

CCHD Names New Director

Dr. Monica Wendel has been named director of the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) at the Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC) School of Rural Public Health. A native of Houston, she has lived in the Bryan/College Station area since 1993 when she came to Texas A&M University to earn a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Communication before finding her path in public health. She completed a Master of Public Health degree in 2002 and a Doctor of Public Health in 2009, both from the School of Rural Public Health.

“From the first time I heard about community health development and community capacity building, I was hooked. It just made sense to me that enabling people to work together and do for themselves was a sustainable strategy,” said Dr. Wendel. As the daughter of an immigrant—her mother born in Korea, she has focused her work on populations that face significant health disparities, including racial/ethnic minorities, rural and geographically isolated, economically disadvantaged, and stigmatized groups

With CCHD since January 2002, Dr. Wendel has served in several capacities and been instrumental in its growth and success. She has forged strong relationships in the community and is passionate about building capacity so individuals, organizations and communities can address their own health issues.



“This is an exciting time in the life of the center,” Dr. Wendel said. “I am blessed to work with an excellent team and with some very dedicated community leaders. There is much work to be done, and I am looking forward to seeing what we will accomplish.”

After starting CCHD and serving as director since 2001, Dr. Jim Burdine stepped down to assume a new role as Assistant Dean for Public Health Practice at the HSC-School of Rural Public Health. He will continue as CCHD co-principal investigator.

“Monica has my full confidence in assuming this role,” Dr. Burdine said. “She brings a solid educational background, excellent experience and a remarkable work ethic to the job. I think when we look back at this change in leadership, it will be seen as critical in the further development of CCHD.”

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CONTENTS

New CCHD Employees	2
Promotor Presentations	2
Back to School Program	3
CTxCARES Mini-grants	3
Farewell to Laura	3
CCHD/BVHP Annual Retreat	3

Save the Date - Brazos Valley Health Summit

The Brazos Valley Health Partnership and the Center for Community Health Development will be hosting the Brazos Valley Health Summit to release the findings of the 2010 Brazos Valley Health Assessment on **Thursday, September 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** at the Brazos Center in Bryan. More details will be forthcoming the first week of September.

The Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment, which included a household survey and over sixty community discussion groups held in all seven counties, was conducted from February through June of this year. Over 3,300 local residents responded to the household survey which was designed with input from Brazos Valley community organizations.

Sponsors of the assessment include the Center for Community Health Development and the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, as well as the Brazos County Health Department, Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Burleson St. Joseph Health Center, City of Bryan, City of College Station, College Station Medical Center, Madison St. Joseph Health Center, Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of the Brazos Valley, St. Joseph Health System, School of Rural Public Health, Scott & White Hospital-Brenham, Texas A&M Health Science Center, United Way of the Brazos Valley, and Workforce Solutions of the Brazos Valley. For more information on the Health Summit, contact Angie Alaniz at (979) 458-1594.

CCHD Welcomes New Employees



Vipin Anand is currently a second year student in the department of Information and Operations Management at Mays School of Business. Vipin is from Bombay, India and completed his bachelor's in Information Technology from Bombay University in 2006, and has an industry experience of two years in a service delivery firm. While pursuing his masters at A&M, Vipin took some credits in finance and developed an interest in security analysis and derivatives markets. He intends to do a master in quantitative finance in fall 2011. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, watching Steven Segal's insane movies, and playstation.



Born and raised in San Antonio, Sydney Dickerson now calls Aggieland her second home after finishing her Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Science from Texas A&M this May. Throughout her undergraduate career, Sydney had the opportunity to volunteer for several community organizations in the Bryan/College Station area, which is where her interest and passion for public health truly emerged and ultimately aided in her decision to further her education at the School of Rural Public Health. About to begin her first full year pursuing her MPH within the Department of Social & Behavioral Health, Sydney is very eager about what this year will entail and is anticipating gaining knowledge and experience during her time with the Center for Community Health Development.



Maggie Aguinaga has rejoined CCHD in South Texas as a promotora on Dr. Joe Sharkey's projects in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. Maggie worked for CCHD from 2005-07 on the Integrated Health Outreach System project, and she has been a promotora for over 15 years serving communities in Texas, Florida, and Michigan. In addition, Maggie is a Texas DSHS certified Community Health Worker. Maggie brings a wealth of promotora experience including health outreach, communication, and education, as well as experience in partnership development and facilitation. Maggie and her husband live in Weslaco and her hobbies include: dancing, playing bingo, walking, and spending time with her family members on Sunday afternoons.

