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Inspiration + Motivation

“The more you practice the art of thankfulness, the more you have to be thankful for”

“It is not just about how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness”

“When one has a grateful heart, life is so beautiful”

“Find gratitude in the little things and your well of gratitude will never run dry”

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Public Health Memos

Fall 2024, Volume III



Thankful, Grateful, and Stressed- Err, We Mean Blessed!

Sometimes we get so caught up in preparing for something big, such as finals, graduation, or the holidays, that we fail to notice the things that make life incredible.

So, in the mist of the craziness that accompanies this time of the semester, this edition of Memos aims to highlight all the things that make our department incredible!

CHES Study Group!

Dr. Perion will be offering a CHES study group information session **Every other Wednesday from 12:00-1:00pm** for those interested in taking the CHES exam!

What is CHES you ask? Great question!

CHES stands for Certified Health Education Specialist.

This certification, given by the National Commission of Health Education Credentialing, establishes an individual's knowledge and skills and makes them more competitive on the job market!

This study group is open to all students!

For more information and the link to the study group, contact Dr. Perion at Jperion@utk.edu

For more information on the CHES exam and certification, go to <https://www.nchec.org/ches>



NCHEC

National Commission
for Health Education Credentialing

Credentialing Excellence in Health Education

Graduation Announcements!

**The University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Fall 2024
Graduation Ceremony will be held on
Friday, December 13th
in Thompson-Bowling Arena at Food City Center**

Undergraduate Commencement will take place at 9:00 am

Graduate Hooding will take place at 3:00 pm

Logistics information:



Parking and Arena Entry

Avoid Neyland Drive eastbound. Joe Johnson Boulevard to Volunteer Boulevard is typically faster. Follow traffic direction and signage where available.

Plan for traffic delays.

Graduate and guest parking is available in the [G10](#) and [G5](#) parking garages.

Graduates should enter the venue at the lower floor-level Media entrance. Orange and white balloons will mark the entrance.

Guests should enter the arena at the upper level gates.

Public Health Grads!

Congrats to the following students on graduating from the Department of Public Health this fall!

Bachelor of Public Health:

Maya Elizabeth Bender

Paige McConnell

Andres Felipe Zaragoza Valdez

Master of Public Health:

