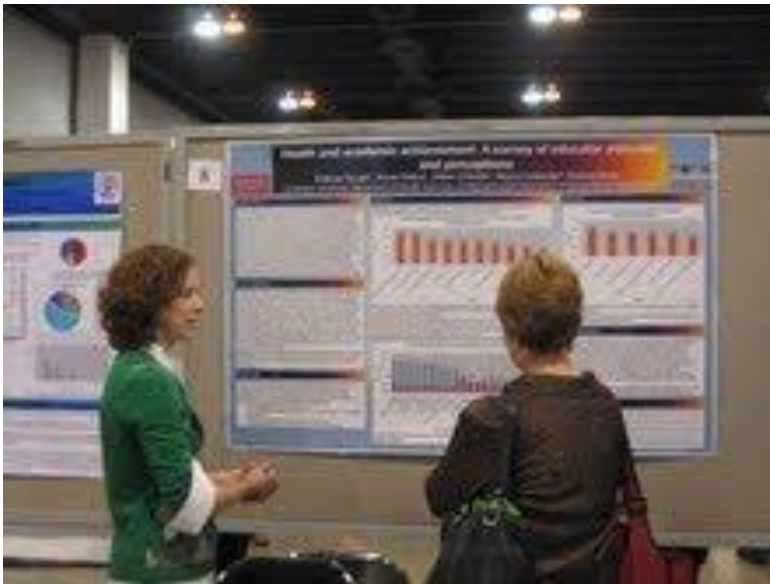


## Committee on Affiliates Student Poster Award Winners

Twenty students from across the country presented posters as part of the APHA Committee on Affiliates (CoA) Student Poster Sessions at the 138<sup>th</sup> APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Denver, CO, held on November 8, 2010. The posters were judged by CoA members, public health professionals and doctoral students.

Congratulations to the winners:

### Undergraduate Student Poster Session



Kathryn Rough,  
Boston University

1st Place: Kathryn Rough, Boston University,  
"Health and academic achievement: A survey of educator attitudes and perceptions"

Honorable Mention: Kalyani Eko, The University of Iowa, "Isolation and ribotyping of *Clostridium difficile* from patient stool samples"

### Graduate Student Poster Session

1st Place: Narissa Puran, New York University, "A health assessment of school-age children in Kutch, Gujarat (India) through the lens of Soil-Transmitted Helminth (STH) infections"

Honorable Mention: Syed Noor, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, "Homelessness and HIV risk factors associated with injection drug use in Houston, Texas, 2009"



Kalyani Eko,  
The University of Iowa

The first place winners each received a cash award prize, and all winners received a certificate of recognition. Thank you – and congratulations – to all who participated!



Narissa Puran,  
New York University

For more information on APHA's state and regional public health associations, please visit

[www.apha.org/membergroups/states/](http://www.apha.org/membergroups/states/).



Syed Noor,  
UTHSC, Houston

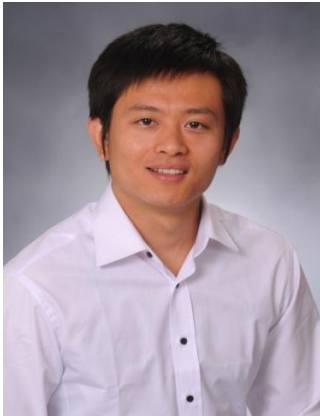
## **HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Appalachia: Fighting Obesity for Our Children**

Liang Wang, East Tennessee State University

Mountain State Health Alliance (MSHA) and the College of Public Health at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) have created a new initiative: Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Appalachia. The goal of this multi-faceted project is to help fight the obesity epidemic in the northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia region. The project serves individuals where they heal, where they learn, where they work, and where they worship.

MSHA is a locally owned and managed healthcare system in Johnson City, Tennessee. With 14 fully accredited hospitals serving 29 counties in Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina, it is the largest regional healthcare system. Through interviews, regional health data, and growing public concern, MSHA identified obesity as its top priority and the main focus of its Social Responsibility Plan.

HEAL Appalachia achieves its key objective through: (1) an annual regional symposium, (2) community grants, and (3) legislative activities. The collaborative project awards grants of \$2,000 to support and empower local community-based organizations in carrying out activities geared toward preventing childhood obesity.



In its first year, HEAL Appalachia received over 100 applications for the 25 available community grants. The first symposium drew over 250 participants from around the region.

My internship with HEAL Appalachia has allowed me to hone my research and leadership skills. My work centered on four major areas related to: (1) best practices research, (2) grant administration, (3) community needs assessments, and (4) measuring the impact of the activities that we undertake. I not only gained practical experience working in a health care setting, but also acquired additional knowledge of how a large and complex multi-state health care system operates. I also

had the opportunity to work with administrators at different levels of the organization and undertake a wide range of responsibilities under their mentorship.

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## **APHA's Get Ready Scholarship: Open for submissions**

To raise awareness about emergency preparedness, APHA is offering its third annual Get Ready Scholarship. The scholarship is a component of APHA's Get Ready campaign, which works to help Americans prepare themselves, their families and their communities for all disasters and hazards, including pandemic flu, infectious disease, natural disasters and other emergencies.

