



Students Provide Health Care in Haiti

By John J. Byrne
University of Texas

Forty-eight hours were all that stood between my medical team being in Haiti and the earthquake that destroyed most of the country's capital. I was part of a group of medical students, physicians and translators who flew to Haiti to provide health care aid to communities in the Central Plateau. We partnered with Project Medishare, a non-governmental organization that brings medical school groups to the Central Plateau each year to provide sustainable health care to communities there.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. What most people know about Haiti is that poverty is everywhere. The diseases we saw in Haiti would be unimaginable anywhere else. The infrastructure and overall health of the people of Haiti were in poor condition when we were there; I cannot imagine how much worse it is now. Yet, what most people don't know is that Haitians are a strong group. They have lived without the luxuries that most people have in the Western world. They continually fight for their lives, each day, with renewed fervor.

Several members of this trip also were there the year before and spoke with the new members about the improvements that had taken place in Haiti. A new airport terminal had been added, new roads had been constructed and some health care facilities had been updated. Yet, due to the earthquake, the two steps forward Haiti had taken in the past year now amounted to three steps back.

Though our team was very lucky to make it back home before the earthquake, a large part of me still wishes we had been there. As I write this article, medical professionals continue to treat people in Port Au Prince, and the country has begun the restoration process. My only hope is that the aid does not stop.

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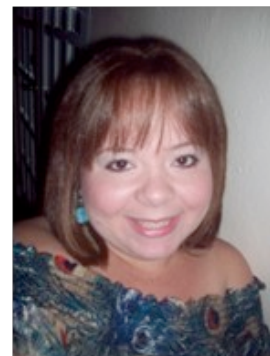
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Public Health Students in Action: Efforts For Haiti

By Yiselly M. Vázquez-Guzmán
University of Puerto Rico

Public health is about action. January 12th was a disastrous day for the people of Haiti. This disaster was a time to react. On January 14th, University of Puerto Rico Public Health students started a campaign to collect food, water and money for Haiti. The effort was recognized by several programs and even the Medical Sciences Campus Chancellor. We collected items like food, medications, clothes and money in that one week. More than 25 boxes full of donated items and \$1,400 were raised and donated to Iniciativa Comunitaria, Inc. (ICI), a non-profit organization working in Haiti. Some of our students are also participating in ICI's direct services and helping in Haiti.

Students' efforts demonstrated the importance of Public Health professionals' disaster preparedness and disaster response. It also showed us the importance of interdisciplinary work in disaster situations.



President's Pen

Public Health Students,

I hope this winter edition of the APHA Student Assembly (APHA-SA) newsletter finds you well and warm! With spring just around the corner, many of you are suffering from cabin fever and are counting down the days until the temperature rises! It was not long ago that APHA members descended upon Philadelphia for the 137th Annual APHA Meeting. The events hosted by the Student Assembly were a great success! Thank you to those who were able to attend. It was a pleasure to meet you and share information about the Student Assembly and APHA. While the 138th Annual Meeting is still a few months away, Student Assembly members are busy preparing for the events that will be held for students in Denver, CO. If you are interested in helping with the planning of our events in Denver, please email us! (programming@aphastudents.org).



In the meantime, APHA-SA is gearing up for the first ever Public Health Student Day. In conjunction with National Public Health Week (April 5-11), the Student Assembly will be celebrating Public Health Student Day on Friday, April 9th. You can celebrate being a student of public health by promoting "Public Health Student Day" at your school! APHA-SA will provide you with a tool kit of resources that will help you get your community involved in public health and get your school celebrating public health! Some event possibilities could include: hosting a poster session, inviting a guest speaker, hosting a social for public health students, or sponsoring a community service project. The possibilities are endless! Visit www.nphw.org for updates and resources!

In addition to celebrating being a public health student, one of the most important things you can do to take part in National Public Health Week is to become a "Health Champion." A "Health Champion" is a person who advocates, organizes, encourages and inspires health improvement and an overall healthy lifestyle for themselves and their communities. How many "Health Champions" do you have on your campus? We want to know! Email us information about your event for National Public Health Week, how you plan to celebrate Public Health Student Day, and who your "Health Champions" are! We will post your ideas and information on our website! (chair@aphastudents.org)

While National Public Health Week in April will get here quickly, not far behind that will be the end of another semester. For many of you, the end of this semester will be the end of your degree program. There is no doubt that graduation will bring celebration and a world full of possibilities! As a public health graduate, you will face a workforce that is overworked and in some cases, underpaid. During this transition time, it becomes vital for you take advantage of your networks and utilize the benefits that are available to you as APHA members. Your investment in continuing your membership with APHA will give you access to employment information and numerous venues for professional growth. APHA offers a reduced membership rate to graduating students. For just \$110, you can purchase a one-year transitional membership. This membership will give you access to all the same benefits as a regular member and is available to you for 12-months after you complete your degree.

