

# Long History, New Name

**A**lthough our name is new, the **Center for Community Health Development (CCHD)** has been working with communities in Texas for several years. Founded in 2001 by the School of Rural Public Health at the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, the CCHD (then known as the Community Health Development Program) has worked to establish a national and international reputation as a resource for training, technical assistance, and research centered around community health development.

This reputation was built by establishing relationships with communities in the Concho Valley of West Texas; the seven counties of the Brazos Valley; and Hidalgo, Starr, and Cameron Counties in South Texas. Additionally, the CCHD successfully engaged the health leaders of Tamaulipas, Mexico, in a bi-national partnership. All of these partnerships have addressed cost and access to health care as means of improving overall community health status.

In 2004, the CDC funded the program as a Prevention Research Center (PRC), and with this new designation came a new name – the Center for Community Health Development. The CCHD was formed to establish a research, education, and experience base for improving population health status in a cost-effective manner. The Center contributes to the PRCs’ national research agenda by focusing on rural residents, border residents, and the working poor. Our goal is to build capacity to conduct and apply

prevention research in our community.

The initial research project of the Center is to improve adherence to chronic disease management guidelines, – specifically diabetes, and researchers are also involved with a variety of other projects. The Brazos Valley Health Partnership, a Healthy Communities Access Program grantee, has been instrumental in increasing access to health resources in several counties in central Texas. The Texas Healthy Aging Research Network Center is working to improve the health of older adults in the Brazos and Rio Grande Valleys, and is working with promotores in the colonias of South Texas to help promote the health status of border residents. You can read more about each of these projects in this newsletter. We look forward to sharing what we are learning with you.

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## Training

### 2005 Funding Seminar a Success

**On July 21 and 22, the CCHD and the Center for the Study of Health Disparities (CSHD) co-sponsored a training seminar dedicated to funding. The event marked the first collaboration between the two centers, and, based on the feedback given by participants, the seminar was an overwhelming success.**

The seminar featured three sessions: Logic Modeling, Evaluation Design, and Identifying Funders and Developing Successful Proposals.

Over the two days, 38 individuals attended the sessions. Representing a variety of organizations. If you would like to receive a copy of training materials on CD,

please contact the CCHD, via e-mail ([cchd@srph.tamhsc.edu](mailto:cchd@srph.tamhsc.edu)) or phone (979-458-0937).

The next training seminar, scheduled for October 28, will focus on the basics community based participatory research (CBPR) and will be held this fall. To have your name added to our mailing list, please call or e-mail the Center.

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*School of Rural Public Health*

**B. Lee Green, Ph.D.**

*Center for the Study of Health Disparities*

**Kerrie Hora**

*Project Manager, PRC Core*

**Jennifer Willyard**

*Communication Specialist*



## Membership

***One of the main goals of the Center for Community Health Development is to connect academics and their research with community health providers, their services, and their clients. In order to do this, we need the support of academic and community members.***

The benefits of CCHD membership include access to Special Interest Project (SIP) funding that is only available to the CDC's Prevention Research Centers, as well as access to the Brazos Valley Health Partnership for research opportunities. Members can also receive assistance with Center-related proposals, projects or activities; use the CCHD name and logo with documentation of Center-related activities; and will be

endorsed or sponsored by the Center for approved events and activities.

If you or your organization would like to apply to become a member or receive more information on membership requirements, please contact us. Applicants should submit a short Statement of Interest and a CV (academic researchers) or resume (all other individuals) to the Center.

## Services

***The Center for Community Health Development can be contracted to provide services, training, or technical assistance in the following areas:***

Strategic Planning,  
Operational Planning,  
Leadership Development,  
Research Design,  
Survey Construction,  
Coalition Development





# Ken & Jim Discuss...

## ... each other

*Ken McLeroy is Principal Investigator of the CCHD.*

*Jim Burdine is Co-Principal Investigator and Director of the CCHD.*



**I**t is a pleasure to have this opportunity to write a column for the Center's newsletter on the Director of the Center, Dr. James N. Burdine.

As some of you know, I have been very fortunate to have known and worked with Jim Burdine since 1977 when he was a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and I was working at the Research Triangle Institute directing the evaluation of a large federally funded stroke intervention project. Jim joined the project team at RTI and we worked together until 1979 when he graduated from Chapel Hill and took a position as Assistant Professor at the University of Texas.

After his graduation, Jim held various positions and offices in the field of public health, including a professorship at the University of Texas, positions at Seton Medical Center and Scott & White, and as a leader in large scale, multi-county, community-based prevention program in Pennsylvania. From 1993-2001, Dr. Burdine was President and Senior Scientist for Felix, Burdine and Associates, a nationally recognized community and population health research and management consulting firm.

