

Meet the 2024 Council of Affiliate Awardees



**Tanya Funchess, DHA, MPH, MSM - Mississippi Public Health Association
2024 Council of Affiliates Award for Excellence**

Tanya Funchess is an associate professor at the University of Southern Mississippi in the College of Nursing and Health Professions with 17 years of experience at the Mississippi State Department of Health, including serving as director of health equity. Her research focuses on health equity and community involvement, and she established the Community Research Fellows Training Program which has trained over 250 fellows statewide. Funchess, who holds degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi, Belhaven University and the University of Phoenix, also serves as Chair of the Mississippi Public Health Association's (MSPHA) Health and Racial Equity Committee. A steadfast advocate for racial healing and health equity since the historic change of the Mississippi state flag in 2021, she has led the association to significant milestones, including:

- Issuing a public statement declaring racism a public health threat.
- Securing and implementing two All of Us grants, one of which established a dedicated health and racial equity track at the MSPHA Annual Conference.
- Leading the HRE Committee in developing a series of educational webinars and conference sessions focused on racial healing, addressing health disparities and promoting leadership through an equity lens.



Kina White, DrPH, MHSA, FACHE – Mississippi Public Health Association

2024 Council of Affiliates Innovation in Public Health Award

As director of the Office of Community Health Improvement at the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), Kina White leads multiple federal grant programs and serves as the state lead for the Age-Friendly Public Health Systems Initiative. Under her leadership, MSDH became the third U.S. health department recognized as an Age-Friendly Public Health System in May 2023, and she is actively working to expand age- and dementia-friendly communities, universities and health systems across Mississippi. As an equity strategist committed to enhancing community health and well-being, White has also applied her leadership within the Mississippi Public Health Association to make Mississippi an Age-Friendly state. Under her guidance, MSPHA was designated as one of three lead state agencies responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the activities of this multi-year project. Key achievements under her leadership include:

- Establishing a statewide advisory council composed of both traditional and non-traditional public health partners.
- Organizing two annual Healthy Aging Summits, held in 2023 and 2024.
- Creating a statewide Healthy Aging Plan for Mississippi that is focused on equity.
- Developing Mississippi Aging Data Profiles for 2023 for each county in the state.



Susan Harris, EdD – New York State Public Health Association

2024 Council of Affiliates Innovation in Public Health Award

Susan Harris, EdD, is founder and chair of the New York State Public Health Association's Climate Committee. She currently serves on the Coordinating and Communications Committees of Third Act Upstate NY. Always the educator, Harris is a steering committee member of the Climate Resilience and Education Task Force, which advocates for state climate education for K-12 students across all subject areas, along with professional development for teachers. She has been trained as a climate ambassador by Vice President Al Gore's Climate Reality Project. When Harris joined the New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA), she championed the importance of prioritizing climate change and youth engagement. As the inaugural leader of the Climate Committee, she has spearheaded significant accomplishments, including:

- Mobilizing key external partners, such as the New York State Children's Environmental Health Centers, the Climate and Resiliency Education Task Force, NY RENEWS, The Wild Center, and Third Act.
- Advocating and lobbying alongside students for the passage of a climate change education bill.
- Creating an engaging and informative Youth Climate Resource Guide.
- Leading a series of focus groups in collaboration with Third Act, gathering insights from high school students across the state on their perceptions and attitudes toward climate change.
- Elevating the profile of climate change as a public health threat through articles, op-eds in local newspapers and radio spots.
- Securing the 2023 APHA Center for Climate, Health, and Equity's Excellence in Climate Leadership Award on behalf of NYSPHA.



Iowa Public Health Association

2024 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Affiliate Award

The Iowa Public Health Association is the independent voice for public health in Iowa. Its 12 board members represent academic, governmental and private sector public health professionals from across the state. Along with staff, the IPHA leadership team serves over 500 members, the public health workforce and communities through education, advocacy and partnership development. Next year, IPHA will celebrate its centennial anniversary and the five-year anniversary of its statewide immunization coalition, Iowa Immunizes and continue its goal of building a public health movement. IPHA's achievements include:

Building a Public Health Movement

- Having over 550 members spanning 80 of Iowa's 99 counties, with 125 organizational members.
- Organizing two Days on the Hill, actively monitoring or lobbying over 33 bills.
- Holding eight in-district legislative meetings.
- Launching six digital marketing campaigns focusing on vaccine confidence, mental health and civic engagement.

