



Public Health Connections

Southern Connecticut State University
School of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

A Message from the Chair Dr. Jean Breny

“I only have a minute:” Standing in Your Power for Justice

In his first speech from the floor of Congress in 1996, Representative Elijah Cummings (D-MD) recited a poem from Civil Rights activist Dr. Benjamin Mays, which had previously been quoted by his colleague, Maryland Democratic congressman, Parren Mitchell. The poem, which Cummings admitted to reciting several times a day, goes like this:

“I only have a minute. Sixty seconds in it.

Forced upon me, I did not choose it.

But I know that I must use it, give account if I abuse it, suffer if I lose it.

Only a tiny little minute, but eternity is in it.”

Congressmen Cummings and Mitchell devoted their lives to fighting for justice, equity, and the elimination of racism, and we are a better nation because of them. This fight, however, is not over and we find ourselves in a time where radical hate groups continue to gain momentum without a strong response from the highest levels of our government.

The theme of justice, anti-racism, and equity was alive and well at this year’s APHA meeting in Philadelphia. I was proud to be there along with several faculty and students from the Department of Public Health who were presenting on all types of public health research. Indeed, this issue of Connections is chock full of community-engaged, advocacy work all of our students and faculty are doing around the globe! As always, our community is walking the walk for social justice.

As we finish out another year and embark on a new decade, I challenge you to join me in continuing the fight for justice, to spend at least one “tiny little minute” each day to do the hard and important work needed to achieve true equity. Each one of us has the power to make a difference!



**In This
Edition**

**APHA
CPHA**

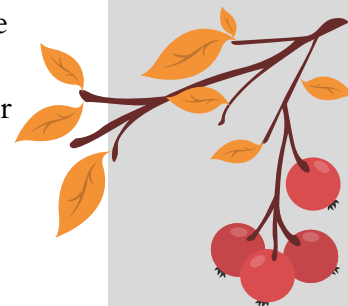
**Faculty
News**

**Student
News**

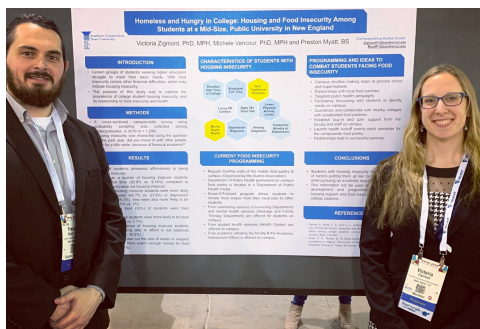
**Alumni
Updates**

**Save the
Date**

**Giving
Back**



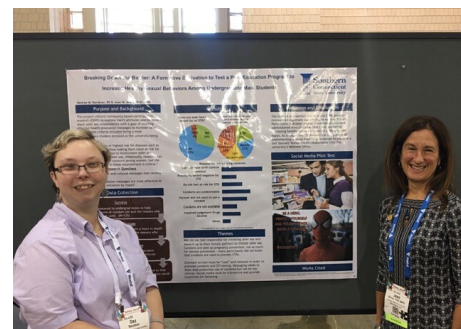
American Public Health Association November 2 - 7, 2019 in Philadelphia, PA



Preston Myatt and Dr. Vicki Zigmont presented a poster titled Homeless and Hungry in College: Housing and food insecurity among students at a mid-size, public university in New England.



Dr. Deborah Flynn presented an oral presentation titled Mindful Resilience Yoga for student veteran Stress.



Dez Rondeau and Dr. Jean Breny presented a poster titled Formative Evaluation to test a Peer Education Program to Increase Healthy Sexual Behaviors Among Undergraduate Male Students.

**The 2020
APHA conference
will be held in
San Francisco,
October 24 - 28**



Dr. Jean Breny, Dr. Marian Evans, Ellen Clinesmith



Ellen Clinesmith and Esi Ambaiwei

Connecticut Public Health Association, October 21, 2019



On October 21, SCSU Public Health students, faculty and alumni attended the CPHA conference in Southington.



Dr. Christine Unson in Taiwan

Dr. Christine Unson presented at the 11th International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Asia/Oceania Regional Congress on October 26, 2019 at the Taipei International Convention Center. Her study examined strategies older Philippine women used to overcome barriers to extending their working life past the obligatory retirement age (65 years). She interviewed 14 older women (average age 67) who had changed employment when they were 55 years or older. The results show that women's main strategies involved being self-reliant, updating their skills, and seeking support of family, friends and co-workers. They saw extending their working life as a means of maintaining their health, giving back to their communities, and self-affirmation. The women encountered several instances of ageism and sexism.

