

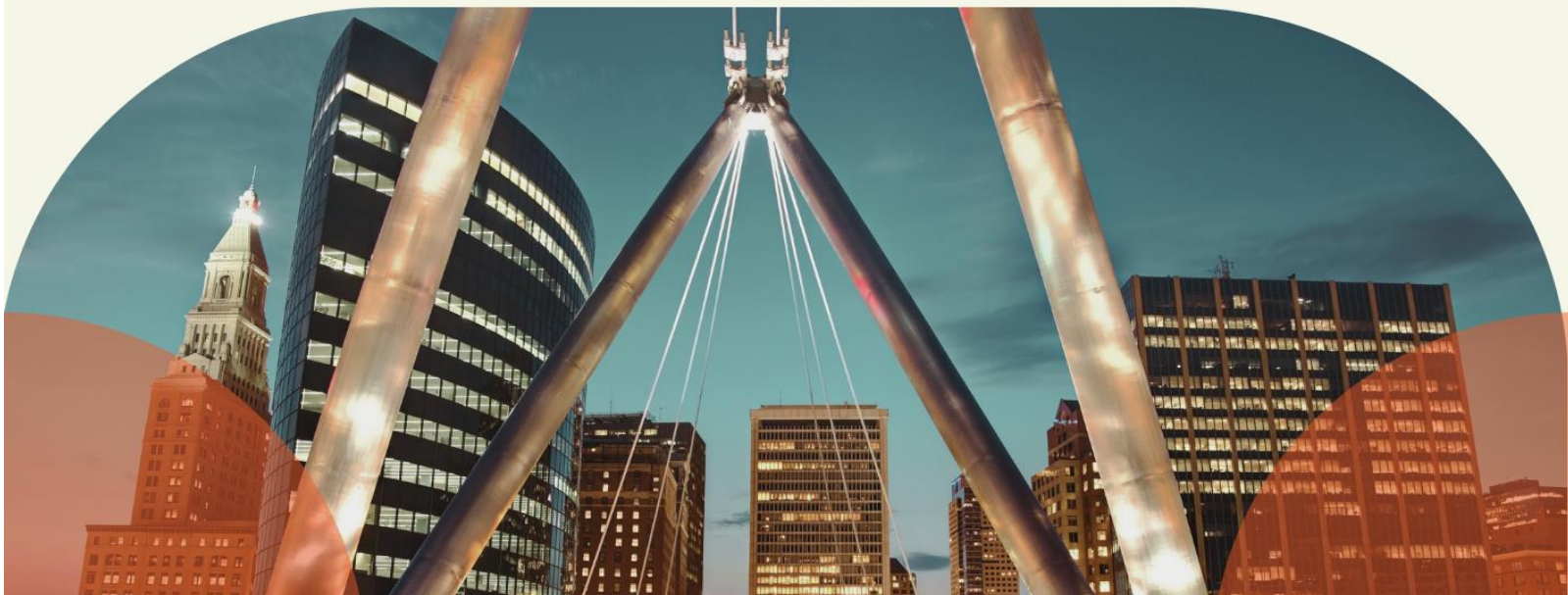


Connecticut
Public Health
Association

BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

CENTERING ON COMMUNITY
FOR CHANGEMAKING

2024



Welcome to CPHA's 2024 Annual Conference

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my honor to welcome you to CPHA's 2024 Annual Conference. This year's theme, *"Building Community Together,"* reminds us of the foundational importance of community in all that we do. This theme not only inspires but challenges us to engage in meaningful ways, highlighting presentations that reflect community-focused and community-engaged research and practices in public health. We gather here to learn, connect, and re-energize our efforts to create healthier, more equitable communities across our state and beyond.

In a time when public health faces unprecedented obstacles, we must remember that while our field is non-partisan, it is never apolitical. The very work we do every day affects lives and impacts policy, requiring us to stand firm in our commitment to truth, to science, and to equity. Hard days likely lay ahead for public health, and moreover for those communities which we serve. We will face challenges to our values, our evidence-based approaches, and our commitment to addressing root causes of health disparities. This is precisely why now, more than ever, we need to rally together and support one another.

Today, I urge each of you to stand with resolve around the rigors of science. In our field, facts matter. We must uphold this truth and speak for it, even—and especially—when it is inconvenient, difficult, and yes, even frightening. Continue to champion equity, knowing that some forces may attempt to diminish or even remove the word from public discourse. Yet, let us keep it front and center in our work and in our hearts.

No matter who you are, each of us here today holds some amount of privilege, be it institutional, professional, or social. Leverage it for the benefit of those who are more vulnerable! Remember that as a society and as a field of practice, we are as strong as the most vulnerable among us. Use your voice to advocate for those whose voices may not be heard and do this work not just when it is easy but when it takes courage and resolve. Real change comes from taking these actions, especially when it is most challenging to do so.

Thank you for being here, for dedicating your time and talents to public health, and for contributing to our shared vision. Together, let's continue to build stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities. We are here for one another, and I look forward to a day of powerful discussions, insights, and connections that will strengthen our work and our commitment to a better, healthier future.

In community and solidarity,

Elizabeth Schwartz

President

Connecticut Public Health Association

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Share with us!

