

# MPH Connection

"Creating a better world through public health"

Fall 2017

## A Word from Dr. Claborn

GREETINGS from the desk of the director (that's right; the word 'interim' has finally been dropped from the front of the title). But, more important, things are happening for the program. The last year has produced a record number of graduates since the accreditation of the program. We hope to continue this trend, but to do so, we need to recruit a little to replenish the size of the student body. We are looking to start about 15 new students in the Fall of 2018. So, if you are considering a MPH, or a public health certificate, give us a call.

Our research continues, particularly with the state contracts for vector-borne disease risk assessments. We also have other work progressing, including research on barriers to access to care in community clinics, workforce development, and wellness education in schools. Continued collaboration with the Ozark Public Health Institute allows the program to contribute to a variety of statewide project.

As this newsletter goes to press, the program is undergoing a re-accreditation visit from the Council on Education for Public Health. This has been a very busy year, made busier by the absence of Dr. Thompson during his military deployment to Honduras. He has returned, however, and our teaching load is complete. For graduates of the program, please let us know how to contact you. We like to hear how you have applied your education from the program.

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## Contact Information



Master of Public Health  
Program  
901 South National Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65897  
Phone: (417) 836-8850  
Fax: (417) 836-8418  
<http://missouristate.edu/mpH>

## Recent Graduates

### Spring 2017

Hajar Almayad  
Srita Chundru  
Titilola Labisi  
Sara Wikoff

### Summer 2017

Rodrigo Johnson	Pinakin Patel
Abby Garton	Madison Poiry
Karanpreet Gill	Lakshmi Rallabandi
Shamim Jaleel	Miguel Ramirez
Mikaila Mitchell	Lakshmi Sajja
	Katie Turck



**Missouri  
State**  
UNIVERSITY



## **Welcome back, Dr. Kip Thompson!**

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He is back! Dr. Kip Thompson recently returned from his deployment with the US Army to Honduras and Central America. Dr. Thompson, who is an Environmental Science Officer with the Army Reserves, served as the Officer in Charge (OIC) of Preventive Medicine (PM) for the Medical Element with Joint Task Force Bravo. As the OIC of Preventive Medicine, Lieutenant Colonel (Dr.) Thompson supervised four public health technicians and one community health nurse. During his time in Honduras, Dr. Thompson and his team conducted testing on 794 water samples (which included over 4,000 chemical tests) and provided classes to over 1,900 personnel on subjects such as nutrition, health behavior and communicable and infectious diseases on Soto Cano Air Base. Additionally, his team conducted 85 food service inspections, 141 facility sanitation inspections, collected 15 air samples for particulate and volatile organic compound analyses, and set 99 mosquito traps on Soto Cano Air Base.

Dr. Thompson and his team also supported US personnel in other locations throughout Central America. They conducted monthly support inspections of food service operations at the US Embassy as well as pool and water inspections at the US Embassy, the US Ambassador's residence, the Deputy Chief of Mission's residence and the Marine Security Detachment residence. In total, 218 water samples were tested for bacterial contamination in conjunction with 33 pool inspections and 15 food service inspections. Thirty-nine water samples were collected for chemical analysis by U.S. Army Public Health Command. Additionally, at the request of the mission health director, a basic food handler's course was taught to 12 employees of the U.S. Embassy dining facility. In addition, he and his personnel conducted 37 facility inspections and tested 59 water samples for bacterial contamination at camps located at Lepaterique, Honduras. They also conducted environmental health analyses for potential Medical Readiness Engagement Training (MEDRETE) locations throughout Central America to include sites in Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Panama. During these medical engagements, he and his personnel provided support to the local people through sanitation and hygiene training and dispensing of basic hygiene and medical items.