Because of his extensive experience and national reputation in community-based interventions and community partnerships, the School of Rural Public Health was fortunate to

recruit Jim as Director of the Community Health Development program in 2001. Under Jim's leadership, this program evolved into the Center for Community Health Development. With national funding from the Centers for Disease Control, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Health Resources and Services Administration, as well as local support the Center has been instrumental in establishing and supporting the Brazos Valley Health Partnership and a parallel project in South Texas.

In trying to capture some of Jim's career in the short amount of space above, I realize that as Jean Paul Sartre, the French existentialist writer and philosopher, stated many years ago... supposing we were to write down everything a man had thought, experienced, felt, and spoken. Wouldn't we still say Where is the man? In trying to answer that more important question, let me say that Jim has been a friend, colleague, and confidant for almost 30 years. Because of his effects on critical decisions in my life, it is impossible to imagine not having known him. He is truly a gentleman in the best sense of that word. Perhaps most important, he is one of those rare people who strives to find the best in everyone.

**L**ike Steve Martin's character in the movie "The Jerk," Ken was born "a poor white child" in Eastern Texas.

He attended Tyler Junior College before transferring to the "big city" to complete his bachelors in psychology at the University of Houston in 1967. From there he moved to the University of Oklahoma where he received his MS in Social Psychology. The next phase of Ken's life played a significant role in shaping his view of the world and ultimate career plans. First, he spent a couple of years in Bolivia as a Peace Corps volunteer helping to design and run a TB control program in small, rural villages. Then he worked as a mental hygiene/social work specialist for the Army in New Mexico.

Somehow these very different experiences lead to a position as a senior health services analyst with the Research Triangle Institute in North Carolina, which is where Ken and I met and ended up sharing an office for the better part of two years. During those years we developed not only a lifelong friendship, but an appreciation of how differently we look at a problem, yet generally arrive at the same conclusions/solutions. That "meeting of the minds" has remained a part of our working relationship in many different contexts, including the development of the CCHD.

Ken enrolled and completed his Ph.D. from the School of Public Health at UNC. Since

then he has held the positions of Assistant and Associate Professor with the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (1983-94), Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Promotion Sciences at the University of Oklahoma's College of Public Health (1994-99), and currently as Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Rural Public Health, here in College Station.

His list of publications is too long to even begin to describe except to say that his peers recognize his work by citing it very frequently and asking him to serve as the Chair of the Editorial Board of the American Journal of Public Health, among other distinguished positions.

Ken's hobby is theory... I wish I could say it was fishing, but he was born without a mental "off" switch so he's constantly ruminating over the next evolution of thinking about how we work to improve the public's health!

I've taken the liberty of sharing my fondness for Ken in the form of humor (probably unsuccessfully), but it goes to the core of how we look at the CCHD. Community health development is about building relationships with communities that focus on enhancing the capacity of those communities to improve the health of their members. Just



# New Members

## Four New Affiliated Faculty Join CCHD

**O**n May 20, 2005, Drs. Katherine Miller, Barbara Sharf, Michael Stephenson, and Thomas Tai-Seale joined the Center for Community Health Development as faculty members following a unanimous acceptance by the Board. Drs. Miller, Sharf, Stephenson and Tai-Seale bring with them a wide variety of experience.



Dr. Katherine Miller holds a Ph.D. in Communication and is a professor in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University. She has research published in *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Health Communication*, *Communication Research*, *Communication Monographs*, and elsewhere. She is author of *Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes* and a contributor to *Organizational Communication and Change: Challenges in the Next Century*, *Case Studies in Organizational Communication 2: Perspectives on Contemporary Work Life*, *Communication and Disenfranchisement: Social Health Issues and Implications*, and other scholarly volumes. Dr. Miller is also the former editor of *Management Communication Quarterly*.



Dr. Michael Stephenson is a University of Kentucky graduate with a Ph.D. in Communication. He is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University. He has published in *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Monographs*, *Communication Research*, *Health Communication*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, and elsewhere. He has been a contributor to *Public Communication Campaigns (3rd ed.)* and *Public Health Communication: Evidence for Behavior Change*. Dr. Stephenson has also been a co-investigator on grants sponsored by the Division of Transplantation and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.