So as you polish-up your resume, iron your best suit, and sharpen those interviewing skills, make sure to add renewing your APHA membership to your list of things to do after graduation!

For now, enjoy the winter edition of APHA-SA *News and Views!*

I hope everyone has a healthy and productive semester!

Best,
Mariza Hardin
APHA Student Assembly, Chair
George Washington University





Steps for Disaster Preparedness

By Reigh Simuzoshya
Walden University

Taking into account that Haiti is a developing nation and that its infrastructure is still in its infancy, it is tempting to conclude that had the earthquake that occurred in Haiti happened in the United States, things would have been positively different. Hopefully so, but each disaster is different in magnitude and level of devastation. For example, the devastation caused by an earthquake differs drastically from that caused by a hurricane. The U.S. has an enviable infrastructure with a sophisticated road network and well-equipped airports that attest to the country's great engineering prowess. But, depending on the magnitude of the disaster, these can be crippled and incapacitated in an instant, hampering distribution of relief supplies. According to Rochman (2010), the last major

earthquake to hit Haiti occurred exactly 200 years ago, and, ironically, it has also been 200 years since the last major earthquake struck along the fault that runs all the way across central United States. Rochman cautions that "time may seem to be on our side when disasters are separated by decades or centuries, but that's only the case if we take advantage of that quiet time to fortify ourselves for the next time Mother Nature roars."

The following strategies, though not exhaustive, are meant to help nations and individuals prepare for natural disasters:

- Governments should enforce strong building codes so that structures can withstand natural disasters
- Individuals should be armed with basic first-aid skills
- Keep on hand a disaster supply kit, due to the potential inability to obtain relief within hours of the disaster
- Make special preparations and provisions for children and the elderly living at home

Lessons from Hurricane Katrina Apply to all Disasters

By Sreenivas Veeranki
East Tennessee State University

Acting United States Deputy Surgeon General Rear Admiral Dr. David Rutstein was invited to give a lecture on "Hurricanes, Hot Zones and H1N1: Are We Prepared For Them All?" at East Tennessee State University, College of Public Health.

Dr. Rutstein illustrated how Hurricane Katrina could be used as a proxy for understanding many disasters. He outlined medical, social, economic, political, communication and transportation complexities during the response to the hurricane. He demonstrated how the lessons learned from Katrina were useful in developing a National Emergency Response Framework which highlights the need for a culture of emergency preparedness. Specific features of the Framework include the need for a single plan of operations, operable and interoperable communications among the public, inter-agency collaboration at all levels, potential military incorporation in disaster responses and interoperable electronic health records.

He gave examples of how the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina could be applied to various other manmade and natural health emergencies. In applying the lessons learned from the hurricane to the current H1N1 flu outbreak, Dr. Rutstein also emphasized the role of surveillance, mitigation of disease threat, vaccination and communication. Dr. Rutstein concluded that to achieve greater success in responding to disasters, the public health community must assure that:

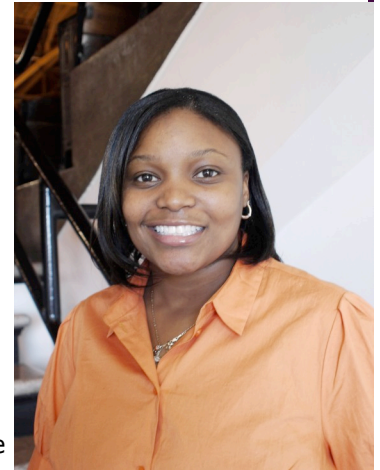
- Competency determines responsibility
- A strengthened public health and medical command drives successful efforts
 - Communication of public health information and health data is vital
 - Local, tribal and state health departments must assume a greater role
 - Effective integration of all types of responders and assets is essential
- Effective collaboration must be among people, not between organizations



Health Care Reform: The Introduction of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*

By Shondra Loggins and Brandon Loggins
University of Illinois

The nation's health has been in the news since President Obama took office. One key determinant of the nation's health is the infant mortality rate. Infant mortality rates are a sensitive indicator of the nation's health system (World Health Organization 2008). African American women have the highest infant mortality rate in the United States; nearly double that of Whites and triple that of Latinas (Center for Disease and Control 2007). There have been many hypotheses and potential solutions generated over decades. One of the promising health care laws currently being proposed in the Senate is the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*. A recent publication from the American Public Health Association described the *Act* as "the vehicle for health reform legislation in the Senate" (APHA 2009). The question is: How can this bill impact the disparities in infant mortality rates?



