



# Public Health Connections

Southern Connecticut State University  
School of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health



WINTER 2020 | VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

## A New Year - Moving Forward Together

A Message from the Chair Dr. Jean Breny

Happy new year to you, our hard-working and devoted public health community! As has happened with so many other things in 2020, this newsletter is slightly delayed, but we did not want to miss the opportunity to update you on all that our community is doing. These days, it is as if every week there is a new and tragic reminder of why our public health mission is integral and essential. That our collaborative work with communities in preventing disease through translational research, ensuring cultural humility, and eliminating racial disparities gets tested repeatedly. It is like we are living in a much more evil and darker version of the movie *Groundhog Day*. The most recent evidence of this, undoubtedly, being the violent attack on our nation's capital earlier this month. A mob of domestic terrorists spurred on by a faction of Americans who refuse to believe in the integrity of our election process because the results were not in their favor. Although they tried to destroy the process, they were hugely unsuccessful. As a nation, we were left shaken and scared, as we have been so many times before.

In the movie *Groundhog Day*, Phil, played by Bill Murray, remarks: "There is no way that this winter is ever going to end as long as this groundhog keeps seeing his shadow. I don't see any other way out. He's got to be stopped. And I have to stop him (1)." As a community of public health professionals committed to social justice – we know this groundhog, and it is racism and we have been battling it since the beginning of our nation's history. We know we need to continue to work until injustices, inequities, and racism cease, and when people can live safely, freely, and healthfully in every community. In my recent [article](#), I call on health promotion researchers and practitioners to be antiracist and commit to eliminating systemic racism (2). To do so, we must commit to the hard work and address the roots of these problems to eliminate the system of power and policies that support inequities. In the pages of this newsletter, we are proud to share the great work our community is doing around these issues. It is my sincere hope that 2021 will be a more peaceful and healthier year and one in which we will be able to see each other in person, once again. Until that time, please take care of yourselves and know you are champions of health and equity.

**“We must stop the heartbeat of denial and revive America to the thumping beat of truth. The carnage has no chance of stopping until the denial stops.”**

–Kendi, I.X. (January, 2021). *Denial is the Heartbeat of America*, The Atlantic.

1. Ramos, H. (Director). (1993). *Groundhog Day* [Film]. Columbia Pictures.

2. Breny, J. (2020). Continuing the Journey to Health Equity: Becoming antiracist in health promotion research and practice. *Health Education & Behavior*, 47(5), pp.665–670. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120954393>

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## Announcing the Connecticut Chapter of the Society for Public Health Education (CT SOPHE)!

By Nicole Batista, MPH Candidate 2021

Southern Connecticut State University

Board President, CT Chapter of the Society for Public Health Education



We are so excited to officially announce the newest Chapter of the Society for Public Health Education right here in Connecticut! The 501c3 non-profit organization aims to provide leadership to the field of health education/promotion and improve the health of our communities in Connecticut with a guiding focus on health equity.

In collaboration with a group of founding board members consisting of local public health professionals working in academia, nonprofits and community health centers throughout the state, as founding President and SCSU MPH student, I worked hard over the summer to spearhead the inception of this chapter during my internship with national SOPHE.

CT SOPHE plans to provide professional development, networking, and mentorship opportunities to both professional and student members of the chapter. As we look forward to our first operational year in 2021, we are excited to expand our membership and begin offering continuing education and professional development events for local professionals in the field. We believe that a local chapter of SOPHE will increase access to these important continuing education opportunities and provide a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration on projects to advance health equity in our state. If you are interested in joining CT SOPHE, please visit our website at [ctsophe.com](https://ctsophe.com).

### You can also follow us on social media!

Instagram: [@ctsopne](https://www.instagram.com/ctsopne)

Facebook: [@ctsophe](https://www.facebook.com/ctsophe)

Twitter: [@ctsophe](https://twitter.com/ctsophe)

## Fall 2020 Public Health Student Award Winners

**Daisy Hernandez** received the Michael J. Perlin award and was honored during the Connecticut Public Health Association Conference for her work with the East Shore District Health Department and Medical Reserve Corps in the COVID-19 response.