A manuscript by **Drs. Christine Unson and Deborah Flynn** of the Public Health Department, Dr. Queendaleen Chukwurah, Tulane University and SCSU MPH alumna, Dr. Maryann Glendon, SCSU Nursing Department, and Dr. Tammy Testut, Nursing Department, Sacred Heart University on African-American caregiving was accepted by the Issues in Mental Health Nursing Journal for publication. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the ambiguities and uncertainties experienced by a diverse group of African-American caregivers. The team interviewed 6 male and 8 female caregivers between 24 years and 82 years who cared for an older relative with dementia, cardiovascular disease, or other debilitating illness, for more than 5 hours a week. The analysis was framed by Schlossberg's Transition Theory and supported by Mishel's Reconceptualized Uncertainty in Illness Theory. The team found that caregiving burdened younger caregivers more than older caregivers. The most common coping strategies were, seeking support of family members and coming to terms with uncertainty. The paper concluded with recommendations for nursing care.



Dr. Vicki Zigmont's research on statin users elevated risk of new-onset-diabetes was published in the October 2019 issue of Prevention Magazine.

Zigmont, V. A., Shoben, A. B., Lu, B., Kaye, G. L., Clinton, S. K., Harris, R. E., & Olivo-Marston, S. E. (2019). Statin users have an elevated risk of dysglycemia and new-onset-diabetes. *Diabetes/metabolism research and reviews*, e3189

Dr. John Nwangwu, professor of public health, was interviewed by National Geographic during a video about the lack of clean drinking water in parts of Africa.

In the video "Orange Is the New Black" star Uzo Aduba joins Global Citizen as they rally millions around the world to push for clean drinking water and proper sanitation for the world's most vulnerable people. They travel to Aduba's parents' homeland of Nigeria, where they urge governors to commit state funds to eradicate the contaminated water and open defecation crises (National Geographic Website Video Description).

The following is a link to the National Geographic website: (You may have to right click on the screen and unmute the sound.) www.nationalgeographic.com/activate/clean-water/

Adjunct Professor Dr. Jennifer Botwick, ND

What I've been Up To!

For too long, I felt pressured and had a sense of failure, when being approached by folks with their often ragged cardboard signs asking for help when I was at the stoplight. I don't carry cash and often, never felt completely comfortable giving cash. I decided to get organized...and that's how LunchBrake was born. In the process of becoming a non-profit, LunchBrake.Org is a way to approach hunger and homelessness.

At all times on the passenger seat of my car, I have prepacked brown lunch bags, ready to dispense when I'm braking at a stoplight/stop sign. These bags are filled with non-perishable food items and waters, items most appreciated all year 'round. As of this writing, I fund the project myself. I have had 1 LunchBrake party, where guests have enthusiastically brought items for filling the bags. We fill them and everyone goes home with at least a dozen bags to give away. What really strikes me, is how we can help and also, I have and have heard many beautiful stories from people who have started doing this with me.

All recipients have been most thankful and appreciate. I wish we didn't have to do this, ya know-end hunger & homelessness, please put me out of a job! But, until that time, I hope you'll join me with a donation or coming to a bag filling event and literally- spread the wealth of food!

Stay tuned for your opportunity to join us at the next LunchBrake party.

The National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE)

Higher education attainment and providing a supportive environment for young leaders are core to the mission of The National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE). NAHSE is a non-profit association for minority health care executives founded in 1968 with the purpose of promoting the advancement and development of minority health care leaders, and elevating the quality of health care services rendered to minority and underserved communities. The Connecticut Chapter of NAHSE is inviting you to join our chapter as we continue to shape the next generation of healthcare leaders today.

NAHSE's purpose is to ensure greater participation of minority groups in the health field and the Connecticut Chapter sees immense value for students through an ongoing relationship and opportunities:

- Access to a national network of healthcare leaders
- Mentorship opportunities for students from leaders of diverse backgrounds
- Increased awareness of healthcare administration as a career path
- Potential for NAHSE to host an event on your campus
- Student rates for NAHSE membership

For more information, please visit nahsect.org or email us at nahse.ctchapter@gmail.com.





