



## Message from the MPH Program Director

Greetings! I hope you enjoy this inaugural edition of *MPH News*. This letter will be sent out each fall to alumni, students, faculty, and friends of the University of Iowa Master of Public Health Program. I hope you will look forward to this annual update, and I welcome your comments and suggestions on this publication as well as on how to improve our communications with you.

I am excited to begin a new academic year. A record number of 117 students are enrolled in the MPH program this fall in a variety of subtracks, focus areas and combined programs. We have 111 alumni residing in Iowa, other states and other countries who are continuing their training, or

working in a variety of public health positions.

Since beginning my position as MPH Director in July 2004, several changes in the MPH program have occurred. The MPH seminar has taken new directions, greater numbers of students are completing practicum experiences abroad, a combined PharmD/MPH program has been launched, and a new faculty member has joined the MPH practicum staff. Our students and alumni continue to make us proud.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will undoubtedly renew public interest and appreciation for the importance of a well-trained public health workforce and the need for well-planned and executed prevention

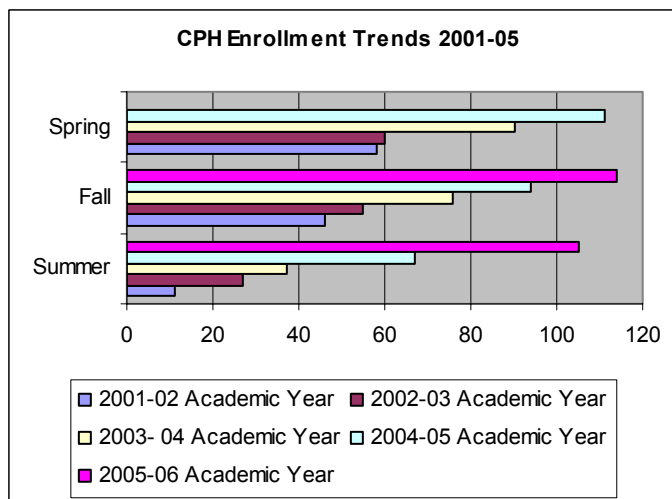
and recovery efforts. Our thoughts continue to be with those directly involved with this disaster.



**Mary Aquilino, PhD, RN, FNP**  
Assistant Dean  
MPH Program Director  
Associate Professor (Clinical)  
Deputy Director, ITRC  
Department of Community and Behavioral Health

## MPH Program Enrollment Trends

It's official! The MPH Program is a success! We hope our alumni feel good about their decision to earn the MPH degree, and we value them as pioneers of a steadily growing number of public health practitioners who were trained at Iowa.



### Notes of Interest:

- You can access the MPH calendar of events and activities at <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/scripts/publish/webevent.pl>
- Public Health Best Practices website: <http://www.osophs.dhhs.gov/ophs/bestpractice/>
- MPH Program office: 319-384-5470 or web address: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/mph/>

## Spotlight on Alumni

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Susan L. Brockus, DVM, MPH (Spring 2004) is one of a handful of public health practitioners in the United States who is appointed to the position of State Public Health Veterinarian.



Dr. Brockus earned her DVM from Oklahoma State University in 1985 and practiced small animal medicine and emergency/critical care for 15 years. Seeking a career change, she became an adjunct professor and one-year trainee in 2003 at Iowa State University's Center for Food Security and Public Health. In addition to working 75% in the Center, she enrolled full-time in the MPH program.

Under the supervision of Russell Currier, DVM, MPH, Dr. Brockus completed her practicum at the Iowa Department of Public Health in spring 2004. Her topic was "Avian Influenza, Past & Present: A Model for Public Health Zoonotic Bio-emergence Planning, Preparedness, and Response." After more than 28 years as the State Public Health Veterinarian at IDPH, Dr. Currier retired in 2004. Dr. Brockus was appointed as State Veterinarian on August 13, 2004.