Finally, Dr. Thompson and his team worked closely with the Honduran Ministry of Health to provide water testing, mosquito trapping and basic medical care to Hondurans living in the Department (State) of Comayagua. Through these activities, basic medical care was provided to over 2,156 citizens by the community health nurse through vaccinations, dispensing of children, adult and prenatal vitamins as well as de-worming medication to both children and adults. Preventive Medicine personnel, in conjunction with the water and vector borne disease sections of the Ministry of Health, collected 260 water samples for bacterial and chemical analysis. Of the 260 samples, 181 were positive for bacterial contamination (70%) to include *Escherichia coli*. These results were used to analyze the need for effective treatment systems as well as to ensure current systems were operating within standards. Through this water testing program, local capacity for provided fresh, disinfected and safe water was improved. In addition to sampling water, Preventive Medicine personnel trapped 3,475 individual mosquitoes. Key species found were *Aedes aegypti*, *Aedes albopictus*, *Anopheles sp.*, and *Culex sp.*, all known vectors of human diseases. Finally, 160 health and wellness assessments of local homes were conducted to help reduce the risk of infectious disease to include sputum sampling to determine the prevalence of tuberculosis in the area (TB). These are important factors in minimizing disease risk for not only Honduran citizens, but US personnel stationed in the area.



## ***Introducing GA Sapana Subedi***

Sapana Subedi Chowi is from Nepal and received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Pokhara University. Due to her inclination towards community health and prevention and promotion of the health of the public, she chose the MPH as her graduate degree. As one of our newest Graduate Assistants for the MPH program, she is currently working on the Mosquito Surveillance project.

“I selected Missouri State University for several reasons. First, the MPH program is accredited by the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH). Second, all the faculty members and staff here are really helpful and cooperative, which encouraged me to choose this school and enroll in this program from among various others. Nevertheless, the sound academic environment of the school in promoting academic success is also one of reasons why I chose the MPH program here at MSU.”

After completion of the degree, she is planning to focus herself in community based research activities for preventing injuries and promoting community health.”



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## ***Introducing GA Sakinya Palakurthi***

Sakinya Palakurthi is from India and came to the United States in January 2017. She received her Bachelor of Science in Dental Surgery degree and developed special interest towards public health in the final year of her dentistry. While at college, she shadowed the public relation officer and was successful in delivering basic oral care to 30,000 patients. She also organized several health awareness camps while she was a dental student.

She is an active volunteer at multiple NGOs in Springfield. She also continues to render her services as a dentist and a public health student by holding counseling sessions to patients focusing on prevention. She plans to have a career in epidemiology.

“As a GA in the MPH program, I am currently assisting Dr. Thompson with the Barriers to Health Care project and Dr. Claborn with the Mosquito Surveillance project. I thoroughly enjoy my stay in Springfield and find this program to be great. I look forward to developing myself in order to excel accordingly in the field of public health.”





## *Future Public Health Professionals*

Future Public Health Professionals (FPHP) is a student organization at Missouri State University for students interested in public health. The organization focuses on gaining experience in public health practice by working with current public health professionals, bringing in guest speakers, participating in service activities, and taking part in trainings.

By working with these professionals and participating in training and service events, individuals in FPHP are able to not only serve their community, but also increase their knowledge and skills of public health practice while doing so. They strive to prevent, promote, and protect public health in the Ozarks as well as in the state of Missouri. The advisor for FPHP is Dr. Dalen Duitsman.

### ***Field Experience Spotlight: Madison Poiry***

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I completed my field experience at the Lawrence County Health Department. I mostly worked on a Community Health Assessment regarding maternal and child health in the county. The major concerns that were focused on were second hand smoke, automobile safety, and vaccinations. I learned a lot about maternal and child health concerns, and was able to attend the regional meeting for the MCH contract to discuss the change in requirements. I also created a survey to hand out to the women of childbearing age in the county to measure what safety precautions they take for themselves and their children. I really enjoyed the staff at the department and the time I spent there, but I have a few tips for people to make sure they get the most out of their Field Experience:

- 1) Start talking to health departments early; do not wait until the semester before. Get an idea of what they would have you work on and how it can be a capstone project.
- 2) Get comfortable with Excel and EpiInfo for statistics so you do not have to come to campus to use SPSS, and chances are the department you are working with will not have it.
- 3) The summer semester flies by so quickly, so make deadlines for yourself along the way and stick to them! The health department you work with will not be on the same timeline as you, so you might have to make them aware of your timeline and when you need to work with them to complete the project.
- 4) Always get IRB approval if you are doing any study with human subjects, even if it is anonymous or does not ask identity-revealing questions, it is an MSU standard and it can take some time so submit for approval early in your field experience!
- 5) Have statistical analysis in your capstone. If you are having a hard time getting original data, or the department is not asking you to do a statistical analysis, get with your advisor about how you can still show you know stats in your capstone. It is better to plan ahead than explain why there are no stats in your presentation.



