

# Master of Public Health Degree Program

## News and Updates

- Theresa Byrd, R.N., M.P.H., Dr.P.H. has been named to lead the Department of Public Health. Dr. Byrd will hold the position of Chair and Associate Dean of the Department of Public Health in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Byrd will lead and build the MPH program to achieve the objective to provide a focal point for enhancing collaboration in public health teaching, service and research with an emphasis on improving health outcomes in vulnerable populations.

## Progress and Accomplishments

- The Board of Regents previously approved the establishment of the Department of Public Health and for the Department to be housed within the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences with the administrative capacity to offer a new degree program, the Master of Public Health. A submission for approval for the establishment of this new degree program was made to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). During the THECB's Quarterly Board Meeting held October 24, 2013, the application for the establishment of a TTUHSC Master of Public Health Degree Program was approved. The first class of the TTUHSC Master of Public Health degree program will begin September 2014.

## Director's Corner



Dr. Byrd

We are ready to go! I am so excited to get started with our first MPH class entering in the Fall! Public Health is an exciting field of study and leads to many wonderful career possibilities. Public Health programs attract highly motivated people with great ideas, and I am looking forward to meeting our first group of students!

Public Health has, at its core, five disciplines which all public health students need to master. First, there is epidemiology. Epidemiology is the study of disease distribution and determinants (either causes, or things that are somehow associated with the disease) in specific populations. It was epidemiologic studies that helped us understand the association between smoking and lung cancer. If you have ever seen the movie "The Band Played On" about the complex population studies used to figure out the cause of AIDS, then you have seen field epidemiologists at work! (If you have not seen this movie, you ought to! The names were not changed to protect the guilty.). Because of our need to understand the distribution of disease and the determinants of disease in order to make change for health, epidemiology is often called the foundational science of public health. Next, we have environmental sciences. I have often considered this discipline to be the real foundation of public health, mostly because it has been the many environmental interventions that have most changed human health. Think about clean water supplies, sewage systems, safe food, control of animal diseases, and decreases in air pollution. All of these are part of the environmental sciences. We can't have good public health without them! The Social and Behavioral Sciences are an important discipline in public health (not just because it is my field of study!) because in public health, we deal with populations. Though some of the populations we work with are animal populations, most of the time we are working with people. We work with populations of people in our communities, and we work with populations of people, like legislators, who have power to

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## Director's Corner (*cont'd.*)

help us as we work with communities. We need to understand how people think, how they learn, how they work together in groups, and how they make health decisions for themselves and their community. The behavioral sciences help us to do all that so that we can carry out the core functions of public health (assessment, assurance, policy) more smoothly. Management and Policy Sciences are fundamental to all three of the core functions. Those who work in this discipline are skilled at assessment of community needs and of health care organizations. They understand that systems must run smoothly in order to assure an environment where people can be healthy, and they are expert at understanding and developing health policies. Finally, (and not because we don't love them) we have the discipline of Biostatistics. We honestly can't do public health without statistics. Epidemiologic studies depend on the skills of biostatisticians to analyze large data sets and help us understand the determinants of health. Environmental scientists need them to help in the assessment of environmental risks, and behavioral scientists need them to help us understand population behavior and to evaluate programs that we put in place. Management and policy folks need help to understand large, complicated health system data sets and in assessing how policies work.

There you have it! Are you ready to join us? We are looking forward to meeting you. To apply to the program, please go to our website at <http://www.ttuhscc.edu/gsbs/publichealth/default.aspx>, or contact me at [theresa.byrd@ttuhscc.edu](mailto:theresa.byrd@ttuhscc.edu) or Beverly Bowen at [beverly.bowen@ttuhscc.edu](mailto:beverly.bowen@ttuhscc.edu).

## Master of Public Health Degree

The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program offers training that will emphasize the knowledge and skills of core public health fields and the integration and application of those fields to public health practice.

The MPH degree plan includes a core set of requirements that focuses on the five Core Disciplines in Public Health: Biostatistics; Environmental Health; Epidemiology; Health Policy Management; and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

### Meet the Faculty



*Dr. Kenneth Stewart*

Dr. Kenneth L. Stewart is professor of sociology and director of Community Development Initiatives at Angelo State University (ASU) in San Angelo, Texas.

Dr. Stewart teaches sociology courses in social change, political culture, sociological theory, and community development. He joins the founding faculty for the Masters of Public Health at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center to teach program evaluation.

As director of ASU's Community Development Initiatives, a program he founded in 2007, Dr. Stewart has implemented more than 15 applied community research and program evaluation projects. Dr. Stewart also produces a local newspaper column, *PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS*, published monthly by the San Angelo Standard Times as a public education series to inform local residents about community-based research.

### Faculty Support

#### *Teaching Faculty*

- Jennifer S. Bard, J.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.
- Theresa Byrd, R.N., M.P.H., Dr. P.H.
- M. Nicholas Coppola, Ph.D., M.S.A., M.H.A., F.A.C.H.E.
- Zuber D. Mulla, Ph.D., M.S.P.H.
- Billy U. Philips Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.E.
- Ken Stewart, Ph.D.
- Brie D. Sherwin, J.D., M.S.
- Adao Alexandre (Alex) Trindade, Ph.D.
- James G. Surlis, Ph.D.

#### *Supporting Faculty*

- Cynthia Jumper, M.D., B.S.N., M.P.H.
- Roland Patry, Dr. P.H., F.A.S.H.P.
- Patti Patterson, M.D., M.P.H.
- Vasum Peiris, M.D., M.P.H.
- Debra Reed, Ph.D., LD, RD
- Matt Richardson, Dr. P.H.
- Roger Smalligan, M.D., M.P.H.
- Patrick Tarwater, Ph.D.

## Requirements:

- Completion of a minimum of 42 semester credit hours of required coursework - all graduate professional public health degree students must complete sufficient coursework to attain depth and breadth in the five core areas of public health knowledge.
- Planned, supervised and evaluated practice experience - all graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to students' areas of specialization.
- Culminating experience demonstrating a substantial knowledge of public health.

## Program Curriculum

Required Courses - Master of Public Health
Introduction to Social and Behavioral Sciences (for non-majors)
Social and Behavioral Sciences (for SBS majors)
Introduction to Epidemiology (Epi I)
Basic Environmental Health Sciences
Management and Policy Sciences
Introduction to Biostatistics (Stats I)
Introduction to Public Health (history and current trends)
Responsible Conduct of Research
Practicum
Culminating Experience

Prescribed Elective Courses - Master of Public Health with major in Social Behavioral Sciences (SBS)
Making Change at the Community Level (SBS II)
Planning and Developing Health Promotion Interventions
Program Evaluation

Prescribed Elective Courses - Master of Public Health with major in Epidemiology
Advanced Epidemiology Methods
Intermediate Biostatistics (Stats II)
Epidemiology Research Methods

To apply for admission to the TTUHSC MPH program, applicants are required to complete the online application found at: <http://www.ttuhscc.edu/gsbs/academics/admissions.aspx>.

For more information regarding the MPH degree, please visit our website at <http://www.ttuhscc.edu/gsbs/academics/programs.aspx>.