

CTxCARES Activities in Full Swing

Recently, the Central Texas Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CTxCP-CRN) decided to change its name to CTxCARES: Communities of Texas: Cancer, Awareness, Research, Education and Support. The name change reflects CTxCARES' desire to be out in the community with a name that reflects our focus and can be easily remembered. CTxCARES consists of collaboration between The Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, Texas AgriLife Extension, and Scott & White Healthcare. The mission of CTxCARES is to accelerate the adoption of cancer prevention and control programs in Central Texas communities. With the finalization of its new name, CTxCARES launched its website: <http://www.ctxcare.com>. The website contains current information about the goals of CTxCARES, its members, and projects.

The past few months have been busy with new activities and projects. Below are a few updates:

CTxCARES 2010 Mini-Grant Program

The Community Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity Mini-Grant Program provides small grants to organizations in the Brazos Valley area to implement local projects that utilize recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strategies. CTx-

CARES decided to focus its mini-grants program around promoting physical activity because it recognizes the importance of regular physical activity for cancer prevention. Approximately five grantees will receive up to \$8,000 for program expenses. The proposal submission deadline is July 20, 2010. For more information about the mini-grant program, important dates and application instructions, please visit: <http://ctxcare.com/mini-grants/>.

TABS, "Talkin' About Better Skin"

As mentioned in the May newsletter, TABS was a program created to train hair-dressers to educate their clients on skin cancer prevention and early detection techniques. A pilot TABS training was held on May 3rd in Bryan. Melody Dorman, MPH recruited eleven area cosmetologists who completed the two hour training session that was taught by Ms. Dorman. All cosmetologists who participated in the training were enthusiastic about the TABS program, and said they felt more prepared to talk with their clients about skin cancer prevention and early detection.

Survivorship survey at local Relay For Life Events

In April and May, CTxCARES members attended the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life events that were held in Leon, Washington and Brazos County. Members asked cancer survivors who were present at the events to fill out an anonymous survey that was developed by CTxCARES investigators. The survey's purpose was to document survivorship practices in the Brazos Valley including receipt of survivorship care plans, use of online resources and support, physical activity practices, and participation in cancer clinical trials. A total of 92 surveys were collected at the three events,

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CONTENTS

CCHD Bids Farewell to Graduate Research Assistants2

2010 Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment2

Community Partners Participate in National Meetings . .3

Welcome to Our New Graduate Research Assistants3

3rd Annual Leon County Health Fair4

and will guide the direction of CTxCARES survivorship activities.

Site visit from CDC

In May, CTxCARES members hosted a one-day site



CTxCARES members with CDC at the site visit in May

and we are very appreciative of all those who completed a survey. Preliminary analysis shows that only 12% of respondents were part of a clinical trial as part of their cancer treatment, with the most common reason listed for not participating being no knowledge of any clinical trials. A more in-depth analysis will be conducted in the upcoming months,

visit with its funders from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The day consisted of many brief overviews from CTxCARES members to the CDC about various projects and ideas. The CDC gave positive feedback and helpful guidance to many projects in development, the mini-grant program being one of them.



CCHD Bids Farewell to Graduate Research Assistants

One of the overarching goals of the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) is to provide relevant training in order to ensure a well-equipped public health work force. In an effort to achieve this goal, CCHD has been providing training for students through graduate assistantships and practicum opportunities. During the past year, CCHD has had the pleasure of providing training opportunities for twelve students, several of which are graduating this semester.

When asked about his experience at CCHD, Robert Shaw said: “The art of collaboration, similar to the Stone Soup story book, is essential in building a sustainable project with limitless and long-lasting impact results on a community and community members. I have had the opportunity to experience the results of collaboration on the Brazos Valley community members through my experience working at the Center for Community Health Development. I will utilize the essential tool of collaboration as I begin my future in Public Health.”

Betsy Chapa also highlighted the impact her experience as a graduate assistant will have on her career in public health: “These past

two years, I have had the opportunity to work with great people in the Brazos Valley as well as see many projects develop through the efforts of collaboration between CCHD and community partners. Their great efforts have made a significant change to the community. Being a part of the CCHD family has enhanced my learning experience which will serve as a lifelong

and am thankful for this opportunity.”

Graduate assistant, Pattie Billingsley, described her experience at CCHD as the highlight of her graduate studies and went on to say “CCHD provided the opportunity to obtain experience using the concepts learned during graduate coursework and I believe this experience will contribute greatly to my future in public health.”



Front Row: Tya Arthur, Betsy Chapa, Pattie Billingsley
Back Row: Aditya Kashyap, Robert Shaw, Arin Robertson

Other students commented on their time at CCHD by saying, “The working atmosphere in CCHD was amazing. I got a chance to be with the best group of people I could have met.” (Aditya Kashyap). Doctoral assistant, Tya Arthur stated, “I have had the opportunity to work with a fantastic group of student colleagues, staff, and faculty during my time as a graduate research assistant at CCHD. Every learning experience and interaction at CCHD has contributed to my development as a doctoral candidate and future professional.”

As each of these students graduates and begins their professional career, CCHD is certain that their participation

experience as I pursue a career in Public Health.”

Another graduate assistant, Arin Robertson, summarized her experience by saying, “Over the past nine months at CCHD, I’ve always felt like I was part of the team. Everyone respects each other which makes for a pleasant work environment. I have gained a variety of skills

in community development and organization processes, their hands-on experience in conducting community based participatory research, and their classroom education will make for well-equipped public health professionals and we wish each student the best of luck in their future endeavors.