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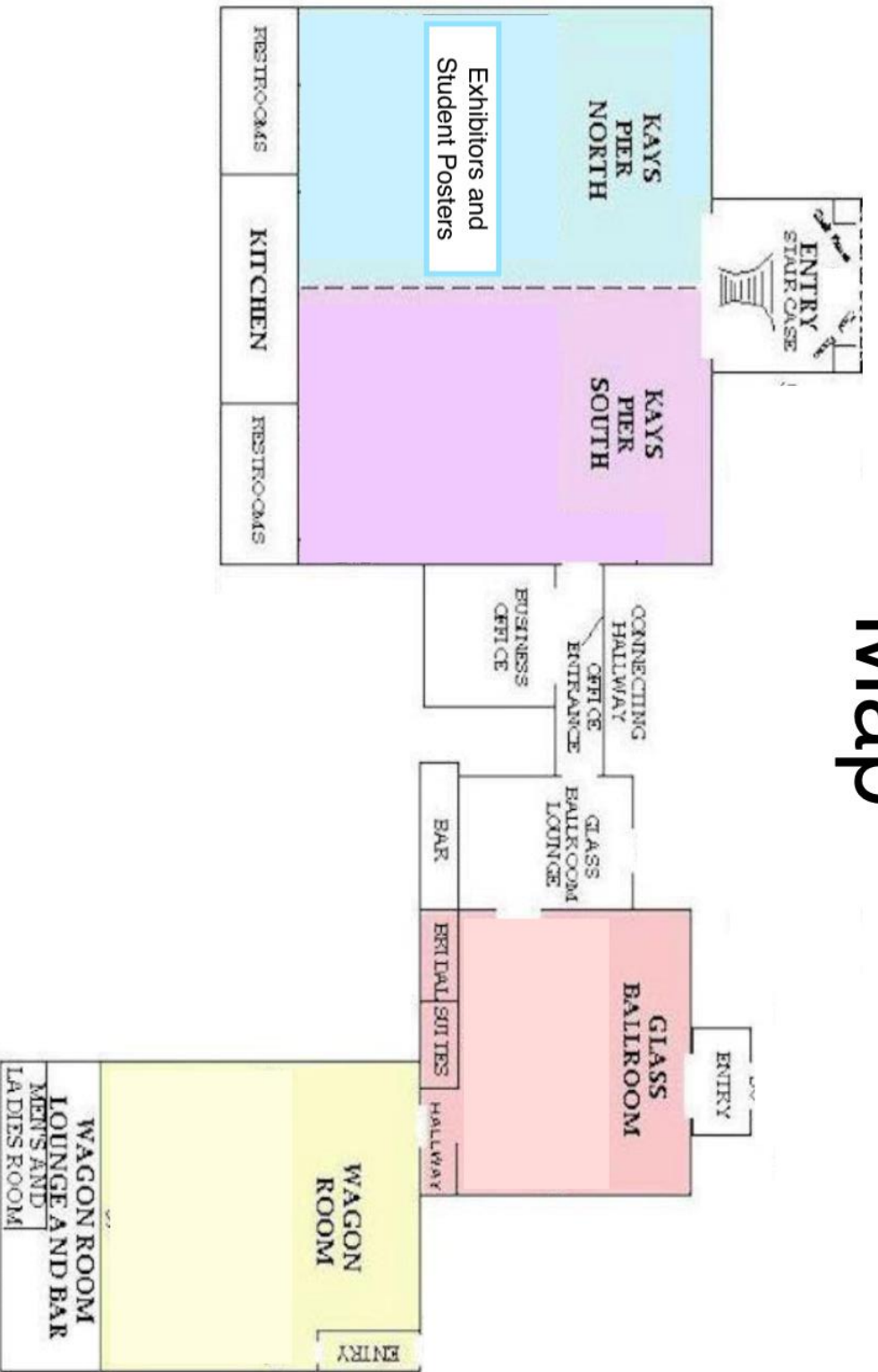
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Schedule of Events

8:00 am		Registration, Breakfast, and Networking
8:45 am		Welcome and Orientation <i>Ayesha Clarke</i>
8:50 am		Program Chair's Message <i>Chloe Johnson</i>
9:00 am		Keynote Speech <i>Dr. Linda Sprague Martinez, PhD</i>
9:45 am		Indigenous Student Scholarship Announcement and Award
10:00 am		CONNIE Presentation
10:15 am		Panel Introduction
10:20 pm		Break/Transition <i>Opportunity to view and engage with Student Posters & Exhibitors</i>
10:30 am		Concurrent Breakout Session I
11:30 am		Break/Transition
11:45 am		Lunch <i>Awards and Platinum Sponsor Speeches</i>
1:00 pm		Break/Transition
1:15 pm		Concurrent Breakout Session II
2:15 pm		Break/Transition
2:30 pm		Concurrent Breakout Session III
3:30 pm		Break/Transition
3:45 pm		Closing Remarks

Map



Concurrent Session Details

Concurrent Session # 1	
KPS	Panel Conversation
Title Presenters /Moderator	Innovative Pathways to Health: Community-Driven Solutions Ben DuBow , Fire by Forge. Travi-gaye Stewart of Yoga in Our City. Vanessa Sena , MLC Nutrition. Yvonne Alston , Indelible Impressions Consulting (Moderator)
Glass Room	Community Engagement & Partnerships
Title Author(s)	Utilizing a Vaccine-Focused Rapid Community Assessment to Gather Community Input: Community-Based Participatory Research to Build Healthier Communities Together Allison Beaulieu , YSPH. Jackson Higginbottom , YSPH. Jamie Foster , Griffin Hospital. Natalie Hellerich , Waterbury Hospital. Cynthia Vitone , Waterbury Health Department. Deepa Mavani , CT DPH. Aisling McGuckin , Waterbury Health Department. Beth Patton Comerford , Griffin Hospital. Kathleen O'Connor-Duffany , YSPH.
Title Author(s)	The Power of Partnerships: Community-Based Efforts to Address Chronic Disease Kelley Tomlinson & Jahliah Green , Norwalk Health Department
Title Author(s)	Community Advisory Boards: Building Authentic Relationships to Advance Community Engaged Prevention and Research Melissa Lang , Agency on Aging of South Central CT. Alycia Santilli , Community Alliance for Research & Engagement, SCSU.
Title Author(s)	Long-Term Effects of the CARE Health Leaders Program: Fostering Health Equity and Community Leadership Sofia Morales , YSPH & Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. Brandi Marshall , Tarini Gupta , Tammy Chapman & Alycia Santilli , Community Alliance for Research & Engagement. Kathleen O'Connor Duffany , YSPH & Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center.
Wagon Room	Incarceration, Violence Prevention & Trauma-Informed Approaches
Title Author(s)	Unique Partnerships to Engage and Empower Formerly Incarcerated Fathers in the Public Health Challenge of Youth Substance Use Kelley Edwards , State of CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Title Author(s)	Strengthening Connections to Opportunities for Prevention Engagement (SCOPE): An Integrated Approach to Violence Prevention Rebecca Beebe , Kevin Borrrup & Sharon Smith , Connecticut Children's Medical Center
Title Author(s)	Accounting for Trauma: The Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed (PCTI) Approach in Community Engaged Research Vanessa Rubenstein , Jewish Federations of North America
Title Author(s)	A Survey of Firearm Epidemiology, Gun Ownership, Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in Fatalities Among Connecticut and Nationwide Youths Tim Peace , YSPH & Leeds Centre for Disease Models, Leeds University