Strengthening Public Health Practice

- Hosting the fourth annual Lunch and Learn series with 10 webinars, each averaging over 50 attendees.
- Organizing the Annual Public Health Conference of Iowa, attracting 454 attendees, featuring 46 educational sessions and showcasing 24 student posters.
- Planning the inaugural Iowa Immunization Summit.

Aligning Resources and Infrastructure

- Achieving 100% Board giving, with 231 member donations and 30 sustaining donors.
- Maintaining a surplus budget since 2017.

Supporting APHA Activities

- Leading National Public Health Week (NPHW) as a student-driven project.
- Engaging in the Speak for Health Campaign, including legislative visits and candidate forums.
- Regularly attending monthly CoA meetings, Public Health Authority Workgroup sessions, MINK Regional Calls, and CoA Affiliate Staff calls.



Carrie Butler - Utah Public Health Association

2024 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Affiliate Staff Award

Carrie Butler, executive director of the Utah Public Health Association, has held roles as an epidemiological field coordinator, population health researcher and state-level advocate. Formerly Action Utah's policy director, she worked on clean air, Medicaid expansion and climate change-related policies. Through her consulting firm, she addresses issues like gun violence reduction and affordable housing. Butler holds degrees in public health and public policy from the University of Utah. She lives in South Jordan, Utah with her husband, two children and their dog, Sanderson Cooper. Butler is a dynamic leader and advocate for the Utah Public Health Association (UPHA), driving goodwill and growth throughout the organization. Her impact is evident across multiple areas:

Leadership:

- Enhancing ADA accessibility through the creation of an Accessibility Committee, ensuring facility maps and signage for all UPHA events.
- Collaborating with the Membership Committee to improve member benefits, mentorship opportunities, relationships, advocacy efforts and resources.
- Revitalizing previously stagnant sections, including Immunizations and Nutrition.
- Achieving a 150% increase in membership from 2022 to 2023.

Enthusiasm/Passion:

- Securing sponsorships to fund conference scholarships.
- Strengthening UPHA's financial stability by reinstating 501(c)(3) status and implementing cost-cutting measures.
- Actively pursuing grants from various organizations to support UPHA's initiatives.
- Leveraging internships to bolster the Affiliate's work.

Advocacy:

- Positioning UPHA at the forefront of policy discussions by participating in Utah Governor Spencer Cox's One Health Collaborative.
- Increasing the association's visibility by fostering key policy partnerships.
- Collaborating with other Affiliates on policy initiatives, sharing resources and advocacy tools.
- Being invited three times to represent public health advocacy from a conservative state at APHA's Policy Action Institute.



Devin Quinn - Kansas Public Health Association

2024 Council of Affiliates Outstanding Student Award

Devin Quinn is an MD/MPH candidate at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He has a bachelor's in kinesiology from Kansas State University and has seven years of health care experience. He has worked with local health policy initiatives, engaging with the Kansas Public Health Association, Midwest Public Health Training Center, and MINK (HHS Region VII). He served as the president of the Master of Public Health Student Organization, contributing to National Public Health Week efforts in Kansas. Quinn has demonstrated outstanding leadership as a student member of the Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA), including:

- Organizing a coalition of students from three state universities to plan a diverse range of presentations for National Public Health Week.
- Completing a field placement in 2023 with the FrameWorks Institute and the Midwestern Public Health Training Center, where he developed the KPHA Legislative Toolkit, a vital resource for the association's advocacy efforts.
- Presenting his work on the Legislative Toolkit at the 2023 MINK meeting.
- Being appointed as the APHA Student Assembly Campus Liaison for the University of Kansas Medical Center.
- Leading the student group in drafting the 2023 National Public Health Week proclamation for Governor Laura Kelly.
- Authoring and submitting testimony during the Kansas legislative session.

Devin recently completed his MPH degree at the University of Kansas and is now pursuing an MD at the University of Kansas Medical Center.