SCSU Public Health Society Update

This semester has been a busy one for the Public Health Society! They have had one event each month starting with “Spooked Into Healthy Habits” tabling event and ending with their Social Justice Month Event, “What Makes You YOU?”. This event had people put quotes about social justice and positivity on a banner that is now hanging in the Orlando House. In October, 20 club members joined other undergraduate and graduate students at the Connecticut Public Health Association Annual Meeting. They also worked with CARE to conduct a food drive for DESK: Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in November. Finally, they helped staff the department’s table at the Major’s Expo in October.

It was a busy and fun semester for the club and they are excited for the upcoming semester, especially since they were awarded a large box of condoms to distribute as part of Advocate for Youth’s Safe Site Campaign!

Program Planning – Residence Life Tabling Projects

The students in Dr. Risicky’s undergraduate Program Planning class had a great semester putting on eight health education events in the five straight line residence halls. The two topics for the sections were “End of Semester Health” and “Emotional Health” and participation was the largest we have ever had. Each group averaged about 70 students over two nights, for almost 300 freshman and sophomore participants playing games and learning positive health habits from these upperclassman. Students worked with RA’s to plan/host the events, created their own two educational tables, and made evaluation instruments to evaluate knowledge and attitude change.



Department Social Media Update

Graduate Assistant Avery Gartman has been busy this fall creating and updating social media platforms that promote the Department of Public Health at SCSU. Facebook and Instagram are essential to reaching and connecting with students and other communities. The new SCSU Public Health Department Instagram (@SCSUpublichealth) has reached almost one hundred followers. Avery has a 2020 goal of connecting with 300 followers and continuing to spread awareness of public health both on and off campus. Please feel free to follow us on all platforms to keep informed about all the wonderful things happening in the Public Health Department.



Open your Instagram app. Go to your home page and click the menu in the top right corner. Tap "Nametag" and then scan our icon.

SOPHE Collegiate Champion Dez Rondeau

My name is Dez, and I am a Collegiate Champion for the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). As a Collegiate Champion, I am the liaison between SCSU and the National SOPHE organization to promote events and opportunities and help people get involved with the organization. SOPHE is an organization with a focus on professional development and advancing health education.

If you are interested in becoming a member of SOPHE, you can join here: <https://my.sophe.org/Member-Communities/Membership-Join-and-Renew>. **Use the code CHAMPION30 to get \$30 off your membership fee!**

If you would like more information about becoming a Collegiate Champion please visit this link: <https://www.sophe.org/membership/collegiate-champions/>

And, don't forget to join us in Atlanta, GA (3/12-3/20) for SOPHE's 70th anniversary conference and Dr. Jean Breny's presidential speech!

Public Health Food Pantry Update - meeting a growing need at SCSU

It has been a busy semester for our food pantry! During the summer, the pantry was relocated to a larger space on the first floor of the Orlando House. Since then, we have noticed a steady increase in usage. We decided to add fresh produce in November, which has been a big success. Graduate Assistant Brittany Bard has been logging, tracking and stocking all donations. For more information about the pantry, please contact Brittany Bard, at bardb1@southernct.edu or Ellen Clinesmith at clinesmithe1@southernct.edu

Want to donate? Items needed are listed below:

Fresh Fruit - apples, oranges, bananas

Fresh vegetables - onions, squash, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes

Soup - vegetarian and meat based

Shelf stable milk including nut milks (almond and cashew), soy milk, rice milk, flax milk, and hemp milk

Cereal - instant oatmeal, boxes of cold cereal

Granola Bars

Bread

We would like to thank everyone that generously donated items to the pantry. We appreciate your continued support!



Graduate Assistant Brittany Bard



2019 MPH Graduates Aubrey Roscoe, Iyanna Fairweather, Krystal Medley, Radhika Patel, Sherry Van Lang, Allie Mirek, Rose Richi, Shama Banik, Caitlin Daikus

Maura (Valentine) Esposito, BS 91', MPH 11' – Maura started her public health career with the Newtown Health Department. Shortly, she joined the Chesprocott Health District in 1992 as a Sanitarian. She has worked for several health departments/district while raising 2 children where she resides in Cheshire. In 2011, Maura became the part-time Health Director for the Town of Killingworth. In 2014 the Director of Health position became available at the Chesprocott Health District. Maura has been the Health Director for several years and enjoys working with her community and state/local partners. For more information about the health district and the health department please visit: www.chesprocott.org.

Maura's environmental, community health and emergency preparedness staff are all graduates of the SCSU undergrad (7 staff) and SCSU MPH (4 of staff) grad's. GO SCSU!