## ***Professional Spotlight: Robert Niezgoda***

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### ***How does the Affordable Care Act affect rural areas in Missouri?***

“The ACA has provided some great benefits to rural areas of Missouri, but it has also created a lot of challenges. The ACA has expanded coverage to many rural residents who qualify for subsidized health insurance coverage and has allowed younger adults to remain on their parent’s insurance plans longer. Additionally, those with pre-existing conditions are finding it easier to obtain coverage. However, the ACA has created many challenges for healthcare systems, businesses, health departments, and those who are not eligible for subsidized health insurance plans. In essence, the ACA, in its current form, is unsustainable economically. The increases in insurance premiums are causing many businesses to reduce hours of employees so that they can reduce health insurance expenses and avoid mandates to provide health insurance to full-time employees, reducing incomes. Additionally, many residents are reporting that they cannot afford the higher premiums and are choosing to take the IRS penalty, which is less expensive. Health departments are also experiencing higher insurance premiums and have been forced to reduce or eliminate health insurance coverage levels for employees. This places health departments at a competitive disadvantage when seeking qualified applicants.”

### ***What is it that is unique about your program and health department with Taney County having such a large tourist population?***

“The Taney County Health Department is accredited by PHAB and MICH. This has been a great benefit as it has allowed the department to create a culture that continuously seeks quality improvement, innovative practices, and improved performance. We see this as necessary because Taney County has substantial challenges related to the social determinants of health and, subsequently, health outcomes. We are also a rural community that is the home of a very popular tourist destination. Approximately, eight million visitors travel to the Branson area annually. While Branson is a city with a population of approximately 10,000, the infrastructure of the city is aligned with a community of over 100,000. Administratively, we need to have the capacity of a larger city’s environmental health and epidemiology program. We also have to be prepared to respond to various types of public health emergencies, which smaller communities may not necessarily have to routinely encounter, such as large outbreaks or the threat of emerging diseases such as Ebola.”

### ***Are there any major challenges in public health you see happening in the near future that should be brought to light for students? Is there any other information or advice you believe would be beneficial to MPH students to know?***

“There are many challenges on the horizon, but these should not worry future public health professionals. The challenges will be stressful and create many unforeseen negative impacts on our communities; however, they will also bring opportunities. These opportunities will not overtly present themselves. Instead, these opportunities will be found in imaginative solutions as they are developed. In addition, as public health professionals, we are uniquely qualified to offer 21st century solutions to our communities. We will bring our knowledge of the social determinants of health, developing coalitions, rallying community members, applying data and technology to decision-making, and systems thinking to these solutions. Today’s students will need to work hard to develop leadership skills, knowledge areas, and flexibility in their thinking and problem solving. The problems that I see developing are going to require leadership, consensus building, and the ability to compromise. Our world is becoming increasingly diverse and complex. Unfortunately, our current leaders are focusing on presenting simple, one-dimensional solutions that ignore these facts. Simple solutions are a thing of the past, we will need to understand systems and the context in which problems exist as innovative solutions are developed; and, we will need to lead diverse community partners toward consensus and compromise.”



## **Projected Course Offerings**

*(This is for planning purposes only and is subject to change)*

Course	Course Title	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Fall 2018
PBH 720	Epidemiology	Online		Seated
PBH 730	Biostatistics in Health Science	Online		Seated
PBH 740	Health Behavior	Online		
PBH 745	Environmental Health			Seated
MGT 701	Health Services Organization	Seated		Seated
PBH 735	Software Application and Data Resources in Public Health			Seated
PBH 756	Introduction to Public Health		Seated	Blended (weekend)
PBH 760	Research Methods in Public Health	Blended (every other week)		
PBH 783	International Health and Infectious Disease	Online		
PBH 775	Principles and Skills of Public Health Administration	Blended		
PBH 781	Public Health Preparedness			Seated