Promotores Represent CCHD in Minneapolis and San Diego

On June 11, 2010, CCHD and Comidas Saludables & Gente Sana en el Sur de Tejas (Healthy Food and Healthy People in South Texas) promotores—Ms. Maria Davila Castillo, Ms. Thelma Aguillon and Ms. Aracely Garibay—presented in San Diego and Minneapolis.

Maria and Thelma conducted a workshop at the Adelante Promotor Conference in San Diego, California, sponsored by the San Diego Prevention Research Center & Healthy Eating, Active Communities/The California Endowment. The workshop titled, "Promotores en los estudios de investigación basados con participación de la comunidad: Ejemplos del sur de Tejas (Promotores in Community Based Participatory Research: Examples from South Texas)," included presentations on five of Dr. Joseph Sharkey's projects in South Texas involving promotores in community-based participatory research (CBPR) as well as hands-on activities and open dialogue on the roles of promotores—particularly in the successes and challenges as promotores in conducting CBPR. As Maria described in her reflections on the conference, "Regarding my experience presenting, it gave me a chance to present what we are doing in South Texas, the participants who attended our presentation were very surprised by the studies that we are making possible and this affirms that the success that we gain from each one is because of the great team we have. I was very proud that the promoters asked us many questions."



Maria Davila, Thelma Aguillon

Aracely presented at the International Society for Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her presentation was entitled, "Observation of Food Choice from the Perspective of Mothers in Texas Colonias," (Sharkey, Garibay, St. John, Dean, & Johnson, 2010). The purpose of this study was to understand how Mexican American mothers in the colonias make choices about what to buy, cook, and feed her children as well as how she identifies herself as a household food manager and mother. The study incorporated photo-elicitation methods that included mothers' documentation of their food experience, their photographs and a semi-structured interview conducted in Spanish. Overall, participants used the pictures to elaborate on their role in providing food for their family. Mothers spoke of a new realization of their importance to their family. Aracely's talk was well-received by session attendees, many of whom were excited to see a *promotora* present research findings and insights. Aracely described her conference experience as follows: "I was moved by the ladies who congratulated us on our work that was done in Hidalgo County, TX. It is a beautiful experience to see that people from different counties are interested in what we are doing. That motivates you to move forward with the projects."



Julie St. John, Aracely Garibay

Preparing Children in the Colonias to Succeed in School

July is over, and back-to-school is just around the corner. This can be an exciting time for families to get ready for a new school year, but some families may not have the resources to equip their children for success in school. This is especially true in the *colonias* of South Texas.

Dr. Joe Sharkey's Program for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities and *Comidas Saludables & Gente Sana en el Sur de Tejas* (Healthy Food & Healthy People in South Texas), in partnership with the CCHD, SRPH Social & Behavioral Student Organization and the Rural Public Health Student Association, collected donations for the program *Preparando a los Niños en Colonias para Tener éxito en la Escuela* [Preparing Children in the Colonias to Succeed in School].

This back-to-school program included 20 families (more than 60 children) living in the Alton and San Carlos-area *colonias*. Every child received a new/unused backpack and a \$20 Wal-Mart gift card for school supplies, clothing or shoes for back-to school. In addition, the family was given a much needed portable fan for their home and each mother received a small gift bag with hygiene and beauty items. Donations were personally delivered to the families in mid-August just in time for back-to-school.



CTxCARES Mini-grants Awarded to Five Organizations

CTxCARES, "Communities of Texas: Cancer★Activity★Research★Education★Support" is pleased to announce the release of \$50,000 to fund five Brazos Valley and Temple organizations through the Community Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity Mini-grant Program. Funded organizations include: The Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley, The Brazos Valley Community Action Agency (BVCAA), Leon County AgriLife Extension, and the Parks and Recreation Departments of both the City of Navasota, and the City of Temple.

Applicants to the mini-grant program attended a training session held at the School of Rural Public Health in June to learn more about the application process, and the types of projects that would be funded. Applications were submitted in July, and applications were reviewed in August by a committee that consisted of CTxCARES staff and a representative of the community. Projects are set to begin in early September, and have 12-month timelines planned.