Concurrent Session # 2	
KPS	Community Methods 1
Title Author(s)	New results from 2024 community-based health equity surveys and approaches to community-engaged needs assessments across Connecticut Mark Abraham & Shannon Carter, Data Haven
Title Author(s)	Use of Photovoice with First Year College Students to Enhance Wellbeing Tracy VanOss, Quinnipiac University
Title Author(s)	The Value of Co-Designing Social Innovations with Communities Annika Anderson & Jacquelyn Rose, Connecticut Children's
Title Author(s)	Training Students to Better Engage with Community: A Case Study Chandra Kelsey, YSPH & Southern Connecticut State University. Susan Nappi, YSPH.
Glass Room	Health Equity & Cultural Perspectives
Title Author(s)	Latina Women's Strategies for Overcoming Negative Breastfeeding Care Experiences: A Qualitative Study Sofia Morales, YSPH, Community Alliance for Research & Engagement, Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, YSPH, Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center. Deanna Nardella, Yale School of Medicine. Genesis Vicente, NYU Grossman School of Medicine. Leslie Brown, YSPH & Community Alliance for Research & Engagement. Kathleen O'Connor Duffany, YSPH & Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center
Title Author(s)	Decolonizing The Research Paradigm: An African Approach Leslie Koons, Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services. Agatha Adigwe, Multicultural AIDS Coalition. Portia Kamara, Multicultural Community Family Services. Julius Kolawole, African Alliance of Rhode Island. Anisa Ali, Lead The Way MN. Donna Smith Multicultural AIDS Coalition. Katarzyna Kaczynski, Office of Maine Refugee Services. Chioma Nnaji, Multicultural AIDS Coalition.
Title Author(s)	Overcoming language barriers in medication management: systems-based health equity promotion Amanpreet Singh, Jane Im, Richelle deMayo, Connecticut Children's
Title Author(s)	Lessons learned engaging residents in health equity research and planning. Linda Sprague Martinez, Health Disparities Institute, UConn Health. Valen Diaz, Health Disparities Institute, UConn Health. Cindy Pan, UConn School of Medicine. Trisha Pitter, Health Disparities Institute, UConn Health. Peter Zapata, Health Disparities Institute, UConn Health. Muna Abbas, CT Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health. Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, CT Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health. Gretchen Shugarts, CT Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health. Emil Coman, Health Disparities Institute, UConn Health.
Wagon Room	Organizational Success, Workforce Development & Workplace Health
Title Author(s)	The evolution of collaboration: Two decades of Building Healthier Communities with the Greater Bridgeport Health Improvement Alliance Andrea Boissevain, Stratford Health Department. Gina Smith, Yale New Haven Health.
Title Author(s)	Project Access-New Haven (PA-NH): From a community-based participatory research (CBPR) project to an established 501(c)(3) organization with 15 years of sustained community engagement and impact Lauren Kelley & Giselle Carlotta-McDonald, Project Access-New Haven. Erica Spatz, Yale School of Medicine.
Title Author(s)	Addressing The Public Health Workforce Crisis Through Community Engagement: Preliminary Evaluation of the Connecticut Public Health Fellowship Program Katherine Hill, Nikole Allen, Evelyn Aviles-DeJesus & Susan Nappi, YSPH Office of Public Health Practice. Heather Trabal, Susan Hacking, Celeste Jorge & Tom St. Louis, Connecticut Department of Public Health.
Title Author(s)	Characterizing Work Hazards and Promoting the Well-Being of Community Health Workers in Connecticut Shenell Benjamin, Hartford Communities that Care. Chavon Campbell, City of Hartford. Rogie Carandang, Jennifer Cavallari & Shayna Cunningham, UConn School of Medicine. Karen Gatison, Community Health Centers, Inc. Millie Landock, Project Access New Haven. Nilda Paris, CT Center for Patient Safety. Adriana Rojas, Community Health Center, Inc. Sherelle Reid, Hartford Communities that Care. Milagrosa Seguinot, Community Health Workers Association of Connecticut

Concurrent Session # 3	
KPS	Mentors on Request
	Speed Mentoring for Students & Emerging Career Professionals
Glass Room	Community Methods 2
Title	Norwalk Health Department Rapid Community Assessment: Routine Childhood Immunizations Identifying barriers affecting routine childhood vaccine confidence and uptake within the community.
Author(s)	Omar Perez & Megan Faugno, Norwalk Health Department
Title	Microbial Source Tracking of Bacterial Contamination in Short Beach, CT Recreational Waters: A Community-Based Approach
Author(s)	Sarah Esenther, East Shore Health Department & Institute at Brown for Environment and Society. Michael Pascucilla, East Shore District Health Department, Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University
Title	Promoting Health Equity and Environmental Justice in Bridgeport, CT: A Collaborative, Community-Driven Approach
Author(s)	Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch, Fairfield University
Title	Change the Script: Expanding a Statewide Campaign for Prescription Drug Misuse Awareness Through Community Partnerships, Effective Communication Techniques, and Resource Accessibility
Author(s)	Amber Sagan & Abigail Lieberman, Wheeler Health
Wagon Room	Substance Use & Prevention
Title	Unpacking youth substance use in Connecticut: Using focus group data to explain the results of the 2023 Connecticut School Health Survey
Author(s)	Alversia Wade, Janice Vendetti & Jennifer Sussman, UConn School of Medicine & DMHAS Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics at UConn Health
Title	Predicting Community Readiness for Substance Misuse Prevention Based on a Survey of Community Partners
Author(s)	Christine Guerette, Alversia Wade, Janice Vendetti, Jennifer Sussman & Megan O'Grady, UConn School of Medicine & DMHAS Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics at UConn Health
Title	Connecticut Substance Use Prevention Resource Assessment
Author(s)	Shayna Cunningham, Jennifer Sussman, Sydney Tabor, Alison Wiser, Megan O'Grady, Center for Prevention Evaluation and Statistics, Department of Public Health Sciences, UConn School of Medicine
Title	Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a University-Community Internship in Opioid Misuse Prevention and Harm Reduction
Author(s)	Nathaniel Rickles & Peaches Udoma, University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy Practice. Stephanie Welch, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Bonnie McRee & Sydney Tabor, UConn Health, Department of Public Health Sciences

Keynote Speaker

Linda Sprague Martinez

Linda Sprague Martinez, Ph.D. (she, her, hers), is a Professor in the Department of Medicine and the Department of Public Health Sciences, at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Director of the Health Disparities Institute at UConn Health. Dr. Sprague Martinez has expertise in health equity and the social determinants of health; community based participatory research (CBPR) and youth led participatory action research (YPAR); photovoice; community assessment and mobilization; and qualitative research methods and analyses. Having formerly worked in municipal and state governance, and as an adolescent mental health provider, Dr. Sprague Martinez brings practical expertise in cross sector collaborations and resident engagement.

She was a 2017 Boston Housing Authority, Center for Community Engagement and Civil Rights, Resident Empowerment Coalition, Resident Empowerment Honoree. In 2023, Dr. Sprague Martinez received the NIH HEAL Director's Award for Community Partnerships, for her work with the HEALing Communities Study. Her research has been funded by NIH, OBSSR and PCORI, as well as by local foundations.