One aspect of the *Act* not in dispute concerns preventing insurance companies from denying coverage to individuals with preexisting conditions. Research has shown that adequate prenatal health care combats infant mortality (Eisenstein 1991). A pregnant woman may be classified as a medical risk if she has previously had a low birth weight baby or is hypertensive, diabetic, or malnourished. Furthermore, health insurance companies classify women as social risk if they are poor, young, unmarried, a minority, homeless, unemployed, or emotionally or physically abused. Therefore, the question becomes, assuming the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* is passed, will courts interpret the social and medical risk factors as "preexisting conditions"?

The general framework of the legislation suggests that courts should consider a mother's socioeconomic status and previous medical conditions as within the scope of preexisting conditions. Doing so may bring continued improvement in infant mortality rates.

Opportunities For Aspiring Maternal & Child Health Professionals

By Katie Baker
East Tennessee State University

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Section of APHA is a leader in developing and supporting student participation in Association and Section activities. The MCH Section has established two separate, but related programs: the Student Fellows Program and the Outstanding Student Papers Session.

Student Fellows are engaged in a number of Section activities including: assisting with section activities, serving as student Governing Council Assistant, writing for the Section newsletter, assisting with the Website, working on projects within topic-specific committees and assisting in the planning and coordination of sessions at the Annual Meeting. Each Student Fellow is paired with a mentor from the MCH Section. Finally, Student Fellows participate in an interactive, long-distance learning MCH Leadership Skills Development training.

The Outstanding Student Papers Session began in 2001. It provides an opportunity for graduate students to present their research and be recognized for outstanding scholarship. Cash prizes are awarded for first- and second-place papers.

These student programs are designed to foster the development of leaders in science, policy, program and practice related to the health of women, children and their families.

As one of the MCH Section Senior Student Fellows, I have had the opportunity to work with top professionals in the field. The Section has provided me with leadership responsibilities, contributing to both my personal and professional growth.

The Mentoring Committee Wants You!

By Tamarah Moss-Knight & Feon Cheng
Mentoring Committee Co-Chairs

The Mentoring Committee manages the National Mentoring Program (NMP). This program pairs public health students and professionals across a variety of disciplines according to the following criteria:

- General area of interest
- Specific area of interest
- Vision of an ideal match

The NMP then helps student and professional participants develop effective mentoring relationships. By doing this, public health students are equipped to meet the challenges found in today's public health landscape. Currently, the committee is working on student and professional outreach for the National Mentoring Program and the Speed Mentoring special event at the APHA Annual Meeting.

For more information on how to become a mentee or a mentor, visit our website at:
http://www.apha.org/membersgroups/students/committees/APHASA_MentoringCommittee.htm

Want to be more involved in APHA-Student Assembly? Get involved in the activities of the Mentoring Committee! Send us an email at: mentoring@aphastudents.org

Connections, Collaboration, Communication and Cooperation

By Russell McIntire
Chair, Community Health Planning and Policy Development Student Committee

In these uncertain economic times, finding a job after graduation has become more difficult than ever. My fellow students are finding the job market much more selective than in previous years. A few of my colleagues in PhD programs are frantically searching for jobs, picking through the "open positions" sections of public health websites and publications. During a job search, there is truth to the adage "It's not just what you know, but who you know." An important addition to this phrase is "It's not just who you know, it's *who knows you*." One of the goals of the Student Committee of the Community Health Planning and Policy Development (CHPPD) section is to help students network with established professionals. The committee also serves to create a sustainable role for students in CHPPD Section governance, provide leadership opportunities for students within CHPPD and help students get involved in CHPPD activities. We take a leadership role within the Section in soliciting, reviewing, and selecting student abstracts for the APHA Annual Meeting, planning and facilitating conference meetings and social events, helping write policy briefs and Section policy statements and organizing webinars and public health t-shirt design contests. It is through these activities that the CHPPD Student Committee will continue advocating for student interests within the CHPPD Section. Only through connections, collaboration, communication and cooperation can we further the initiatives of CHPPD and APHA and, ultimately, help build stronger, healthier communities.

If you would like to get involved with the CHPPD Student Committee, please contact Russell McIntire rkmcinti@indiana.edu.



War and Global Health Conference

Announcement

War and Global Health: Transforming our Professions, Changing our World
Presented by the UW Department of Global Health and Physicians for Social Responsibility

This conference will frame war prevention and reduction as a legitimate area of study and practice for those in the public health and medical fields. Organizers hope to increase public health student and practitioner awareness of the health consequences of war and share information and tools on how these groups can contribute to peace- building and mitigate the effects of conflict.