Dr. Thomas Tai-Seale is an assistant professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Health at the School of Rural Public Health. He holds four graduate degrees from three major research institutions and has over 20 years experience in community organization and health promotion, including work at Indiana University, UCLA's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, President Carter's Health Risk Appraisal Program, and the University of Bophuthatswana in Southern Africa. Dr. Tai-Seale is the author of numerous articles and book chapters devoted to the process of health planning for chronic disease prevention and control, as well as conducting research through service-learning. He is also a frequent presenter at international, national, and state health



With a Ph.D. in Speech Communication, Dr. Barbara Sharf, a professor in the Texas A&M University Department of Communication, joins the Center with much experience. She is co-author of *Communicating Health: Personal, Cultural, and Political Complexities*, as well as *The Physician's Guide to Better Communication*. She has research published in *Health Affairs*, *Health Communication*, *Journal of Health Communication*, *Communication Monographs*, *Literature & Medicine*, *Women & Health*, and elsewhere. Dr. Sharf is a contributor to *The Handbook of Health Communication*, *Communication and Disenfranchisement*, and other scholarly volumes. She also serves as associate editor of *Health Communication*, as a consultant in qualitative re



### Going Public

## Year One Products

**The faculty, staff, students, and partners of the Center for Community Health Development have been extremely busy building infrastructure during this first year of funding.**

Despite this fact, we have generated over 100 products in the past year, including 47 conference presentations, eight journal articles and five book chapters. Articles by Dr. Marcia Ory have appeared in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, and Dr. Ken McLeroy has published in and co-edited a theme issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*. Drs. Bolin, Burdine, Gamm, McLeroy, Ory, and Sharkey and Monica Wendel

have all contributed to the large number of conference & other presentations delivered at professional meetings throughout the year. Combined with service and membership on various committees and boards, the Center is well-positioned to have a place of prominence in the field of prevention research. For a full list of the Center's products, please visit our webpage at: <http://srph.tamhsc.edu/centerscchd>.



# Core Project

## Diabetes at the Core:

### Prevention & Management in the Brazos Valley

***Diabetes is a growing epidemic in our country. Because the number of Americans diagnosed with diabetes has doubled over the past two decades (including nearly two million Texans who live with the disease) and the associated costs of the disease are rapidly rising, health officials recognize that immediate action is necessary.***

Both governmental agencies and professional organizations have released a number of diabetes prevention and disease management practice guidelines to inform health care providers what they can do for patients with known or potential diabetes. Similarly, guidelines have been distributed to help communities know how to prevent or reduce risks. The guidelines provide information on disease prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, disease complication prevention, and referral. Despite all of the educational information that is available to professionals and the lay public alike, there is growing evidence that such guidelines are not routinely followed by diabetes patients.

The CCHD has recognized the need for the Brazos Valley community to take action in providing the best available guidelines for diabetes prevention and management and ensuring that those guidelines are followed. Working collaboratively with community and clinical leaders, the CCHD is seeking to learn what guidelines are being utilized in the rural and underserved communities of the Brazos Valley, what barriers

prevent guideline utilization, and what strategies will be the most effective in improving diabetes guideline implementation in rural populations. This project is led by Dr. Marcia Ory, an expert in health promotion and aging; Dr. Jane Bolin, an expert in chronic disease management; and Kerrie Hora, a health educator; Dr. Joseph Sharkey; and Dr. Nelda Mier (all of the School of Rural Public Health), and a technical advisory committee of local, state, and national representatives round out the core project group.

According to Ory, the research team plans to assess current diabetes-related activities in the Brazos Valley, and she and her colleagues have met with Eric Todd and others at the Bryan-College Station Community Health Clinic. "We want to learn how they are implementing the chronic care model for diabetes and what lessons they may have that we can bring to the more rural parts of the Brazos Valley," said Ory. The team also needs to understand the extent of the diabetes problem in the Brazos Valley. To do this, the research team is currently administering a survey to all members of the

Brazos Valley Health Partnership (see related article in this newsletter) to determine what diabetes guidelines are being implemented, what resources are currently available to people with diabetes, and to whom diabetes patients are referred for further information and assistance.

Ory also said that in-depth activities are being planned for Madisonville and one or two other rural counties in the Brazos Valley. Working with the Texas Diabetes Council, Dr. Bolin and other research team members are developing a computer-based educational module that could be delivered in the waiting rooms of doctors' and community clinic offices. The module would offer practical advice on what people with diabetes can do to manage their condition.

The research team is eager to partner with community and clinical partners who are concerned about the diabetes epidemic in the Brazos Valley. Ory stated that the team is looking forward to learning what different agencies and organizations can do to bring quality care and community interventions to the area. If you would like more information about the project team's planned activities, contact Kerrie Hora via phone (979-458-1224) or e-mail (klhora@srph.tamhsc.edu).