Emcee

Ayesha Clarke

Ayesha Clarke, is a native of Hartford, CT. Ayesha has built a career centered on elevating the voices of those often left out around the city of Hartford. She is a fierce advocate who believes in the power of keeping and establishing meaningful relationships with the community and other stakeholders to accomplish tangible outcomes. Ayesha Clarke holds a master's degree in social work with a policy practice concentration (UCONN) and public health (Benedictine University) with a healthcare institution concentration. She also holds a bachelor's in economics from the

University of Connecticut with a concentration in business; Ayesha has a passion for policy and advocacy work centered on health, criminal justice, and education. Ayesha has a keen understanding of the intersection of community and policy. She is an appointed member of the Harford Community on Public Health and Addiction and worked with the State Department of Public Health to translate a report on the opioid crisis into actionable policy. She also connected with a broad spectrum of stakeholders as a Regional Field Organizer and Treasurer for political campaigns. Ayesha is a Co-Chair of the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health for the State of Connecticut.

Her public office position bolstered her professional career and community service, and Ayesha was the former Hartford Board of Education Chairperson, where she served in elected office from 2017-2021. She currently works for Health Equity Solutions as the Executive Director, where they focus on residents of CT obtaining optimal health care regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Ayesha is a member of The Citadel of Love, the Greater Hartford Branch NAACP, an adjunct professor, and an advisor for the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

Ayesha further serves the community through her active participation as the Board Chairperson-Elect for The Children's Museum and an Executive board member of Community Health Resources (CHR). A proud member of the Hartford Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Ayesha is also a wife for 14 years and the mother of two young boys. Ayesha enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, watching movies, and dancing.

Program Committee Co-Chair

Chloe Johnson, MPH

Chloe Johnson is an organized, highly driven public health and higher education practitioner with academic interests in research and teaching including chronic diseases such as

HIV/AIDS, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes with a passion for student success and wellbeing, health disparities, health promotion/education, and social justice.

Chloe has her Master's of Public Health (MPH) degree from Southern Connecticut State University and her Bachelor's degree in Health Sciences with a concentration in Public Health (BS) from Eastern Connecticut State University. Currently working in the Internal Medicine Section of Infectious Diseases completing HIV and Aging research at Yale University, an Adjunct Professor in Public Health at Southern Connecticut State University. She currently serves in a few roles for the Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) as the Director of the Board, Website and Database Manager, and Co-Chair for the Program Planning Committee. Chloe has also become a 200hr. Certified Yoga Teacher from Yoga In Our City (YIOC) offering her community free yoga classes in parks across Connecticut. In her free time, Chloe enjoys traveling, reading, yoga, and dancing.

President & Program Committee Co-Chair

Elizabeth Schwartz

Elizabeth Schwartz is the President of the Connecticut Public Health Association. Following a lengthy career in the private sector, she has spent the last decade following her passion in public health, engaging in non-profit management, community practice, and academic instruction.

Elizabeth dreams of living in a world scripted by Aaron Sorkin, scored by upbeat, one-hit wonders, and where absolutely everyone has access to outstanding healthcare & exceptional public education. In her free time, she is an avid baker, photographer, and escape room enthusiast. She has an incurable case of wanderlust.

Indigenous Student Scholarship

The Connecticut Public Health Association's Indigenous Scholar Award is a **new** award & scholarship that honors and supports Indigenous students in public health or allied fields. Inspired by the CPHA executive committee's commitment to move beyond land acknowledgments, this award aims to contribute to a process of rectification, diversify the workforce, and move towards greater health equity by empowering Indigenous scholars to advance their education. Endowed and facilitated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, the award provides financial support to one Indigenous student in Connecticut each year, helping them complete their studies and contribute to public health.

Presenter

Michele Scott

Michele Scott is a Tribal Councilor for the Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia University and a Master of Science degree from Quinnipiac University. She also received a Certification in Genealogical Research from Boston University. Michele chairs the Tribe's Economic Development and Health & Human Services Committees. Her commitment to health and economic development has been at the forefront of her professional career; she was Chairwoman of the Mashantucket Pequot Health Care Advisory Board and a founding Director for Command Holdings, LLC. that focuses on federal contracting.

Prior to Tribal Council, Michele served as the Executive Director of the Health Education Center, Inc. (HEC) of Connecticut. Councilor Scott is committed to the broader community outside of her Tribal Council responsibilities. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Public Health Association, United Way of Southeastern

Connecticut, and Co-Chair of Women United. Councilor Scott is an Eastern Region Alternate Delegate for the Indian Gaming Association, the National Institutes of Health's Tribal Advisory Committee Nashville Region Alternate Delegate, and appointed to the Office of Minority Health's Advisory Committee on Minority Health. Councilor Scott is a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the International Women's Forum. She is an At-Large Director of the Connecticut Public Health Association.

For her years of work training healthcare professionals and community advocates, Michele was selected as a Leaders In Action Fellow by the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut. She was recognized as a National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development's Native American 40 Under 40 Award recipient. Councilor Scott is an enrolled citizen of the Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Tribal Nation and is equally proud of her Eastern Pequot, Narragansett, Shinnecock, and Black ancestry. She resides on the Mashantucket Pequot reservation with her family.

Indigenous Scholarship Awardee

Sydney Aquilina

Sydney Aquilina is a second-year medical student at the Yale School of Medicine and a tribal member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. She is also a member of Alpha Pi Omega, the first and largest Native American Greek letter organization. She graduated with distinction from Duke University in 2021, where she earned her BA in Philosophy with a minor in chemistry and a global health thesis on Adverse Childhood Experiences and adult diet quality. From there she obtained an MS in Biomedical Sciences from the Duke University School of Medicine, and spent a year working as an EMT.

At Yale School of Medicine, she has resurrected the Indigenous Medical student group and advocated for greater attention to Indigenous

matters in medical education. She has also continued conducting research on Adverse Childhood Experiences in hopes of informing interventions to help uplift Native communities out of historical and generational trauma. Outside of medical school, Sydney has been working on securing a land recognition landmark in Leesburg, VA. She received a proclamation last November from the mayor and town council of Leesburg in recognition of her efforts and the land's original caretakers.

While Sydney is undecided on her specialty, she is committed to serving Native communities directly upon her completion of residency. In doing so, she aspires to improve Native healthcare and address barriers to care in tribal communities using culturally integrated and trauma-informed pedagogy.

Awards

Award Committee Chair

Tracy Van Oss

Dr. Tracy Van Oss is a full clinical professor in the Occupational Therapy Department at Quinnipiac University (QU). Dr. Van Oss has earned a Doctor of Health Science degree, a Master in Public Health degree, a Bachelor of Science degree in Corporate Communication and has a degree in occupational therapy from QU.