Six scholarships of \$500 each will be awarded:

- Two scholarships for high school seniors
- Two scholarships for college undergraduates
- Two scholarships for graduate students

Winning students will also receive a free one-year membership in APHA.



### **SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES**

The Get Ready Scholarship, offered in conjunction with APHA's Get Ready campaign, is designed to encourage high school and college students to focus on the importance of emergency preparedness. For more information on the campaign or preparedness, visit the [Get Ready website](#).

#### **I. ELIGIBILITY**

The 2011 Get Ready Scholarship is open to:

- a) U.S. high school seniors graduating in 2011 who plan to further their education

at a college, university or certified trade school;

b) Currently enrolled U.S. college or university students who will be continuing their studies at the undergraduate or graduate level in 2011;

c) Currently enrolled U.S. college or university graduate students who will be continuing their studies at the graduate level in 2011.

Previous Get Ready Scholarship winners are not eligible.

## **II. CRITERIA: ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Scholarship applicants should write an essay using one of the following questions, based on their current year of study:

### **1) High school seniors**

*September is National Preparedness Month. On the third Tuesday of September, APHA's Get Ready campaign sponsors [Get Ready Day](#), devoted to emergency and disaster preparedness. Explain how you would plan a Get Ready Day event to prepare your school and community. (Length: 350-500 words).*

### **2) Undergraduate students**

*Evaluate the emergency preparedness plan at your college or university. Explain its strengths and weaknesses and how it could be better promoted across campus. If your school lacks an emergency preparedness plan, describe one that would be useful for your college or university. (Length: 500-750 words).*

### **3) Graduate students**

*After the earthquake in Haiti, social media served as a tremendous tool in aiding disaster relief efforts and communication. Using social media in Haiti as a model, evaluate the potential benefits and shortcomings of social media as a tool for emergency and disaster preparedness. Make an argument for what role, if any, social media should have in preparedness. (Length: 500-750 words)*

## **III. ESSAY GUIDELINES**

Essays must follow the word length of the corresponding question. Do not submit photos with your entry. Essays must be original and solely the work of the entrant. Only one essay per individual is accepted. All entries become the property of APHA and will not be returned. For full guidelines, visit our [rules and regulations page](#).

## **IV. REQUIREMENTS**

All applicants must submit an essay and personal contact information. Only electronic submissions will be accepted and must be provided via the official online entry page/e-mail address provided. By submitting an essay, you agree to all official [rules and regulations](#).

#### **V. SELECTION PROCESS**

The Get Ready campaign judging panel will read essays and select scholarship winners. Winners will be selected by April 20, 2011 and will be notified via e-mail. The winners' names and essay excerpts may be published on the Get Ready website or via other APHA communication outlets.

#### **VI. SUBMISSION LIMITS**

Entries will be limited to the first 300 submissions in each education level (300 high school submissions, 300 undergraduate submissions and 300 graduate submissions). Once the limit has been reached in a respective level, that level will be closed for submissions.

#### **VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Deadline for submissions is March 28, 2011, or until entry limits are reached.
- APHA will begin receiving submissions at 10 a.m. EST on Feb. 7, 2011. Any essays received before this time will not be reviewed.
  
- Submissions may only be submitted online using the links below.
  
- Winners will receive one \$500 scholarship apiece. The Get Ready scholarship may only be used to pay for direct school costs.

For questions about the scholarship, e-mail [Pooja Bhandari](mailto:Pooja.Bhandari) or call 202-777-2461. (Note: Do not send your entry to this e-mail address. Scholarship entries sent to this e-mail address may be disqualified.)

#### **SUBMIT YOUR ESSAY (Opens Feb. 7)**

##### Instructions:

- Once the essay submission period has opened on Feb. 7, select one of the links at [www.getreadyforflu.org/new\\_pg\\_scholarship.htm](http://www.getreadyforflu.org/new_pg_scholarship.htm) to e-mail your essay. Make sure to select the button that corresponds with your entry level (high school, undergraduate or graduate student).
- In the body of your e-mail, include your name, school/college/university, expected date of graduation, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.
- Attach your essay to the e-mail as a Word document and send.
- Submissions that lack the specified contact information or do not meet word length specifications may be disqualified.

## Get Ready for School with \$500 from APHA

Are you ready for school? Are you ready for emergencies?

APHA wants you to be ready for both.

To raise awareness about emergency preparedness, APHA is offering its third annual Get Ready Scholarship. These scholarships are part of our Get Ready campaign that works to help Americans prepare themselves, their families, and their communities for disasters and hazards including pandemic flu, infectious diseases, natural disasters, and other emergencies. A \$500 scholarship will be awarded to two high school students, two college undergraduate students, and two graduate students. Winning students will also receive a one-year membership to APHA.

To learn more please visit [http://www.getreadyforflu.org/new\\_pg\\_scholarship.htm](http://www.getreadyforflu.org/new_pg_scholarship.htm) or contact Pooja Bhandari at [pooja.bhandari@apha.org](mailto:pooja.bhandari@apha.org).

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