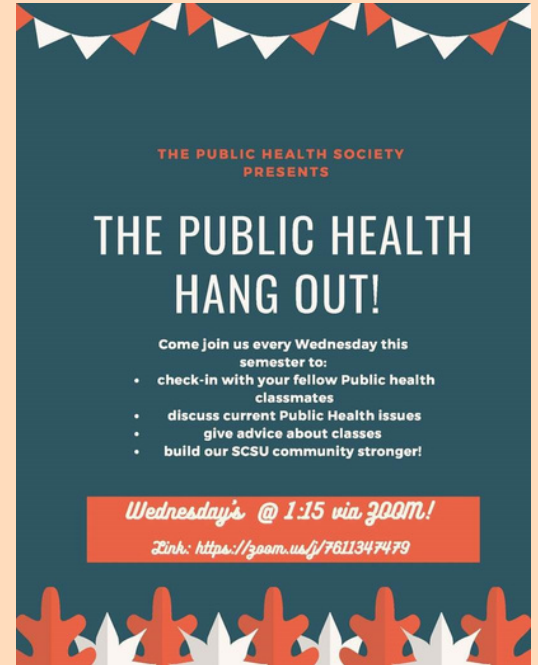
**Breanna DeLeon** received the New England Public Health Training Center's Health Equity Internship Program, with it comes a \$3500 scholarship stipend.



## SCSU Public Health Society Update

As the leader of the Public Health Society and senior in our Public Health program here at Southern, I know that this semester has been tough for everyone with the stress of COVID-19 and transitioning to mostly virtual learning. The Public Health Hang-out has created an outlet to bring members of our SCSU community together while discussing important issues all at the same time. We started out with only a few people coming to our weekly zoom meeting but now we have a strong group with many students interested in leadership opportunities for the club moving forward. Currently the Public Health Hang-out is teaming up with CARE New Haven - Community Alliance for Research and Engagement, in helping to advertise and bring awareness to a virtual food drive they have coming up. It was a pleasure to lead this group over the course of this semester and I am looking forward to what next semester has in store for us!

Best Regards - Julie Golebiewski



On November 5, author **Rachel Kauder Nalebuff** visited SCSU's Women's Health Class, taught by Dr. Marian Evans. She discussed her book, *My Little Red Book*, an anthology of stories from around the world about first periods.

Rachel defines herself as an interdisciplinary educator who works with oral history, performance, and public health.

In addition to her writing, Rachel runs a memoir program for seniors and lectures at Brooklyn College.



Southern Connecticut State University is thankful for her guidance and insight into this topic of women's health.

"Seldom can a book stretch to accommodate both its author's and its publisher's fondest hopes: that it be original yet universal, artistic yet practical, and likely to sell briskly for centuries to come... It is hard to imagine any woman, from the most straitlaced and body-denying to the most uninhibited and body-embracing, who will not read right through it with pure enjoyment."  
—The New York Times

The nature of the book is meant to be raw and vulnerable. So often are periods ignored and stigmatized, that the subject becomes taboo. The open dialog in class allowed for exploration of defining moments in one's personal history. Students had the opportunity to discuss the book and participate in a reflective writing exercise.







By Professor Tamara Rissman

This fall, I offered my classes 1 extra credit point for voting. If they mailed in, they sent me a screenshot of their accepted ballot, and if they voted in person, they took pictures with their "I voted" sticker. I did NOT ask who they voted for, what party they were affiliated with, or advise them in anyway who to vote for. I provided them links to check their voter registration status and assisted (if they needed assistance) to register.

I received a lot of great pictures and excited emails! Please see the fantastic pictures of some of my students voting, for many this was their first time!