She is a Community Health Education Specialist (CHES), and earned a certificate in experiential education from the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), and has an AOTA Specialty Certification in Environmental Modification. She completed the requirements from the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) to earn the Lifestyle Redesign Badge. Dr. Van Oss utilizes her degrees and certificates to plan, implement and assess various educational and community experiential learning projects. Dr. Van Oss has clinical experience working in various settings including acute care, sub-acute care and home health care.

CEA Winslow Award Winner

Steve Huelatt

Mr. Huelatt currently serves the Capitol Region Council of Governments as the Connecticut Division of Emergency Managements and Homeland Security Region 3 Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Grant Manager and as the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Project Manager. Additionally, Mr. Huelatt serves on the Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (CREPC) responsible for the Connecticut Region 3 Emergency Support Plan (RESP) and Associated Annexes and as a Region 3 ESF-8 (Health and Medical) Duty Officer.

Prior to joining the Capitol Region Council of Governments Mr. Huelatt was the Director of Health for the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District for 25 years. As an active member in NACCHO Mr. Huelatt served on the Board and Executive Committee, the Project Public Health Workgroup, co-chaired the Preparedness Planning and Outcome Measures Workgroup, chaired the Bylaws Committee, and served on the Nominations Committee, Incident Management Workgroup and currently on Radiation Workgroup. Mr. Huelatt received his undergraduate education at Clark University in Worcester, MA and his graduate education of a Master of Public Health degree and graduate Certificates in Business Mastery and in Local Government Management at the University of Connecticut.

Beth Weinstein Award Winner

Manisha Juthani

Manisha Juthani, MD, is the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). She is the first Indian American to serve as a commissioner in the State of Connecticut. She served as Professor of Medicine at Yale School of Medicine through September 2024, and currently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Medicine. She served as Director of the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program from

2012 to 2021. Dr. Juthani received her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and MD from Cornell University Medical College, completed Internal Medicine residency training at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Campus, and served as Chief Resident at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She came to Connecticut in 2002 as an Infectious Diseases Fellow at Yale School of Medicine.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Juthani was a leader in the COVID response at Yale which led to her appointment as Commissioner of CT DPH in 2021. In the early days of the pandemic, she was a voice to help educate the public in both local and national media outlets, a role she was able to expand in her role as Commissioner.

As she continues in her role as DPH Commissioner, she continues to combat emerging infectious diseases and is committed to revitalizing public health by refocusing efforts on the opioid crisis, lead abatement, gun violence, mental health, climate and health, maternal health, and drinking water infrastructure improvements. In order to do this work, she is committed to growing the public health workforce and partnering with local health departments who are essential partners in implementing public health policies. She sees all these goals through an equity lens which is essential to ensuring that our focus on health as a human right is maintained.

Ira Hiscock Award Winner

Megan Ranney

Megan L. Ranney is an emergency physician, researcher, and national advocate for innovative approaches to public health. She joined Yale in July 2023 as the Dean of the Yale School of Public Health and C.-E. A. Winslow Professor of Public Health.

Dr. Ranney's research focuses on developing, testing, and disseminating digital health interventions to prevent violence and related

behavioral health problems, as well as on COVID-related risk reduction.

She has held multiple national leadership roles, including Co-Founder and Senior Strategic Advisor for the American Foundation for Firearm Injury Reduction in Medicine (AFFIRM) at the Aspen Institute, a nonprofit committed to ending the gun violence epidemic through a non-partisan public health approach, and Co-Founder of GetUs PPE, a start-up nonprofit that delivered donated personal protective equipment to those who needed it most. She is a Fellow of the fifth class of the Aspen Institute's Health Innovators Fellowship Program and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. She also serves on the Board of Trustees for the National Opioid Abatement Trust. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine.

She has received numerous awards for technology innovation, public health, and research, including Rhode Island "Woman of the Year" and the American College of Emergency Physicians' Policy Pioneer Award. A leading public voice on urgent topics in health and medicine, she offers expert analysis through testimony to Congress and guidance for non-governmental organizations. She is a frequent media commentator and author of op-eds for outlets that include the BBC, CNN, The Atlantic, MSNBC, The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, The Washington Post, and The New York Times.

Prior to arriving at Yale, Dr. Ranney served as Deputy Dean at the Brown University School of Public Health; the Warren Alpert Endowed Professor of Emergency Medicine at Alpert Medical School of Brown University; and the Founding Director of the Brown-Lifespan Center for Digital Health. She remains an adjunct faculty member at Brown University.

Dr. Ranney earned her bachelor's degree in history of science, graduating summa cum laude, from Harvard University; her medical

doctorate, graduating Alpha Omega Alpha, from Columbia University; and her master's degree in public health from Brown University. She completed her residency in Emergency Medicine and a fellowship in Injury Prevention Research at Brown University. She was previously a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cote d'Ivoire.

Michael Perlin Award Winner

Austin Telford

Austin Telford completed his Master of Public Health degree in May 2024 from Southern Connecticut State university, with a concentration in health promotion. He is a Community Health Worker at the East Shore District Health Department, having served in that position for two years. He focuses on providing underserved communities needed education and outreach on nutrition, chronic disease and preventive care.

He was an intern for CT SOPHE in the fall of 2023, working with the Continuing Education committee and at the completion, remained with the organization as the Co-Chair of the committee. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Allied Health Science from University of Connecticut and multiple certifications and licenses, including Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Poster Presentation Session

Gender and Exercise among Users of a Campus Recreational Facility

Presenter: Philomena Appiah

Fairfield University

Collaborators: Kimberly Doughty

"Going to the Doctor is a Vulnerable Thing" - The Illness Narratives of East Asian Americans in St. Louis

Presenter: Rani Huo

Washington University in St. Louis

Menstrual Health, Period Poverty, and Well-Being among Undergraduate Students

Presenter: Aliyah Seenauth

Fairfield University

Collaborators: Kimberly Doughty

Patterns in Patient Handling Injuries among Staff at Griffin Hospital and Perspectives on Interventions

Presenter: Sana Haroon

Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine

Forever Fit at the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities in Fairfield, Connecticut

Presenter: Derek Profita

Sacred Heart University

Collaborators: Michael Attonito, Victoria Iannone, Emily Kusinski, Alanna Kubik, Leigh Ronald

Environmental Injustice and Early Menarche: Implications for Black Maternal Health in the U.S.