In her current position, she has a variety of responsibilities including zoonotic disease consultation with the public, media, and local public health departments; developing bioemergency preparedness and response plans; acting as lead principal investigator for zoonotic

outbreaks; participating in medical grand rounds; IDPH liaison and collaborator with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management; conducting rounds for senior veterinary medical students; and developing, coordinating and presenting written materials on public health, emerging infectious diseases, and emergency preparedness and response planning.

Dr. Brockus was the May 2004 recipient of the Milford E. Barnes Award that honors an outstanding MPH student. As an alumnus, she is already contributing to the MPH Program by participating in our Fall 2004 orientation of new students and lecturing at the August 2005

## Recent Student Practicum Sites and Projects...

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**Iowa Tobacco Research Center, CPH:** Adolescent Experimental and Occasional Smoking.

**Shelter House, Iowa City:** Shelter House Community Awareness Campaign, Childhood Overweight in Iowa.

**Employee Health Clinic, UIHC:** The Role of the Occupational Health Service in Disaster Preparedness and Response.

**Department of Epidemiology, CPH:** Prevalence of Equine Influenza Subtypes

in Iowans with Occupational Exposure.

**Iowa Department of Public Health:** Screening and Referral for Perinatal Depression in MCFH Title V Clinics.

**Finland, Norway and Iowa:** Occupational Health Services for Agricultural Workers: A comparison.

**Center for Social and Behavioral Research, UNI:** Infant Sleep Position Preferences among Minority Families in Iowa.

**Medical University, Charleston, SC:** Awareness of the Risks of Artificial and Natural Tanning Influences Behavior among Young Adults in a Southeast Coastal City.

**Virology Clinic, UIHC:** Integrating a Clinician-Initiated Intervention.

**Iowa Medical Society:** Physician-Patient Communication on Childhood Overweight.

## ... and Student Practice Reactions

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"I thought I knew what poverty was, but I was sadly misinformed and given a crash course by the slums of Kibera, Kenya. The concept of healthcare was unlike anything I had ever known. How could thousands of people survive malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis without proper antibiotics? My medical and public health training to date



**So...How was your experience in public health practice?**

allowed me to adjust my approach, but it was at first difficult to see that my good intentions sometimes were not enough. Still, I now more than ever feel the passion for the career path that I have chosen and will someday return to offer my help."

Yolanda Villalvazo,  
MD/MPH

"My practicum work at the United States Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases has been incredible! I am so thankful for the opportunity to be here and to interact with the top-notch professionals here."

Shawn (SAM) Messer,  
General MPH



## Highlighting CPH Centers: Prairielands ATTC

College of Public Health centers provide work and practicum opportunities for MPH Students. The PATTC is part of a nationwide network covering the states of IA, MN, NE, ND and SD. It ensures that health and allied healthcare professionals throughout the region have access to the most up-to-date information and expertise and the means to apply it.

Activities are concentrated on training and the provision of technical assistance, including the development and implementation of training curricula, the organization of conferences, symposia and workshops, and the development of products including training videos and DVDs, and online courses.

Specific outreach activities include:

**Healthy Lifestyles** - a curriculum to aid substance-abusing women in recovery to

lead healthier lifestyles thereby reducing the likelihood of relapse.

**Toolbox Training** – a course of 12 monthly modular trainings, offered over



The Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Uniting science, education and services to transform lives

the Iowa and North Dakota communication networks (ICN and IVAN). The program is based on best practices in the assessment and treatment of substance use disorders, and the target audience is

entry-level substance abuse counselors, or counselors who wish to review some or all of the topics.

**Hand-in-hand** – a curriculum to address the needs of people suffering from co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

**Alcohol Awareness Month** – In addition to organizing events throughout the region, PATTC staff on UI campus invited students to use screening instruments to self-assess their drinking habits.

**Current MPH student Asmita Mhaskar, MD**, says she particularly likes the diverse cultural working environment that encourages input and team efforts. “One of my most rewarding experiences came from co-facilitating and watching the enthusiasm build of participants in the Healthy Lifestyles program.”

