



# CCHD awarded funds for special interest projects

*In addition to the funding the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to continue as a Prevention Research Center, the Center was also awarded an additional \$2 million for five years in support of three special interest projects focusing on nutrition and obesity, healthy aging, and cancer. The following is a summary of the special interest projects:*

## Texas Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research Network (TxNOPRN) Collaborating Center

The TxNOPRN Collaborating Center, led by Dr. Joseph Sharkey, is a collaboration of multidisciplinary investigators from the School of Rural Public Health (Texas A&M Health Science Center), two land-grant institutions (Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M University), Institute for Obesity Research and Program Evaluation, Texas AgriLife Extension, and the Institute for Science Technology and Public Policy with numerous state, regional, and local partners. TxNOPRN will actively engage in activities with the larger NOPRN, to respond to issues related to the identification of policies that affect improved access and availability of healthy foods; identification of determinants of policy adoption throughout the food system; research on policy implementation in rural and deprived areas; and direct and indirect outcomes of policy implementation. In addition to working with the larger NOPRN, members of TxNOPRN will work with rural communities within Central Texas and colonias in South

Texas to gain insight and feedback on aspects of policy change that seek to influence children's access to healthy foods. Specific aims of the TxNOPRN are to:

- (1) Establish a multidisciplinary TxNOPRN building upon current regional and state-wide activities;
- (2) Contribute to the NOPRN policy research agenda, especially in the areas of community and families, and implementation of policies;
- (3) Work with our community and statewide network to prioritize research activities, communicate with key stakeholders, and disseminate research findings; and
- (4) Identify a strategy for ensuring network sustainability and growth.

## Texas Healthy Aging Research Network (TxHAN)

The TxHAN, led by Dr. Joseph Sharkey, was refunded to continue its membership in the Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN), which is a CDC-funded thematic research and practice network promoting healthy aging research. Our specific mission is to continue to develop and work

with a network of community, health and aging services organizations in our local seven-county region of Brazos Valley as well as the Lower Rio Grande Valley and across Texas to conduct community participatory research around aging-related prevention issues. As a member of the HAN, the TxHAN serves a leadership role in network areas of nutrition and environmental assessment. The TxHAN continues its participation in key HAN research initiatives in the areas of physical activity and environmental assessment, while also engaging in addressing new research priorities identified by the HAN network in areas including depression, nutrition, and Alzheimer's Disease.

## Central Texas Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network

The Central Texas Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CTxCPCRN), led by Dr. Marcia Ory, is one of nine Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network members. The Network will review public health interventions that show promising results and test them

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in new populations and settings, and determine how best to spread, implement, and evaluate the interventions. Working with colleagues at Scott and White HealthCare and Texas AgriLife Extension, the CTxCPCRN aims to advance community-based participatory research around cancer prevention and control by working with community stakeholders. The network will then disseminate evidence-based cancer prevention and control interventions to public health researchers and public health practitioners. The interventions will target improving post-treatment care and linking cancer survivors to locally available resources that encourage adoption of lifestyle behaviors that reduce risk of developing the same type of cancer a second time or the development of another type of cancer.

## Community Spotlight

# Colonias Sanas y Seguras (Healthy and Safe Colonias)

Alton, Texas, received an EPA Environmental Justice grant and partnered with CCHD for: Colonias Sanas y Seguras. The project addresses the Safe Drinking Water and Solid Waste Disposal Acts and has two goals: 1) develop a replicable training program for promotoras on environmental health; and 2) educate colonia residents on solid waste disposal and clean drinking water to improve health status and reduce exposure to environmental risks. Methodology includes: 1) training of two certified promotoras in focus group moderation; 2) promotoras conducting focus groups with colonia residents; 3) developing first training module; 4) CCHD promotoras employing the content of the module during outreach with colonia results, utilizing post tests, revising the curriculum and finalizing the training materials; 5) organizing and conducting the first promotora training session (82 trained); 6) developing the second

training module and following the same process of development, revision, training (60 trained), and evaluation; 7) write up project results and evaluation. Projected outcomes include: two packaged promotora training modules on environmental issues, increased number of Alton colonia residents with

enhanced environmental knowledge on solid waste disposal (121 residents trained) and clean drinking water (110 residents trained); and changed environmental behaviors among Alton colonia residents.



## PROMOTORA CONFERENCE



### Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies 4th Binational Conference for Promotores de Salud

Close to 200 promotores (community health workers) from the Rio Grande Valley, other areas of Texas, and Reynosa, Mexico convened for the 4th Binational Conference for Promotores de Salud on Friday, October 2nd in South Padre Island, Texas. The conference theme, "Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies," included break-out sessions designed to help promotores address mental health in their communities. Dr. Ana Nogales, author, community leader, and Clinical Director of Casa de la Familia in Los Angeles, CA, served as the keynote speaker.

A conference committee comprised of Mario E. Ramirez, M.D., library staff and several local entities organized the event.