Presenter: Mousa Al-Hassan

Southern Connecticut State University

Collaborators: Kaleigh Albert, Sharaban Tohura, Anuli Njoku

Adult-Use Cannabis Legalization: A Scoping Review of Outcome Monitoring Recommendations

Presenter: Kemi Suleiman

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Yang Liu, Alison Wiser, Shayna Cunningham, Sydney Tabor, Jennifer Sussman, Megan O'Grady

Healing Hands

Presenter: Ethan Pollack

Sacred Heart University

Collaborators: Shannon Jordan, Julia Hayes, Caroline Seretis, Leigh Ronald, Donna Bowers

Equity in Diabetes Care

Presenter: Venkata Surya Vamsi Bellamkonda
University of New Haven

Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy Interventions For Chronic Conditions in Community-Based Settings

Presenter: Melissa Mennillo

Quinnipiac University

Collaborators: Tracy Van Oss

Goals of Care in a Medicaid HCBS Program: Variations by Race, Ethnicity and Dementia.

Presenter: Victor Elisha

University of Connecticut Center on Aging

Collaborators: Julie Robison, Kathy Kellett, Kristin Baker, Richard Fortinsky

Every Bit Counts: Just 10 Minutes Per Day of Moderate Exercise Is Associated With Lower Disease Risk In US Adults

Presenter: Kayla Champagne

Sacred Heart University

Collaborators: Jacqueline Vernarelli

How to Increase the Public's Awareness of CAR-T therapy?

Presenter: Pei-Cha

Yale School of Public Health, Dept. of Chronic Disease Epidemiology

Collaborators: Samuel Katz, Teri Carson

UConn UCEDD's Certificate of Interdisciplinary Disability Studies in Public Health: A Follow-Up Evaluation

Presenter: Dean Kim

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Tara Lutz

Refugees' Post-Resettlement Barriers to Accessing Healthcare Services in the Northeastern United States During COVID-19

Presenter: Nour Al Zouabi

Yale University

Collaborators: None

Enhancing Preventative Care: Educational Outreach and Community Impact in Bloomfield and West Hartford

Presenter: Brianna Feliz

Eastern Connecticut State University

Collaborators: Sara Carroll

Exploring the impact of educational attainment on food insecurity, food habits and commitment to change to healthier food habits in inner-city communities

Presenter: Taiwo Ajibola

University of Connecticut Health Center

Collaborators: Helen Wu, Cato Laurencin, James Grady, Gualberto Ruano, Michelle Slivinsky, Taraje White, Marc Merriman

Preliminary Insights into Community Physical Activity (Steps) Knowledge with Attitudes and Goals in Hartford, CT

Presenter: Taiwo Ajibola

University of Connecticut Health Center

Collaborators: Michelle Slivinsky, Gualberto Ruano, James Grady, Cato Laurencin

Caretakers Fruits and Vegetables Shopping Patterns: A Community-Based Pilot Study to Strengthen Farmers Markets Benefits Use among Overweight/Obese children ages 2-5 years Participating in the City of Hartford Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program.

Presenter: Shomrita Barua

Department of Public Health Sciences, UConn Health School of Medicine

Collaborators: Ponita Khouy, Angela Bermúdez-Millán

Role of Lifestyle Medicine Interest Group (LMIG) Community Based Wellness Events in Understanding Community Preferences of Lifestyle Change Intentions

Presenter: Lucia Duenas-Bianchi

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Mingda Sun, Taiwo Ajibola, Kyrinda Richardson, David Hopkins, Varalakshmi Niranjana, Helen Wu

Jumping Through Hoops: Overcoming barriers to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine based on community thoughts and perceptions

Presenter: Emily Pavano

Brown University

Actualizing Professional Identity Through Transformative Learning

Presenter: Roseanna Tufano

Quinnipiac University

Collaborators: Angelina Neto, Janelle Mathew, Paige Velie, Kathryn Zito

Household food insecurity among Latinas at risk for type 2 diabetes: Relationship to dietary glycemic index and trans-saturated fat

Presenter: Dean Kim

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Rafael Perez-Escamilla, Julie Wagner, Sofia Segura-Perez, Richard Feinn, James Grady, Jiarui Liu, Angela Bermudez-Millan

Association between Oral health and cardiovascular disease using BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) from Connecticut.

Presenter: Karthik Madhavan

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Stephanie Poulin

Understanding Baseline Dietary Status in the Community of Hartford

Presenter: Mingda Sun

University of Connecticut Storrs

Collaborators: Asha Williams, Sarah Grady, Lucia Duenas Bianchi, Taiwo Ajibola Folake

Community Choices of Numbers of Days Desired for a Free, Healthy Food Delivery in a Hypothetical Lifestyle Program

Presenter: Asha-Layla Williams

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Lucia Buenas-Bianchi, Mingda Sun, Sarah Grady, Taiwo Folake Ajibola

How Food Insecurity and Habits Impact Perceived Engagement in a Hypothesis Lifestyle Program

Presenter: Asha-Layla Williams

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Sarah Grady, Mingda Sun, Lucia Buenas-Bianchi, Taiwo Folake Ajibola

Climate Change Mitigation Through Residential Energy Efficiency: A Case Study of New Haven, Connecticut

Presenter: Arinze Agu

Yale University School of Public Health

Interprofessional Education: A Curricular Framework for the Next Generation of Public Health Emergency Responders

Presenter: Terry Cooper

University of New Haven

Advancing Elder Abuse Prevention Through Individualized Risk Assessments

Presenter: Patrick Guerrera

University of New Haven

Assessment of Mental Health Status and Utilization of Mental Health Services among Graduate Students.

Presenter: Oluwadamilola Egbewole

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Shadrach Danjuma, Aishwarya Sreenivasan, Cindy Iheanetu

Occupation-based Parenting Skills Program for Young Parents of Children Who Are Homeless and Living in Transitional Housing

Presenter: Ayanna Samuel

Quinnipiac University

Collaborators: Anna N. Carlson

Characteristics of Hospital & Health System Initiatives to Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) in the United States: A Scoping Review of the Peer-Reviewed Literature

Presenter: Alisha Thapa

Department of Population Health and Leadership, School of Health Sciences, University of New Haven

Collaborators: Pavani Rangachari, Dawa Lhому Sherpa, Keerthi Katukuri, Kashyap Ramadyani, Hiba Mohammed Jaidi, Lewis Goodrum

Functional outcomes and clinical characteristics of children discharged from pediatric intensive care unit of a low- and middle-income countries: A single-center prospective observational cohort study from Rwanda

Presenter: Samantha Strelzer

Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, University of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda

Collaborators: Richard Gatera, Febronie Mushimiyimana, Françoise Nizeyimana, Christian Umuhiza, Aimable Kanyamuhunga, Lisine Tuyisenge, Cliff O'Callahan

Substance Use Behaviors Among Sexual Minority Men

Presenter: Moushume Chowdhury

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Yanice Méndez-Fernández, Alvin Tran