The Western Regional International Health Conference is an educational forum for health science students, faculty and community members interested in learning more about global health issues and opportunities. This year's conference will be held in the University of Washington. There are six tracks:

- Combatants and military populations
- Vulnerable populations
- Policy, human rights and social justice
- War, society and the environment
- Health professionals as peace workers
- The role of the media and information in war and global health

Space is limited. Early bird rates are available until March 31, 2010. On-site registration is not available. See www.wrihc.org for more information.

Check us out on the web!
<http://www.apha.org/membergroups/students/>

Updates from Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Section

By M. Justin Byron
Student Assembly Section Liaison

The ATOD section has had a busy winter. The section advocates for sound public health policy and encourages research on timely alcohol, tobacco and other drugs topics. Over this past year, ATOD members have been talking with the media to explain the scientific basis for keeping the drinking age at 21. Members also helped APHA write a letter to HHS Secretary Sebelius encouraging strong U.S. support for WHO's global alcohol framework. On the tobacco front, ATOD members are helping with the startup of FDA's new Center for Tobacco Products. The Center will regulate tobacco product design and marketing, and it should become a major force in reducing tobacco deaths and disease in the U.S.

In preparation for the 2010 APHA meeting in Denver, ATOD members are reviewing abstracts for presentations and posters. We have received some excellent poster abstracts from students, the best of which will be selected for the Student Poster Showcase. The showcase winner will receive a stipend and an APHA student membership. ATOD's next event is the Mid-Year Meeting, to take place April 11-12, 2010, in Washington, D.C. To attend, contact Ann Mahony at agmpublichealth@gmail.com. As a public health student, I have found it quite valuable to be a member of ATOD, as it offers an opportunity to get involved and be on the forefront of public health issues and research. I recommend membership to anyone interested in ATOD issues, even tangentially. It is a great way to meet professionals in the field who you may someday work with after graduation. For more information on ATOD activities and opportunities, visit: www.apha.org/membergroups/sections/aphasections/atod/

Maryland Public Health Association Students Host AIDS Awareness Week

By Deanna Tran
University of Maryland

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy's Student Section of the Maryland Public Health Association hosted its largest AIDS Awareness Week in its history in December! AIDS Awareness Week is an annual event designed to increase awareness about HIV and AIDS. It is a week to remember those afflicted with HIV/AIDS and to educate each other and the community about this deadly disease.



We began our week with speakers from Chase Brexton Health Services, Inc., who spoke about their Medical Care program, and two very brave patients who shared their experiences and struggles with HIV.

December 1st marked World AIDS Day. Red Ribbons were distributed across campus to encourage support. "Pills, Profits, Protest," a thought-provoking documentary that chronicles the international response to the global AIDS crisis was also shown that night, followed by a lively discussion about the global crisis. Home-made baked goods filled the air during the AIDS Bake Sale. More than \$230 was raised, and all proceeds were then donated to the Pediatric AIDS Ward at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

A weeklong service project unified the week. Donations such as sanitizers, band aids and condoms were solicited from the community. These items were used to assemble more than 80 health and hygiene kits which were donated to the indigent throughout Baltimore City.

The last event of the week was Friday's health information distribution. Informational AIDS pamphlets were distributed across the campus to inform current and future health care professionals about the importance of fighting this deadly epidemic.

Have you done something special at your University? Let us know your commitment to improving public health in your area!

Dental Health Student Awards Nominations

The Oral Health Section of the American Public Health Association is accepting nominations for the Anthony Westwater Jong Community Dental Health Pre- and Post-Professional Student Awards.

The Pre-Professional Award recognizes an outstanding community-based research or service project of an oral health nature carried out by a pre-doctoral dental student or dentist, dental hygiene student or hygienist who has graduated within the preceding 12 months from an ADA-accredited dental school. The award includes \$200.00 cash, a copy of *Jong's Community Dental Health*, a one-year membership to the APHA Oral Health Section, APHA Annual Meeting registration, a plaque and two tickets to attend the Oral Health Section Dinner following the Awards ceremony.

The Post-Professional Award recognizes an outstanding community-based research or service project of an oral health nature carried out by a dentist, physician, dental hygienist, nurse, nurse practitioner, social worker and/or other professional. Though applicants are not required to have a degree in dentistry, dental public health or dental hygiene, the application of community-based dental public health principles to the design of the project must be clear. The award provides \$200.00 cash, a copy of *Jong's Community Dental Health*, a one-year membership to APHA Oral Health Section, APHA Annual Meeting registration, a plaque, two tickets to attend the Oral Health Section Dinner following the Awards ceremony, hotel expenses and transportation to the annual meeting.

The nomination/application deadline is May 14th. Contact Amos Deinard, MDS, MPH for details (deina001@umn.edu).



National Public Health Week

April 5-11, 2010

www.nphw.org



American
Public Health
Association



A Healthier America:

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American Public Health Association
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