Caroline Barnes

Kendall Collins

James Griffith

Martha Hawksworth

Caitlin Moore

Rachel Seligstein

Srijana Uprety

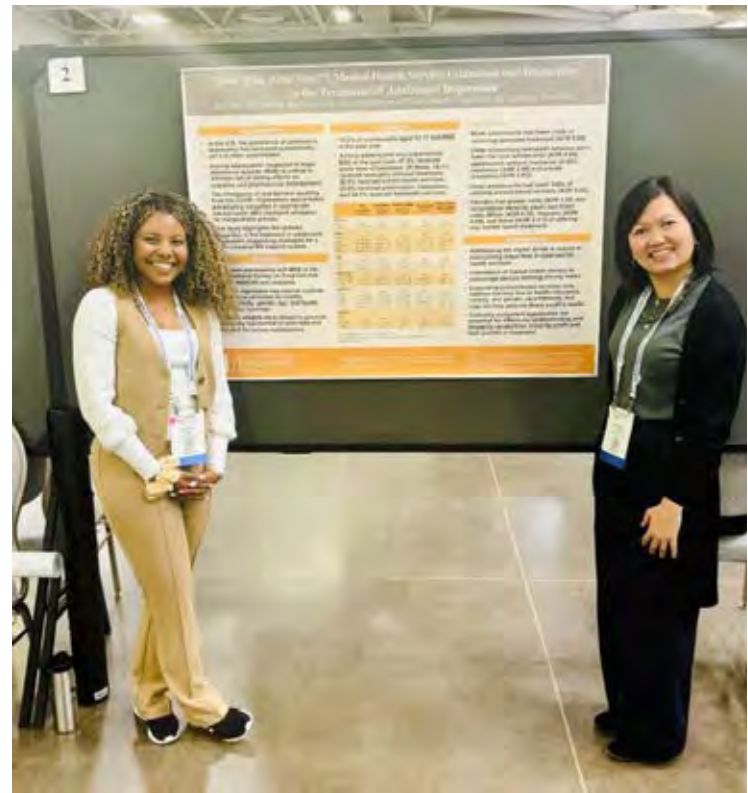
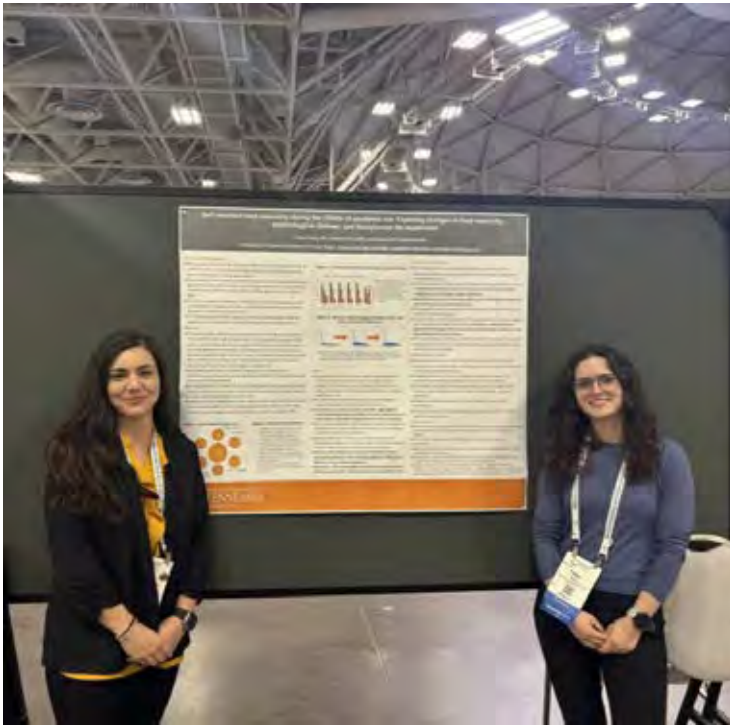
Lauren Wells

Allison Winfield



APHA Presentations!

**Congrats to Yusof Al-Wadei, Parker Avery + Dr. Parks,
Kaylynn Hunt + Su Chen Tan,
McKenzie Granata Green, Siddhi Patel,
Sompa Reza, and Dr. Tran on their APHA presentations!**



Interested in Presenting at APHA?



APHA's Annual Conference will be held November 2-5, 2025, in Washington D.C.

Interested in presenting?

Keep an eye out for APHA's call for abstracts, which typically takes place in early spring!



Brown Bag Seminar!



BROWN BAG Seminar Series

- When: Wednesday, **November 20**, 1-2 pm
 - Where: Fred Brown Room 147
- (Zoom: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/92044430775>)



✓ Presentation 1 (Kaylee Ramage, Ph.D.)

“One would not want to experience a pregnancy with worries...but I knew that all the sacrifice was going to be worth it”: Complexities of motherhood during forced migration for asylum-seeking women at the Mexico-U.S. border”



✓ Presentation 2 (Jennifer Perion, Ph.D.)

“Tovertafel: Evaluating the benefits of a novel multi-sensory intervention for nursing home residents with dementia”



Questions? Dr. Kaylee Ramage (kramage1@utk.edu) or Dr. Luke Cho (bcho1@utk.edu)

PHSA Celebrates World Kindness Day!

**KINDNESS
CHANGES
EVERYTHING**



SPREAD

POSITIVITY

Student Spotlight!

A huge congrats to Caroline Barnes, a second-year MPH student (HPM), on making it to the final round of the three-minute thesis competition!



