

# MPH MEMOS

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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Issue 3

## An Update on UT's Center for Public Health By Dr. Paul Erwin, Professor and Director

In September 2007, the Center for Public Health (CPH) existed in name only. In fact, the only thing budgeted for at that point was my position. But, take heart, with enormous support, **the CPH was born**, and we are making it through our year of infancy in good health!

Melissa Reeves came on board in the early fall, bringing not only greatly needed administrative skills to the work of the Center....but she knows everyone and everything about this place! An absolute gem! Then, through the Office of Research, we were formally recognized as a Center, receiving much-needed start-up funding as well. Next came the establishment of the **Board of Deans** – the oversight structure for the CPH. Since public health is multi-disciplinary by nature, our Board of Deans includes Deans/Associate Deans of CEHHS, Social Work, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, and the Graduate School of Medicine.

In December, the CPH began serving as Secretariat to the **East Tennessee Forum on Public Health and Preventive Medicine** – an academic-practice collaborative – and initiated the Public Health Colloquium, with our first guest being Dr. Stephanie Bailey of the CDC. Dr. Bailey initiated a focus on the emerging field of public health systems and services research, and she was followed in February by Dr. Doug Scutchfield from the University of Kentucky. The visit of Dr. Glen Mays from the University of Arkansas completed the 2007-08 series of Public Health Colloquia, all of which have focused on public health systems and services research.

There also came...a GA! Shannon Looney, an MS-MPH dual graduate student, has been immensely resourceful in helping with various CPH activities. Yay, Shannon! Another milestone was the establishment of an **Advisory Committee for the CPH**, which includes approximately 25 persons representing faculty across several Colleges on campus, and the public health practice community. One upcoming task of the Advisory Committee is to finalize a survey to be sent to all faculty documenting the public health-related teaching, research, and service conducted by UT faculty. A second task – and one students should keep an eye out for – is to hold a **Public Health Research Symposium** in the fall, with students and faculty providing oral and poster presentations. Would a paid trip to the APHA conference in San Diego interest you enough to submit something?!

As the CPH heads toward the end of its first year, there is one, clear observation that I can share: there are *many*, high quality, public health-related activities going on at UT – some in places you would predict, others in places you might not think about. At the heart of the CPH's mission is to connect students and faculty who are doing this work. Stay tuned!

## Dates to Remember

May 8 – Graduate Hooding Ceremony

May 30 – East TN Grand Division Annual Conference (TPHA) in Gatlinburg. To register, contact Melissa Davis at (865) 549-5381.

June 2 – First Day of Full Term Summer Classes

July 11 – Comprehensive Exam, beginning at noon

Aug 7 -- Last Day to Submit Admission to Candidacy Form and Application for Fall Graduation

Aug 20 – Fall Classes Begin

Aug 27-29 – Meeting of Tennessee Public Health Association (Franklin, TN)

Sept 1 – Labor Day (no classes)

## Next CHES Exams

Interested in becoming a Certified Health Education Specialist? The next CHES exam will be held on April 26 and October 18. Apply at [www.nchec.org/](http://www.nchec.org/).

## From Coast to Coast: Revisiting *National Public Health Week* (April 7-13) Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance

On Thursday, April 10, UT MPH students and faculty—joined by many others—commemorated National Public Health Week with an address from Ken Givens, Tennessee’s Commissioner of Agriculture, and wife Connie Givens, Director of Coordinated School Health for the state. After Commissioner Givens surveyed his Department’s numerous public health responsibilities—from food safety to biofuels—Connie Givens highlighted some recent successes of Tennessee’s Coordinated School Health program, such as its work to address the obesity epidemic among Tennessee’s children, 43% of whom are either overweight or are at-risk of being overweight. Additionally, Carrie Thomas, MPH was recognized as Outstanding Preceptor for 2008. Ms. Thomas is Tobacco Prevention and Reduction Coordinator, Knox County Health Department.

Meanwhile, across the nation, many other events were taking place! Here’s a sampling.

### ***Seattle, WA***

The Poetic Justice Theatre Ensemble held an interactive performance to illuminate barriers to our taking action to limit global warming.

### ***Detroit, MI***

Detroit Department of Health opens its community garden “to help lessen the effects of climate change.” Included a mini-market for fresh fruits and vegetables and a healthy cooking demo.

### ***Portland, OR***

Multnomah County Health Department held an awards ceremony to honor its Public Health Heroes.

### ***Aurora, CO***

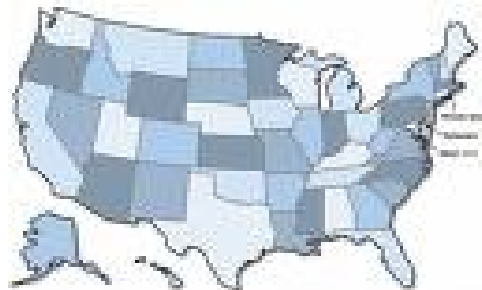
Anschutz Medical Campus held a grand rounds seminar to explore ways in which healthcare providers can limit primary and secondary GCC-related health effects.

### ***Albany and Hudson, NY***

Public film screenings of *The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour* and *An Inconvenient Truth*.

### ***Sacramento, CA***

Kick-off of The Green California Summit, which focused on what “state and local governments are doing to create healthy communities and a vibrant, green economy.”



### ***Boston, MA***

A cleanup helping to beautify the Charles River involves over 2,000 volunteers’ collecting trash.

### ***San Mateo County, CA***

Health Department hosted a nature walk, led by a local botanist, to educate the public regarding ways in which global climate change impacts insect and plant life.

### ***Nashville, TN***

Lentz Health Department showed *Kilowatt Our*, which was followed by a plant walk (patterned after a cake walk).

### ***Portsmouth, VA***

Local health department teamed up with Wal-Mart to provide food safety demos, pregnancy education, pandemic flu preparedness kits, and much more.

### ***Chinle, AZ***

Interagency educational seminar included local, state, and tribal agencies in a discussion of environmental issues specific to Navajo area, which was followed by a showing of *An Inconvenient Truth*.

### ***Charlotte, NC***

Panel discussion addressed “Climate Change and the Impact on the Charlotte Area.” Film screening of *Blue Vinyl*, an “eco-activism documentary, a detective story, and a comedy all rolled into one.”