COVID-19  
TESTING AHEAD

### By Professor Susan Hurt

I have a passion for cooking, and never take for granted that our pantry is forever full, and vegetable garden grows in leaps and bounds. Like all of you, I am very much aware of food insecurity in our communities, especially during a pandemic. Recently, I learned about a group known as Lasagna Love. It was founded by a young mother here in California at the beginning of the pandemic. Rhiannon and her little daughter started to make and deliver lasagnas to people in her community who needed a hot meal. Since then, the “movement” has grown throughout the country. How could I possibly ignore this opportunity to share my resources with others? I signed up to volunteer, indicating the distance I was willing to travel, and how often I could be of service. After waiting a few weeks, I received my first “match,” a family of three adults. Some of our members choose to include “extras” such as a loaf of Italian bread, salad, and cookies. I followed suit, and my recipient family was very appreciative. There are no words to describe the joy I felt after safely making the delivery. My heart was full as I officially became a “Lasagna Mama” as our members are called.

If you know someone who could benefit by a home cooked meal, would like to donate, or volunteer to become a Lasagna Mama/Lasagna Papa, please go to <https://www.lasagnalove.org> Let's help spread the word! Happy holidays to you all!



### Racism is a Public Health Issue!

Join The SCSU Department of Public Health for their Fall Lunch and Learn Series



Thursday, November 5, 2020  
1-2pm

#### Dr. Anuli Njoku

will discuss her recent research: Police Brutality against Blacks in the USA and Ensuing Protests: Implications for Social Distancing and Black Health during COVID-19.

To register, please email Ellen Clinesmith at [clinesmithe1@southernct.edu](mailto:clinesmithe1@southernct.edu).

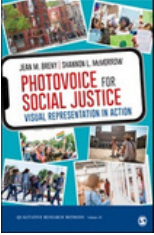


### Racism is a Public Health Issue!

On November 5, 2020 Public Health Faculty member **Dr. Anuli Njoku** presented her recent research titled Police brutality against Blacks in the United States and ensuing protests: Implications for social distancing and Black health during COVID-19. SCSU faculty, students and staff participated in the fall Department of Public Health Lunch and Learn series.

Click the link below to access the full article:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/57RPHK2MFBC8PHJ8NIC/full?target=10.1080/10911359.2020.1822251>



### **Dr. Jean Breny**

Breny, J. & McMorrow, S. (2021). *Photovoice for Social Justice: Visual Representation in Action*. Qualitative Research Methods Series. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Breny, J. & McMorrow, S. (2021). *Photovoice for Social Justice: Visual Representation in Action*. Qualitative Research Methods Series. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

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Alber, J., Allegrante, J., Auld, ME., & Breny, J. (2020). Looking Back and Moving Forward: SOPHE's 70 Years of Contributions to Health Education. *Health Education & Behavior*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120964195>

Breny, J. & DeLeon, B. Employing Photovoice to Develop Community-Based Advocates around Climate and Health. Oral presentation at SOPHE Advocacy Summit, October, 2020

### **Betty Jung**

(June 22, 2020). Jung, Betty C. Lisa M. Sullivan and Sandro Galeo, eds. 2019. *Teaching Public Health*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. [Book Review] *World Medical & Health Policy*. doi: 10.1002/wmh3.347  
Copyright2020 Policy Studies Organization

Book Review: Lisa M. Sullivan and Sandro Galeo, eds. 2019. *Teaching Public Health*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. \$46.49. pp. 352. ISBN: 9781421429809. Betty C. Jung First published: 22 June 2020  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/wmh3.347>

### **Dr. Anuli Njoku**

Police brutality against Blacks in the United States and ensuing protests: Implications for social distancing and Black health during COVID-19 <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/57RPKHR2MFBC8PHJ8NIC/full?target=10.1080/10911359.2020.1822251>

### **Tamara Rissman**

Symptom Profiles of a Convenience Sample of Patients with COVID-19- United States, January-April 2020  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6928a2.htm>

Preliminary Incidence and Trend of Infections with Pathogens Transmitted Commonly Through Food - Foodborne Diseases Active Surveillance Network, 10 U.S. Sites, 2016-2019  
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6917a1.htm>