Drew Messore, BS 00', MS 05', MS 12', MPH 17'

Drew is the CEO of VetFuel, a tiny non-profit that is growing and doing some amazing work in the New Haven community. The directive of VetFuel is simple: Offer all of Connecticut's Veterans seamless assistance with mobility, health access, and means tested advocacy for the purpose of reintegration into civilian life. For more information about VetFuel visit <http://www.vetfuel.org/>



Seth Mastrocola

Seth Mastrocola, MPH 14', has been appointed to the Board of Directors for VetFuel. Seth has a background in Chemical Weapons exposure and his experience working with soldiers returning home is highly valued by the organization.

Bianca Shinn-Desras, MS 08', M.Ed.10', MPH 11', has been selected by Nestle Waters North America as a scholar for their Aspen Ideas festival. She will be part of Nestle's CEO's delegation.

We are looking for more Alumni Updates! Please email your update to Ellen Clinesmith at clinesmithe1@southernct.edu



Senior Lecturer from University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand to Visit Public Health Department

Dr. Mary Simpson, Senior Lecturer in Management Communication, University of Waikato, in Hamilton, New Zealand, will be visiting the department on December 2-9. She will be working with Dr. Christine Unson to complete two manuscripts and plan for other studies on caregiving. They collaborated on a study on motivations, barriers, and benefits of extending the working life of older women while Dr. Unson was on sabbatical at the University of Waikato in 2018. They will also complete a manuscript on the socialization of caregivers in the Maori population, a study funded by a grant awarded to both professors by the University of Waikato. Dr. Simpson will be giving a talk on the New Zealand healthcare systems in Dr. Unson's Global Health class in room ENG B118 at 9:35 a.m. on Tuesday, December 3, 2019. Please email Dr. Unson (unsonc1@southernct.edu) if you intend to attend Dr. Simpson's talk.



Dr. Mary Simpson

Advocacy Training - 2/8/20

The Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) and the SCSU School of Health and Human Services are hosting a 2020 CPHA-SCSU Advocacy Training on **February 8, 2020, 8:30am-3pm**, in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom. This will be a free, one-day event that is open to the public. Public health students and professionals will build their knowledge of legislative advocacy and policy making, and learn the skills necessary to be successful advocates at the state, local, and institutional levels. **For more information or questions on how to register for this event, please e-mail advocacytraining2020@gmail.com.** We hope to see you there!

Student Research and Creative Activity Conferences - 5/2/20 and 5/11/20

The 6th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference will take place on **Saturday, May 2** and the 4th Annual Graduate Research Conference on **Monday, May 11**. For more information about each conference please visit <http://more.southernct.edu/creative-conference/>

Guatemala 7/25/20 - 8/9/20

For more information, please email Dr. William Faraclas, faraclasw1@southernct.edu

This summer... do something really special! **2020 Public Health Field Study in Guatemala** *Study in* **Guatemala** *Accepting applications now!*

July 25 - August 9, 2020

Earn 6 credits, and make this a summer you will never forget!

For more information contact Dr. William Faraclas at faraclasw1@southernct.edu

Thick jungles, mountain terrain and interior, lakeside Mayan villages provide an electrifying backdrop for this intensive public-health investigation that uses a hands-on, experiential-learning model.

SCSU Public Health Student Development Fund

Dear Students, Alumni, Faculty, and Friends:

Please consider supporting the Public Health Student Development Fund. This fund provides support to students seeking to further their professional development at conferences and study abroad experiences. This year, four MPH students received scholarships to attend the American Public Health Association Conference in Philadelphia.

To donate, please visit www.southernct.edu/giving/give-online and select "other" under donation destination and write in Public Health Student Development Fund.

Thank you for your continued support!

Jean M. Breny, PhD, MPH



Ellen Clinesmith with MPH student grant recipients Esi Amnaiowei, Avery Gartman, Dez Rondeau and Preston Myatt in Philadelphia.

"The conference was a perfect opportunity for me to figure out my potential thesis topic and a great way for me to connect with other young professional in the field. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to attend APHA! "

-Avery Gartman, 1st year MPH Student

Happy Holidays!

Southern Connecticut State University
Department of Public Health
144 Farnham Ave.
New Haven, CT 06515
203-392-6950

<https://www.southernct.edu/publichealth>

Dr. Jean M. Breny, Chair
Dr. Marian Evans, Graduate Program Coordinator
Dr. Peggy Gallup, Undergraduate Program Coordinator
Dr. Stanley Bernard, Internship Coordinator
Ellen Clinesmith, UA, Public Health Connections Editor