Caroline says she is honored to be a finalist in the University's 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, an experience that challenges graduate students to convey years of research in just three minutes using a single slide. Her work focuses on rural food insecurity and the critical issue of limited access to nutritious, affordable food. As a firm believer that health should not be determined by zip code, this platform has pushed Caroline to refine her message and share public health information in an approachable and impactful way. Caroline notes that she is excited to bring more awareness to rural health and food access challenges through this opportunity.

In addition to competing in the 3MT competition, Caroline also had the privilege of participating in the University of Tennessee's Community Engagement Academy, a selective interdisciplinary professional development program aimed at preparing researchers to step beyond academia and bring their skills to their communities, this fall!

Prior to her MPH, Caroline completed her undergraduate education at the University of Tennessee, where she was a Chancellor's Scholar and graduated with dual Honors degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience with a minor in Public Health, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Entrepreneurship (both awarded in May 2022). Beyond the classroom, Caroline's experiences have been grounded in community engagement and practical public health application. Throughout her academic career, Caroline has collaborated with community members to understand their unique challenges and work together on sustainable, impactful solutions. She currently contributes to Be More Tennessee, a CDC-funded High Obesity Population Reduction Program that partners with 7 counties across Tennessee to assess needs, outlines policy interventions, and develops community-driven programs. Her passion for public health extends to rural food deserts, a topic she is actively working to highlight at local and regional levels.

Caroline's previous work includes increasing community awareness and knowledge about La Crosse Virus Encephalitis in Knox County, TN, where she wrote my undergraduate thesis on innovative communication strategies to educate communities on health risks. Caroline also worked for 2 years as full-time program manager for a local utility company, focusing on Environmental and Regulatory Compliance, System Reliability, and Occupational Health and Safety. These roles, combined with her CHES and CPH certifications, drive her commitment to informed decision-making, clear communication, and optimism for community health going forward.

Student Spotlight!



We are thrilled to announce that Desarai King, a Master of Public Health student focusing on Epidemiology through the distance education program, has been awarded a prestigious one-year fellowship with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Office of Emergency Risk Communication. As part of her fellowship, Desarai will join the Emergency Partners Information Connection (EPIC) team, where she will develop essential skills in communicating critical health information during emergencies. Congratulations, Desarai, on this remarkable achievement!



Faculty Spotlight!

Dr. Beomyoung (Luke) Cho, Ph.D., M.P.H.



Dr. Beomyoung (Luke) Cho serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Public Health at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UT). Prior to joining UT, Dr. Cho was an assistant professor at the University of North Florida and worked as a postdoctoral research associate at Colorado State University, the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. Dr. Cho's research areas include lifestyle factors related to cancer and other chronic diseases and can be categorized into tobacco control and obesity prevention. One of his major research interests is examining influencing factors and sociodemographic disparities in substance use (e.g., excess alcohol drinking, cannabis use, tobacco use, and dual/poly substance use), as such information helps develop efficacious substance use prevention strategies. He specializes in quantitative research using advanced statistical and epidemiologic methods. His current projects at the Department of Public Health focus on health or cancer information-seeking behavior as a protective factor of unhealthy lifestyle factors. He is also building on his expertise to address health promotion among disadvantaged populations, including people with disabilities, cancer survivors, and older adults. His research works have been published in *JAMA Oncology*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *Preventive Medicine*, *American Journal of Health Promotion*, *American Journal of Health Behavior*, *Journal of American College Health*, *BMC Cancer*, *BMC Public Health*, *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, *Substance Use and Misuse*, and *Journal of Primary Prevention* and presented at various academic conferences.

Dr. Cho obtained his Ph.D. degree in Health Behavior (minor in Epidemiology) from the Indiana University School of Public Health—Bloomington and his M.P.H. degree in Epidemiology from the Seoul National University Graduate School of Public Health in Seoul, South Korea. In addition, he was trained in undergraduate and graduate occupational therapy programs and worked as an occupational therapist.