*Dr. Marcia Ory,  
Principal Investigator  
of the core project.*

**"We want to learn how they are implementing the chronic care model for diabetes and what lessons they may have that we can bring to the more rural parts of the Brazos Valley,"**



# Helping Communities Partner in Health

## Brazos Valley Health Partnership

**A**ccess to and the costs of health care are always concerns in our health care system. These problems are often compounded in rural areas as rural residents find themselves traveling long distances to receive appropriate medical care.

This is problematic not only because immediate care may be unavailable, but also because patients must take time away from work and cover for ever-increasing travel expenses (assuming transportation is even available) in order to be treated.

To address these and other problems, the CCHD conducted a Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment in 2001 and

*Members of the BVHP look on as Brenda VandeWalle, Judge Sutherland and Don Strickland, Chair of the BVHP (front row, left to right) cut the ribbon at the new health resource in Caldwell.*

presented the results to Brazos Valley community leaders at regional health summits in July and November 2002. The assessment indicated that citizens in the six rural counties of the Brazos Valley lacked transportation to medical facilities, were unaware of what services were available to them, and often did not know how to access the limited resources that were available. The Health Summit attendees – including health and social service providers, elected officials, and other civic leaders – found that residents of the Brazos Valley could benefit from coordination of health services and

created the Brazos Valley Health Partnership to “improve the health status and access to care in the seven-county region of the Brazos Valley through the collaboration of services and the creation of local partnerships.”

BVHP members agreed to improve access to health care by creating rural health resource centers in each of the six rural counties surrounding Brazos County. Each center would be anchored by a local non-profit organization, Project Unity, and their coordinated case management approach and would be developed in conjunction with local health providers.

In September 2003, the CCHD was awarded a 2.1 Million Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) grant on behalf of BVHP to support their role as the administrative

entity of BVHP and facilitate the creation of the resource centers. Since the HCAP grant was awarded, the BVHP has evolved quite rapidly. According to Angie Alaniz, director of the BVHP, health resource centers have now been established in four of the six rural counties, including Madison, Burtleson, Leon, and Grimes Counties.

Alaniz stated that prior to the development of each center, CCHD staff – including graduate research assistants – work with community stakeholders to appoint a health resource center advisory board. This board provides oversight in the development and on-going progress of the center and then creates a strategic plan to address the short- and long-term needs of the center. Chairs of each advisory board automatically serve on the BVHP Board, creating a network between the local communities and the regional health partnership.

The BVHP’s primary goal for the next twelve months is to enhance and expand the regional community health network within the Brazos Valley. As with most endeavors, the sustainability of this health network will depend largely upon the strength of the infrastructure and the commitment of its members. With each passing milestone, however, the BVHP has set the pace to succeed.

**“improve the health status and access to care in the seven-county region of the Brazos Valley through the collaboration of services and the creation of local partnerships.”**

## Sharing Insights Between Peer Communities

***At its inception, the Center committed to long-term relationships with two communities in Texas: the Brazos Valley and the Lower Rio Grande Valley.***

In late 2001, activities commenced with a comprehensive community health status assessment in the Brazos Valley. In November of the same year, a four-year project jointly funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) began in the Rio Grande Valley. This project established the Integrated Health Outreach System (IHOS) to increase access to care for colonia residents along the Texas-Mexico border. Local partners including Nuestra Clínica del Valle, El Milagro Clinic, Planned Parenthood of Hidalgo County, Migrant Health Promotion, Texas Department of State Health Services Region 11, and the Office of Border Health joined to develop a collaborative strategy to get basic health and human services to isolated residents of two areas in Hidalgo County.

Initially the strategy was to establish shared protocols for each respective agency's community health workers called promotores – to identify residents' needs, make referrals to appropriate resources, and assist families in navigating the health delivery system. As the project evolved, however, the promotores have taken a more

central role in the planning and facilitation of the project. Project promotores and staff have begun to engage residents of the target colonias in local partnerships with the ultimate goal of building local capacity to improve population health.

Over the past four years, several collateral projects have grown from IHOS activities. A comprehensive community health status assessment was conducted for Hidalgo and Starr Counties in 2002-2003 and led to the development of La Estrella Saludable (Healthy Star), a health partnership in Starr County. La Estrella Saludable mobilized quickly and began activities around diabetes prevention and management and domestic violence. In addition, they have also commissioned a feasibility study for establishing a local health department. A second project

grew from the creation of a bi-county health services district for Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. CCHD was asked to assist the Rio Grande Valley Health Services District in developing a strategic plan to begin providing essential services to the medically indigent in the two counties. The Center later developed an operational plan which was subsequently approved by the Department of State Health Services.