## MPH Program Updates

**Student Awards:** Recipients of the 2004-05 MPH Scholarship Awards were *Jennifer Bass (CBH)*, *Bethany Lewis (MD/MPH)*, *Sydney Switzer (OEH)*, and *Yolanda Villalvazo (MD/MPH)*.

*Kirsten Beyer (Global Health)* Honorable Mention for Student Excellence in Public Health Practice from the Association of Schools of Public

Health.

*Aaron Termain (Global Health)* the 2005 UI College of Public Health Community Based Practice Award.

**Staffing Changes:** *Jack Barnette* became Executive Associate Dean for the College of Public Health at the U of Alabama-Birmingham. *Tanya Uden-Holman* filled the position of Associate Dean for Educa-

*Financial support, practical skills, networking, and public health knowledge are vital ingredients to help students establish a successful career.*

tion and Student Affairs at the UI. *Amy Engelmann*, previous CBH Coordinator, works in the office of Education and Student Services. *Barbara Brown* now works exclusively with the MPH Program. *Meredith Field*, Institute for Public Health Practice, is working with the MPH practicum. staff. *Arllys Thompson* is the new CBH Coordinator.



**Pamela H. Willard, RN, MS, Field Experience Coordinator**

**Q.** Prof. Willard, please tell us about your background and how it relates to your new job.

**A.** I joined the College of Public Health to work with the Practicum Experience. The Practicum gives students an opportunity to synthesize information gleaned from academic coursework and apply it in a practice setting, under guidance of a public health professional. I assist students in determin-

ing the kind of practice experience they will most benefit from and identifying possible agencies/preceptors that will be a good match.

My long experience with public health in Iowa makes me knowledgeable about possible practice partners throughout the state. I directed students' public health practice experiences in the College of Nursing and I have served on several public health committees and organizations in the state. These activities afforded me the opportunity to meet a wide variety of skilled professionals who are able and willing to mentor our MPH students as they learn the day-to-day challenges of public health work.

**Q.** Can the employers of our alumni contact you if they are interested in hosting an MPH Practicum Experience?

**A.** Chris Atchison, Laurie Walkner or I welcome contact from potential preceptors. We are continually trying to expand our partnerships in order to find the most appropriate matches for our students. We also believe our students can add value to the organizations with which they associate. It is our expectation that these partnerships enhance the health of the populations served.

Contact Ms. Willard via e-mail at [pamela-willard@uiowa.edu](mailto:pamela-willard@uiowa.edu) or call 319 335 8708.

## UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

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**UI College of  
Public Health**

*Public health: life's safety net*

## Share Your Successes!!

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Let me say first that I love graduation! I get misty-eyed when I think about the exciting new world that opens up for our new alumni. My heart swells when I think about the contributions you will make to society. I'm so proud of you that I feel as though I could fly!

But what I don't love about graduation is that you leave Iowa City, get established in your career, and I lose touch with you! When I have a few minutes I search the web to see if I can find your names so that I can follow your career. But it seems as though I never have enough time so I *know* I am missing information about you!

I *know* you are successful!  
Achievement comes in many guises. It may be recognition at

your workplace. It may be success in professional organizations. It may be getting a new job. It might be presenting as an invited speaker at a conference. Perhaps it is an innovative new initiative with which you are working. Or it might be a name change!

Whatever your version of success is, please, please, please, *pretty please*,...blow your own horn, pat yourself on the back, strut your stuff! Stop being so darn modest! Tell me about your successes so I can enjoy your achievements!

With your permission, I would also love to share your success with others, whether it is talking with prospective students, spotlighting you in our MPH newsletter or publications, or in the Collegiate well-

spring newsletter! So whisper in my hear, send articles from papers or journals, or e-mail me about your triumphs! It will brighten my day!

Always my best to you,

***Barb***

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