## SCSU Affiliated Presentations

### **Neighborhood socioeconomic status and breastfeeding initiation and duration among primiparous black women**

Michele Griswold, PhD, MPH, RN, IBCLC Yvette Cozier, DSc, MPH<sup>2</sup>, Sybil Crawford, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Donna Perry, PhD, RN<sup>3</sup>, Sharina D Person, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Lynn Rosenberg, Sc.D.<sup>4</sup> and Julie Palmer, Sc.D.<sup>4</sup>, (1)Southern Connecticut University, New Haven, CT, (2)Boston University School of Public Health, Boston, MA, (3)University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, (4)Slone Epidemiology Center at Boston University, Boston, MA

### **The elephant in the room: Is it time to talk about breastfeeding for women living with HIV in the U.S.**

Michele Griswold, PhD, MPH, RN, IBCLC<sup>1</sup>, Jessica Pagano-Therrien, PhD, RN, CPNP<sup>2</sup> and Rita Amoah, RN, B.Ed.<sup>2</sup>, (1)Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT, (2)University of Massachusetts Medical School, Graduate School of Nursing, Worcester, MA

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Environmental Justice and Health Disparities**

Adrienne Wald, EdD, MBA, RN, MCHES, CNE, School of Natural and Health Sciences, and Anuli Njoku, DrPH, MPH, Department of Public Health, Southern Connecticut State University

### **Unmet needs: A community based participatory research (CBPR) approach to addressing basic needs in higher education**

Elizabeth Schwartz, MPH, Victoria Zigmont, PhD, MPH, Ryan Conway, Breanna De Leon, BS, Mahoghany Dolberry, Andressa Granado, Muna Mah, Aliyah Manning, Elisabeth McNivens, BS, Amanda Murray, Rachel Schaffer, Natalie Van Komen and Michele Vancour, PhD MPH, Southern Connecticut State University

### **Combating racial injustice: Photovoice as a catalyst for change**

Breanna De Leon, BS and Jean Breny, PhD, MPH, Southern Connecticut State University

### **Moving Toward Student Basic Needs Security in Higher Education: Improving Knowledge of Food and Housing Insecurity, Food Resource Utilization, and Dietary Health**

Victoria Zigmont, PhD, MPH, Department of Public Health, Southern Connecticut State University, and Barbara Baquero, PhD, MPH, Department of Community and Behavioral Health, University of Iowa

### **Support for Local Environmental Health**

Anuli Njoku, DrPH, MPH, Department of Public Health, Southern Connecticut State University, and Michele Okoh, JD, Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, Duke University School of Law,

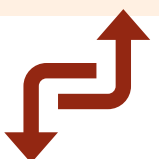
### **Socially Determined: A Call to Action**

Erica Bills, BA, MPA, Strategy, Michigan Public Health Institute, and Anuli Njoku, DrPH, MPH, Department of Public Health, Southern Connecticut State University

### **Discovering alternative solutions to increase condom use among heterosexual male students**

Anthony Lawson, MPH, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, and Jean Breny, PhD, MPH, Southern Connecticut State University

**"Health care is vital to all of us some of the time, but public health is vital to all of us all of the time." -C. Everett Koop**



## Alumni Update

**Chandra Kelsey** (current adjunct and 2017, 2015 alumna) promoted to Associate Director of Public Health Practice at Yale School of Public Health. She will oversee the Applied Practice Experience requirement for MPH candidates and will co-lead a course for public health practice focused on equitable engagement.



**Queendaleen C Chukwurah MBBS, MPH, PhD** successfully defended her dissertation titled "Disparities in Obesity-Related Health Risks among Hispanic Older Adults: The Impact of Food Insecurity" in December 2020. She wishes to thank Dr. Unson for her guidance and support. Her Ph.D. dream started in Dr. Unson's office, where she worked as her graduate research assistant. Dr. Unson also served as a member of her dissertation committee.

## Important Dates

January 26, 2021 Spring classes begin

March 21, 2021 Submission deadline for American Public Health Association (some deadlines may be extended).

April 6-9, 2021 **SOPHE Annual Conference – a digital experience**

"Gateway to the Future: Health Education & Promotion for All"

October 23-27, 2021 **American Public Health Association Conference – in person and online**

"Creating the Healthiest Nation: Strengthening Social Connectedness."



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