## Sabemos Project Wraps Up with Community Events

In 2008-2009, CCHD researchers implemented and evaluated **Sabemos**, a CDC-sponsored program featuring community outreach and a media campaign for parenting tobacco-free Hispanic/Latino youth. Implemented in three colonias, project promotores conducted community outreach meetings so that local families could discuss creating a smoke-free environment for their children. Radio ads provided additional information and support to families.

The project was recently completed with "thank you" events in each community. Project staff participated in health fairs by promoting the Sabemos message of a smoke-free environment. In Alton, promotores spoke to over 200 residents about second-hand smoke while project staff painted children's faces and handed out snow cones. In Progreso, promotores visited with residents about Sabemos while project staff provided pizza and face painting to over 100 children. The La Feria event was held in conjunction with the La Feria ISD Parental Involvement Program where promotores presented the Sabemos project and provided lunch to over 50 school staff and parent attendees.

# Graduate Student Spotlight



Omar Camarillo is a Doctoral Research Assistant with the Program for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities at the Center for Community Health Development. He is originally from San Juan, Texas in the Rio Grande Valley and is pursuing a Doctorate in the field of Sociology, with a major in Crime, Law & Deviance and possible minors in either Social Psychology or Sociology of Culture from Texas A&M University. He earned his Bachelors degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology from the University of Texas-Pan American. He also earned a Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Texas-Pan American.



Gwenetta Curry was born in New Bern, North Carolina. She received her Bachelors degree in Food and Nutritional Sciences from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. After completing her bachelors degree, she attended Southern Illinois University–Carbon-dale where she received her Masters degree in Animal Science. Her thesis research investigated the effects of linseed oil and omega-3 fatty acids in the diet of grazing dairy cow's milk. She worked for ConAgra Foods in Omaha, Nebraska for two years as a Food Scientist in product development. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Nutrition and Food Science at Texas A&M University. Her current research interest involves the cultural perspective on diet and nutrition in the African-American family.



Raquel Flores graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in allied health and a Spanish minor. She is currently a second-year Social and Behavioral student at SRPH as well as the treasurer for the department's student organization. She works with Dr. Joseph R. Sharkey on different research projects where she leads focus groups and performs translations (Spanish/English). She has always been interested in how language affects access to health services. When Raquel graduates, she plans to relocate to Angola, a country in Southwest Africa, to work with public health officials.



Cassie Johnson has been cooking since she was about 10 years old and interested in the connections between food and health since about the same time. In 2005, she graduated from Texas A&M with a B.S. in industrial engineering and a math minor. Then, in 2007, after working as a consultant engineer for two years, she decided she was most interested in food and health. She came to the School of Rural Public Health to do research with food and families and has enjoyed her opportunities at the school. Currently, she is working on a qualitative project with mothers about the daily food choice process.



Brandy Kelly, a nomad that claims California as her home, is currently a new doctoral student in Youth Development in the Recreation, Park and Tourism Science Department at TAMU. Though Brandy is new to CCHD, she is no stranger to Community Health. With an undergraduate degree in International Affairs concentrating in Global Public Health and Africa from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Brandy has had the opportunity to work on community health issues at the international and domestic levels and while pursuing her Masters at GW she worked for the AED in the Center on AIDS and Community Health. She is excited to be working with the evaluation team at CCHD and looks forward to all Texas A&M has to offer.

## Network Analysis Training

The Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) hosted a network analysis training on October 15th and 16th featuring Dr. Douglas Luke. Dr. Luke is the Director of the Center for Tobacco Policy and Research and Professor of Social Work

at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He has a strong interest in research methodology and has incorporated network analysis into a number of research projects, including a current evaluation of how state

tobacco control programs disseminate and implement evidence-based practices.

The two-day training provided participants with an overview of the history and utility of network analysis for public health and other health sciences. Attendees

had the opportunity to use professional network analysis software (Pajek & R-statnet) on several real-world public health datasets. Dr. Luke shared his experiences in designing network studies, learning how to present network results to a variety of

audiences, and reviewing network papers and grant applications.

A total of 30 individuals, representing various departments at the School of Rural Public Health and Texas A&M University, attended the training.



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## Resources

<http://depts.washington.edu/harn/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/prc/research-projects/special-interest-projects/prevention-research-promote-protect-brain-health.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/prc/research-projects/special-interest-projects/cancer-prevention-control-research-network.htm>

*\*\*please note that some of these have not been updated to reflect the newly  
funded centers as of yet\*\**

[http://www.library.uthscsa.edu/community/  
promotoresconference.cfm.](http://www.library.uthscsa.edu/community/promotoresconference.cfm)

## 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
- Assessment
- Evaluation

**Have you Moved?** We are continuously making efforts to keep our distribution list up to date. If you have a new email address or mailing address, please send it to Kelly Morris at [kamorris@srph.tamhsc.edu](mailto:kamorris@srph.tamhsc.edu) so that we may update your contact information in our mail out list.