Nutritional rickets among children under 15 years presenting to a Rwandan tertiary hospital: pediatric surveillance study

Presenter: Samantha Strelzer

University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Kigali, Rwanda

Collaborators: Christian Umuhiza, Lisine Tuyisenge, Florent Rutagarama, Melinda E. Chen, Cliff O'Callahan

Assessing the Prevalence of Cyberbullying Among a Sample of Sexual Minority Men

Presenter: Acsah Mathews

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Yanice Méndez-Fernández, Alvin Tran

Erectile Dysfunction and Substance Use Behaviors in Sexual Minority Men in US

Presenter: Marion Otieno

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Yanice Méndez-Fernández, Alvin Tran

S'mores for Strength: Using a Social Identity Theory Framework to Improve Transgender Adolescent Mental Health through Summer Camp Experiences

Presenter: Julia Thomae

Yale School of Nursing

Collaborators: G. Oscar Anderson, Jacob Hofheimer

Food and housing security among SES and racially diverse college students: an intersectionality perspective

Presenter: Kritee Niroula

University of Connecticut

Collaborators: Summaya Abdul Razak, Sajal Raja, Kristen Cooksey Stowers

The Effect of Group Prenatal Care on Perinatal Mood Disorders

Presenter: Elizabeth Curtis

Yale School of Nursing

Collaborators: Kailu Shannon-Frolich, Nicole Ceil

Enhancing Refugee Women's Social Integration and Healthcare Access Through Driver's Education

Presenter: Zaharaa Altwaij

Yale College

Collaborators: Adina Safi-Aghdam, Sarvenaz Keshavarz, Laya Jalillian-Khave, Fereshteh Ganjavi, Camille Brown

Empowering the Danbury Community: Mastering the Art of Health Fair Planning

Presenter: Stephanie Ferguson

Southern Connecticut State University

Addressing Adolescent Substance Use in Belize: A Proposed Situational Analysis

Presenter: Annie Shen

Yale University

Collaborators: Malakha Bility

The power of Photovoice to build community trust and work towards equity

Presenter: Gabriella DeMaro

Southern Connecticut State University

Collaborators: Jean Breny

Including persons with disabilities in local health activities, programs, and functions: A Connecticut needs assessment and training inquiry

Presenter: Holly LaBrecque

University of Connecticut Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD)

Collaborators: Tara Lutz, Mary Beth Bruder

Assessing diagnostic breast ultrasound skill in Rwanda and globally: A literature review and protocol for the validation of an assessment tool

Presenter: Amanda Fata

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Food Swamp exposure interacts with transportation to explain inequities in food shopping Among Black and Latinx adults.

Presenter: Summaya Abdul Razak

University of Connecticut, Department of Allied Health Sciences

Collaborators: Abiodun Atoloye, Qianxia Jiang, Kritee Niroula, Olasubomi Ajayi, Tanya Huedo-Medina, Emil Coman, Caitlin Caspi, Valerie Duffy, Kristen Cooksey Stowers

Over-Cleaning, Racism, and Gut Health: Investigating the Early Microbiome and Health Disparities Among Black Infants and Children

Presenter: Marissa Chen

Yale School of Nursing

Collaborators: Craig Manbauman

Identifying the Prevalence and Distribution of Neuro-Developmental Disorders in Children and Adolescents in the Connecticut Public School System

Presenter: Nishant Lal

University of New Haven

Collaborators: DaShawn Robinson, Dyema Nicholson, Vasavi Signamaneni, Deepthi Bhavirisetty, Sravya Gaddam, Ramyasri Penthala, Sweta Adhikari, Supriya Chandu, Chhavi Attri, Moushume Chowdhury, Prasanthi Ilankoon, Swathi Vasantha, Shushma Gopu, Terry Cooper

Gun Violence Prevention Initiatives at Hospitals Across the United States: A Scoping Review

Presenter: Kalpana Bhattarai

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Ravi Golchha, Alekhya Gopu, Aliyah Wright, Karl Minges

Exploring the Gap in Hospital Readmission Between High and Low-Performing Skilled Nursing Facilities

Presenter: Mohammed Motasim Mohiuddin

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Praise Binoran, Akanksha Mehra, Lucy Pereira, Shelli Feder, Karl Minges

Emerging Public Health Needs for Climate Smart Technology in Connecticut Affordable Housing

Presenter: Claire Lee

Yale School of Public Health

Collaborators: Gaby Olea Vargas, Matthew Di Vitto, Claire Lee, Alixandra Rachman, Annie Harper

Ethnicity and Food Pantry Access Predict Inequities in Food Security during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Presenter: Mini Ajayi

UConn Health

Collaborators: Qianxia Jiang, Curtis Antrum, Kristen Cookey-Stowers, Abiodun Atoloye, Summaya Abdul Razak, Sajal Raja, Kritee Niroula

STD prevention in dental settings: Insights from patient perspectives

Presenter: Karthik Madhavan

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Karl Minges, Marie Paulis, Jamie Luckhardt, Lucy Pereira, Reyusha Chalise

Exploring the Effectiveness of Nontraditional Fieldwork on Doctor of Occupational Therapy Students

Presenter: Britney Boursiquot

Quinnipiac University

Collaborators: Michele Tarantino

Exploring Food Insecurity as a Predictor of Poor Mental Health Among Graduate Students & the Potential Moderating Effects of SES and Race/Ethnicity

Presenter: Sajal Raja

University of Connecticut

Collaborators: Kritee Niroula, Summaya Abdul Razak, Kristen Cooksey Stowers

Impact of E-Cigarettes vs. Cigarette Use During Pregnancy on Infant Health

Presenter: Jen-Yuan Christine Kao

University of Connecticut School of Medicine

Collaborators: Erin Mead-Morse

Prevalence and Determinants of COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake among UNH Graduate Students

Presenter: Teniola Akinosho

University of New Haven

Collaborators: Gaza Danjuma, Ebrima Touray, Jedidiah Akinde

CPHA Committee Statements

Advocacy Committee

Tiffany Morrissey

The Advocacy Committee is dedicated to expanding our members' engagement in grassroots public health advocacy across local, state, and federal levels. Through our initiatives, we strive to enhance members' knowledge and active involvement in shaping public health policy.

This year, we trained approximately 100 people from our membership and from the wider community in our hands-on advocacy training for both our members and the wider community. To stay aligned with membership interests, we regularly conduct polls to establish legislative priorities and monitor state public health legislation, keeping members informed of advocacy opportunities.