As a result of the progress and success of the initial IHOS project and collateral developments, key staff from the RWJF and HRSA traveled to the border area for a site visit last April to explore the potential of expanding the current project. The Center submitted a new proposal to RWJF in July of 2005 to develop a sustainable, replicable model for building local capacity and addressing each county's specific health issues.

The activities in the Brazos Valley and the Lower Rio Grande Valley have followed similar paths over the past four years, both rooted strongly in the community health development approach. Staff from each project have been able to periodically share insights and strategies with one another which has helped with leadership development and problem solving. An initial goal of the Center, however, is to connect the two communities more formally to facilitate information sharing and technical assistance between leaders and partners from both the Brazos Valley and Lower Rio Grande Valley communities.

*Below: Aurelio Martinez (standing, left) and Michael Felix (standing, right) discuss public health issues with promotores in Hidalgo County.*





**Joseph R. Sharkey,  
Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D**



**Joseph R. Sharkey,  
Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D.  
is in the Department of Social  
and Behavioral Health at the  
School of Rural Public Health.**

His responsibilities include serving as Director of CDC-funded Texas Healthy Aging Research Network (TxHAN) Center, Editor of the Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly, & as a member of the Graduate Faculty of Nutrition at Texas A&M University. He joined the faculty at SRPH in 2002 after receiving his doctoral degree from the Department of Nutrition at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health, where he also earned his Masters.

Dr. Sharkey is also co-director of the Program on Health Promotion and Aging at SRPH and a trans-NIH funded Health Maintenance Consortium Resource Center, and the Principal Investigator of three current projects.

Dr. Sharkey's work has been recognized with several awards from the Gerontological Health Section of the American Public Health Association. Dr. Sharkey's main areas of research include nutritional and functional assessment, nutrition policy and aging, and the influence of environmental factors and lifestyle behaviors on the prevention and self-management of chronic conditions in older populations.

**TxHAN**  
Your Partners for Healthy Aging

## Healthy Aging & Healthy Eating

***The Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN) was funded by CDC to develop a healthy aging research agenda for the CDC's Prevention Research Center (PRC) Network and to serve as a model theme network for the CDC-PRC program.***

The Texas Healthy Aging Network (TxHAN) Research Center was funded by CDC in 2004 as one of only eight HAN centers in the nation, joining HANs in Washington, California, Colorado, Illinois, South Carolina, North Carolina, and West Virginia.

The TxHAN works with local, county, state and Federal partners to help communicate prevention research findings to community-level health providers. According to TxHAN director Dr. Joe Sharkey, the TxHAN will galvanize existing prevention activities in Texas. Sharkey says, "We can improve the health and functioning of older adults by providing a mechanism to identify, implement, and evaluate and translate best practices." These health practices will be dispersed to older adults in rural and urban areas, and they will be sustained by relying on existing community structures and resources.

Currently, TxHAN is working with the Brazos Valley Council of Governments Aging Advisory Group, the Brazos Valley Aging Partnerships, the Academic Aging Partnership, and the Region and State Aging Partnership to establish a network of local, regional, and state partners dedicated to healthy aging. Sharkey stated that the TxHAN is also partnering with various groups to establish a national research agenda in nutrition and physical activity.

Sharkey outlined two of TxHAN's funded research activities in a recent interview. The first is the Brazos Valley Food Environment Project. This project will use state-of-the-art Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to determine the geographical characteristics of the six counties in the Brazos Valley and describe the "food

environment" for older adults in two of these counties. This refers to food quality, variety, and cost of food in local stores. The information will provide the research team with a clear picture of the food habits of older adults in the Brazos Valley. The team, led by Dr. Sharkey, includes Dr. Marcia Ory who is the co-director of TxHAN, Dr. Li Zhu of the School of Rural Public Health department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Scott Horel who is a GIS specialist at the School of Rural Public Health, John Prochaska of the School of Rural Public Health, Jennifer Creel of Texas A&M Department of Nutrition, and Monica Wendel from the CCHD. Sharkey and the TxHAN were also recently awarded a grant from the Southern Rural Development Center to study and document the factors that may be most critical to food choices made by low-income residents in the colonias in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. According to Sharkey, TxHAN "will focus on the accessibility, availability, and affordability of healthful food" in the region.

**"We can improve the health and functioning of older adults by providing a mechanism to identify, implement, evaluate and translate best practices."**