CTxCARES staff members are thrilled to have a variety of projects serving different areas across the region. Organizations will utilize The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommended strategies for promoting physical activity. Ms. Meghan Wernicke will be coordinating technical assistance to be delivered to each funded site.

Two projects (City of Temple and City of Navasota) plan to enhance infrastructure supporting walking by making improvements to city trails and implementing programming around the trails. The BVCAA will also enhance infrastructure for walking by creating maps and audio tours for the downtown Bryan area. The Children's Museum plans to create a safe space for kids to be active by fencing off an outdoor area adjacent to their building. Leon County AgriLife Extension will increase physical activity through the Walk Across Texas program, and with Balance Your Day with Food and Play in schools.

Dr. Ory, the CTxCARES Principal Investigator, is especially pleased at the community partnerships and underlying resources that will add value to these five selected projects. The School of Rural Public Health, Texas AgriLife Extension, and Scott and White Health Care will all contribute assistance through their participation in CTxCARES. Additionally, we will be working with colleagues in the College of Architecture to maximize health benefits accrued by better outdoor spaces.

Congratulations and Farewell!



Laura Windwehen began her new position as the Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Resource Center in Bryan, Texas on August 18th. In her four-year tenure with the Center—starting as a graduate research assistant and then joining us full-time as our Community Partnership Manager—Laura worked with Angie Alaniz, the Brazos Valley Regional Director, to provide technical assistance to build the capacity of four rural health resource commissions in the Brazos Valley region. Although we will miss Laura, we know that we will get to continue to work with her as the leader of a local agency that serves the Brazos Valley.



CCHD Executive Committee

Kenneth R. McLeroy, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

James N. Burdine, Dr.P.H.
Co-Principal Investigator

Monica L. Wendel, Dr.P.H., M.A.
Director

Martha Tackett
Center Coordinator

Kelly Morris, M.P.H.
Research Associate

Angie Alaniz, B.A.
Brazos Valley Regional Director

Julie St. John, M.A., M.P.H.
South Texas Regional Director

Christopher E. Beaudoin, Ph.D.
Director of Communication & Training

Corliss Outley, Ph.D., M.S.
Lisako McKyer, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Co-Directors of Evaluation

Heather R. Clark, M.S.P.H.
Evaluation Manager

Joseph R. Sharkey, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D.
*Director, TxHAN, TxNOPREN and
Principal Investigator, Core Project-
Rural Food Environment*

Wesley Dean, Ph.D., M.A.
*Senior Research Associate, Rural Food
Choice Program*

Marcia G. Ory, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Director, CTxCARES

Meghan Wernicke, M.P.H.
Program Manager, CTxCARES

Jane N. Bolin, B.S.N., J.D. Ph.D.
*Director, Southwest Rural Health
Research Center*

CCHD/BVHP Hold Annual Retreat

The Center for Community Health Development Executive Committee and its community committee, the Brazos Valley Health Partnership held its annual retreat on August 19th. The two groups discussed new operational policy related to the facilitation of community engagement in research. BVHP members proposed to develop a Research Committee to

review research proposals and ensure that partner communities are involved throughout the research process.



Britt Allen, Albert Ramirez

Ms. Heather Clark, CCHD Evaluation Manager, presented the results of the 2009 Interorganizational Network Survey which identified relationships between several Brazos Valley organizations and county Health Resource Centers. In comparing organizational

ties from the 2004 and 2009 interorganizational surveys, many organizations – including the health resource centers - increased the number of organizations with which they shared information and resources, jointly planned, and/or entered into contractual agreements.

Drs. Monica Wendel and Jim Burdine presented a glimpse into the preliminary findings from the 2010 Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment. CCHD faculty and staff continue to analyze the raw data which will culminate in one regional report and seven county reports. The reports will be made available at the September 23rd Brazos Valley Health Summit which will be held at the Brazos Center in Bryan.

The retreat concluded with an overview of the health summit and plans for the upcoming Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) site visit. As part of the health summit, the group intends to highlight regional efforts already underway to address concerns identified in the assessment. CDC representatives will be attending the health summit as part of their planned site visit from Wednesday, September 22nd through Friday, September 24th. Dr. Eduardo Simoes, the Director of Prevention Research Centers at the CDC, will be a featured speaker at the summit.