2010 BRAZOS VALLEY HEALTH STATUS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Assessment activities are successfully wrapping up this month as CCHD faculty and staff prepare to analyze results and begin developing regional and county-based reports that will be available at the Brazos Valley Health Summit. Many thanks go to all of the community

members and organizations that participated in the community discussion groups, provided facility space, and encouraged their neighbors to also participate! Household survey participation has also been significant and we expect to exceed our goal of 2500 completed surveys.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Brazos Valley Health Summit will be held on Thursday, September 23, 2010 at the Brazos Center in Bryan. Assessment findings will be released at the summit and several Brazos Valley initiatives will be highlighted throughout the day. Look for more summit details in the August issue of *Communitas*.

Community Partners Participate in National Meetings

Britt Allen, BVHP President, attended the Campus-Community Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Conference held in Portland, Oregon on May 12th-15th. The theme of this year's conference was "Creating the Future We Want to Be: Transformations through Partnerships". The conference offered several break-out sessions that highlighted successful academic and community partnership projects as well as visits to campus-community project sites based in Portland.

"I appreciated the opportunity that CCHD gave me to attend the CCPH conference and to network with people from across the nation and even outside the United States who were working on great projects that had such a positive impact on their communities. It really motivated me to engage the BVHP and our communities even more in our partnership with CCHD. We – the residents of the Brazos Valley – definitely have the ability to participate in research that can result in better practices and sustainable solutions to address the health of our communities."

CCPH was founded in 1997 with the mission "to foster partnerships between communities and educational institutions that build on each other's strengths and develop their roles as change agents for improving health professions education, civic responsibility and the overall health of communities."

My attendance at the meeting annual of both the National Community Committee (NCC) and the Prevention Research Center (PRC) Directors, gave me a better understanding of the role our community committee, the Brazos Valley Health Partnership, plays in relation to our PRC, the Center for Community Health Development, and the potential role it could be playing on the national stage.

All 37 PRCs are mandated to collaborate closely with a community committee in the design and implementation of research projects. It is essential that the committees are developed in a manner that reflects true representation of the

community and utilized in a way that reflects true inclusion in research projects. After hearing from other PRCs, it is clear not all committees are developed in such a manner and there is great variation between the levels of collaboration. As a result, the NCC is now focused on developing best practices and standards that will guide the development of these relationships.

I believe the BVHP, despite the fact that we are still in the early stages of our development, is founded on solid core principles and is truly representative of our community. I have an enhanced appreciation for how the collective results of our daily activities at the health resource centers are important in demonstrating the impact of our collaboration. I believe that the BVHP/CCHD relationship is a good example of the type of collaboration envisioned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and that we therefore have a voice that needs to be heard at the national level.

Albert Ramirez, Executive Director, Burleson County Health Resource Commission (BCHRC)

Welcome to Our New Graduate Research Assistants

Sunny Rathod has been aspiring to blend the practice of public health into modern medicine. In February 2008, Sunny graduated from Government Medical College in Kolhapur, India with a MBBS degree. In the final years of his medical school, his focus shifted from curing to protecting the health of an entire community rather than on an individual level. In August 2008, he came to the School of Rural Public Health hoping to learn more about epidemiology, survey methods and biostatistics. Currently he is working on the 2010 Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment with Dr. Jim Burdine doing geospatial analysis.

Lindsay Shea is currently a second-year student in the Department of Social & Behavioral Health and will be graduating in December. She is from Sugar Land, TX and completed her Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Science at Texas A&M in the Fall of 2008. She is interested in chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Lindsay has volunteered in organizations around Bryan/College Station such

as St. Joseph's Hospital, Health for All, and Twin City Mission. In her free time, Lindsay enjoys reading, seeing movies, and spending quality time with family and friends.

with the emerging infectious diseases prevalent throughout Southeast Asia. She graduated from Texas A&M

University with a B.S. in biology, and after receiving her M.P.H. in social and behavioral health, she intends to continue to pursue her doctorate. Christina is thoroughly enjoying her time here at the School of Rural Public Health and looks forward to even more learning experiences with The Center for Community Health Development.

Whitney Reynolds is a first year Master of Public Health student at SRPH. She is a recent graduate of Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Health. Working at the Center for Commu-

nity Health Development is an exciting opportunity for Whitney and she looks forward to all she will learn and experience while at the center. In the future, Whitney hopes to continue her education and eventually pursue a career in child and adolescent health research.



Christina Ly, Sunny Rathod, Whitney Reynolds, Lindsay Shea

Christina Ly, born in Long Beach, California and raised in the rural Texas town of Kaufman, has grown up visiting her parents' home country of Cambodia a number of times. In her travels to Cambodia, Christina has witnessed extensive health disparities throughout the country and is interested in learning more about and getting involved



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Salsa Into Good Health



Students learning the risks of smoking

The Leon Health Resource Center held the 3rd Annual Leon County Health Fair at Normangee ISD on May 5th, Cinco de Mayo. To fit with the holiday, the theme of the fair was "Salsa into Good Health." The fair has always focused

on the youth in the county but it was open early to welcome all residents. Over 65 adults and 350 students attended the fair this year. They received information from over 40 vendors on topics ranging from proper nutrition and exercise

to alcohol and substance abuse. The students were given punch cards that could be redeemed for a ticket into a drawing for a bike to encourage them to visit with the various vendors. One of the goals of the fair was to teach the students good habits at an early age that will follow them into adulthood.

"The health fair was well organized and we had a wonderful turnout. I believe the fairs in our county have contributed to better health for our residents."

Byron Ryder, Leon County Judge