To support members in their advocacy efforts, we provide fact sheets on key public health

topics and legislation, along with templates for testimony, letters to the editor, and opinion pieces that members can personalize. The committee also submits testimony on behalf of CPHA to the Connecticut General Assembly regarding relevant proposals and fosters ongoing relationships with leaders in the General Assembly's Public Health Committee, other legislative committees, and the Executive Branch in Connecticut.

Awards Committee

Tracy Van Oss

Our mission is to recognize the remarkable achievements of individuals and organizations who exemplify dedication, innovation, and impact in public health.

As a committee, we are focused on building a meaningful awards program that highlights the contributions of both seasoned professionals and emerging leaders. Our awards honor those who inspire change and advance the field, helping to foster a culture of recognition and motivation within our community.

We look forward to our awards ceremony at this year's annual conference, where we will celebrate the outstanding efforts of our honorees and share their stories to inspire the public health professionals of tomorrow.

Community Health Workers Association

Millie Seguinot

CHWACT serves as Connecticut's statewide association for Community Health Workers (CHWs), representing their role in amplifying community voices within the healthcare system. As a section of the Connecticut Public Health Association, CHWACT provides a platform for sharing resources and effective strategies.

Our work focuses on empowering individuals and communities by building health knowledge and promoting self-sufficiency. We do this

through outreach, community education, counseling, social support, and advocacy initiatives.

CHWACT is committed to strengthening the CHW workforce through policy, education, research, and leadership development. We provide essential resources, training, and capacity-building for CHWs, along with professional networking opportunities. Our advocacy efforts are dedicated to shaping policy and supporting a resilient and sustainable CHW workforce throughout Connecticut.

Communications Committee

Avery Gartman

The Communications Committee is more than an information channel; we are a bridge connecting members, empowering them with knowledge, and amplifying their voices in the pursuit of a healthier, more equitable world. In 2024, The Communications Committee had a busy year! As part of our mission to connect, inform, and empower our members, for the first time, we implemented a communications strategy, and we more than doubled our social media reach.

As we move towards continuing to build a dynamic, connected community, we want to grow our successes by highlighting member contributions and accomplishments, sharing public health knowledge, building connections, boosting engagement, and advocating for our field. We hope you will connect with us so we can amplify the great work we know that you are doing.

Health Education Committee

Karl Minges, Jamie Luckhardt

The Health Education Committee is dedicated to supporting the professional growth of the public health workforce and related fields. We serve as a resource for public health and allied professionals, helping them strengthen their competencies, skills, and performance in alignment with core public health essential services. In 2024, our committee proudly offered

diverse professional development and continuing education opportunities, including bi-monthly webinars and workshops which were accessed by close to 100 individuals. We are also committed to exploring new ways to enhance networking and facilitate the sharing of ideas, best practices, and job opportunities among our members.

Membership Committee

Jennifer Schindler-Ruwisch

The CPHA Membership Committee is focused on welcoming new members, supporting the retention of our current members, and promoting the initiatives of other CPHA Committees. As a membership-driven association, we rely on each member to reach out to their colleagues and encourage them to join CPHA, amplifying our collective voice for public health in Connecticut.

This year, we've worked to restructure our membership levels (stay tuned for an announcement in 2025), created plans to recruit non-traditional members, and helped create networking events to foster connections. Additionally, we are continuing our ongoing efforts of managing the CPHA membership database, keeping members informed about the benefits of membership, and bringing more people into the organization. We look forward to growing our community with you!

Mentoring Committee

Maggie Litwin

The Mentors on Request (MOR) Committee's mission has always been to strengthen the pipeline of future public health professionals. Today, MOR mentors continue to support high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, as well as early-career professionals, helping them find the public health paths that best match their interests and skills.

This year, the committee launched a series of social hour events tailored for emerging professionals—those who are out of school but newly navigating careers in public health. Additionally, we partnered with the Connecticut Department of Public Health to host the CT Next Gen Workforce Showcase. This event connected students and recent graduates from across the state with employers, mentors, and public health thought leaders, fostering valuable connections and insights for the next generation of public health professionals. We are excited to offer a speed mentoring session at this year's annual conference as well.

Program Committee

Chloe Johnson, Elizabeth Schwartz

The Program Committee is responsible for participating in the planning of all CPHA events, including the Annual Conference, National Public Health Week activities, the annual Step Challenge, the Advocacy Training Event, Health Education trainings, and more. This year's conference theme is "Building Healthier Communities Together", emphasizing our shared commitment to creating thriving communities that support the well-being of all.

Our goal for the Annual Conference is to deliver an educational, relevant, and inspiring experience that engages the diverse disciplines within and beyond the public health workforce—both current and future. This year, we're proud to have hosted more programming than at any other time in our organization's history, supporting our mission to be a "year-round" organization. By expanding our offerings beyond the Annual Conference, we're working to create ongoing opportunities for learning, connection, and action throughout the year.

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To Our Sponsors

As we gather for inspiration, collaboration, and progress at CPHA Annual Conference 2024, we extend our gratitude to our supporters. Your generous contributions and commitment have been the foundation of this event's success, driving our mission forward. Your support fuels our efforts to create healthier communities, foster equity, and advance the public health community.

Together, we are building a future where knowledge leads to action, and positive change becomes a reality for all. This conference is a testament to what we can achieve when we unite for a common purpose. Your partnership is more than support—it's a reflection of your commitment to empowering individuals, sparking innovation, and making a lasting difference.

Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

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With a degree or certificate from the UConn Program in Applied Public Health Sciences, you can join others who are working to shape our public health system. Our alumni and faculty are found in various positions across the university, the state, the nation, and the world! We hold positions as health directors and staff in state and local health departments; managers of community health and social service organizations; managers and scientists of pharmaceutical firms, health insurance companies, and hospital systems; educators; community-based physicians; and public policy advocates.

Graduate Programs:

- 2 -year Master of Public Health
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Our programs are tailored to both the needs of working professionals and full-time students. Students engage in coursework and community-engaged scholarship designed to improve health, eliminate health inequalities, and promote health systems reform.

To learn more about developing student practicum opportunities at your organization:

Contact: barigye@uchc.edu in the Department of Public Health Sciences

To learn more about our programs please scan the QR code to request more information.



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Developing Healthier Communities

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Our core curriculum provides a broad foundation in key areas including epidemiology, biostatistics, social and behavioral sciences, and environmental health, along with more advanced coursework focusing on the range of issues **relevant to public health today**, including global health, public health ethics, public health law, and public health practice, planning, and evaluation.

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Of current students would recommend the MPH program to a friend.

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The MPH program has been awarded \$1.5M from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for scholarship assistance for MPH enrollments; students may be eligible for up to \$15,000. Our Admissions Officers can provide details.



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Notes
