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Summer 2019

Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Magazine

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PUBLIC HEALTH

JIANN-PING HSU COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Summer 2019



Dean Greg Evans:
Seven years at the helm
PAGE 4

Correlation between
pet ownership and cancer
PAGE 6

Drive-thru flu clinic
PAGE 8

Up in smoke!
Health hazards of burning tires
PAGE 10

The risks of cheap fuel?

Message from the Interim Dean: Stuart Tedders, Ph.D.



As a Georgia Southern alumnus and a founding member of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH), I'm truly honored and humbled to be selected to serve as the Interim Dean.

Since my time as an undergraduate student at Georgia Southern (1983 - 1987), I've been witness to a tremendous transformation of this

institution over the years. I have also had the distinct privilege of being a Georgia Southern faculty member since 2000 and an active participant in the development and growth of the JPHCOPH since our founding.

When the JPHCOPH began its journey in 2006, our college was composed of just five faculty, a founding dean, two staff and 40 students. Today, we are home to 42 faculty, 12 staff and nearly 500 undergraduate, master's and doctoral students. As a nationally recognized and accredited college of public health, I am proud of what we have accomplished in a relatively short period of time. However, we still have much work to be done to fully realize our potential serving the citizens of the State of Georgia, the nation and the world.

Since our founding, the JPHCOPH has never wavered from our commitment to improving health, eliminating health disparities and health inequities through excellence in teaching, public health workforce development, research, scholarship, professional service and community engagement. As Interim Dean, my pledge to the faculty, staff and students is to stay true to the shared values that have served us so well for the past 13 years. Moreover, I'm proud to be associated with such a wonderful organization and surrounded by so many talented people who work each and every day to make a difference. The future of the JPHCOPH is indeed bright, and I'm very excited to continue to be a part of that future.



JIANN-PING HSU COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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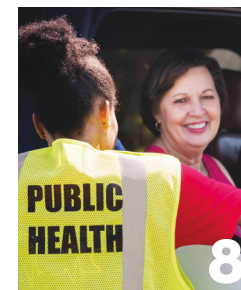
The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) is one of the nine colleges that make up Georgia Southern University and is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health.

The mission of the JPHCOPH is to improve health and eliminate the health disparities and health inequities of rural communities and underserved populations globally through excellence in teaching, public health workforce development, research, scholarship, professional service and community engagement.

SPOTLIGHT



FEATURES



SPECIAL

4 Dean Greg Evans: Seven years at the helm

FEATURES

- 6** Can owning a pet affect your health?
Students and faculty work together to answer this question
- 8** Class project becomes reality: Students partner with local health departments for inaugural drive-thru flu clinics
- 10** Up in smoke!
Health hazards of burning scrap tires for meat-singeing

TRAVEL

12 Where in the world did we go?

CENTER UPDATES

- 14** Center for Addiction Recovery:
Celebrating 10 years of recovery
- 15** Center for Public Health Practice and Research:
Community assessments
- 16** Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics and Survey Research:
Ten years of developing biostatistical techniques to impact the health of society

AWARDS & HONORS

17 Faculty and Students

NOTES

- 18** Research
- 20** College

SPOTLIGHT

22 Undergraduate / Graduate / Alumni

EVENTS

23 A year in photos



Photo by Frank Fortune

Dean Greg Evans: Seven years at the helm



Dean Evans with JPHCOPH students, faculty and staff

Seven years ago, I was drawn to the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) by its mission of serving rural and underserved populations and the opportunity to develop and implement that mission. In an interview for the JPHCOPH magazine, I laid out the challenges we faced to meet that mission. We needed to “develop a school culture based on shared values, goals and a sense of purpose, a culture of encouragement and empowerment ... in which all stakeholders had a voice, a culture that understood the importance of meeting the needs of faculty and staff so they could provide ... the best public health education available.”

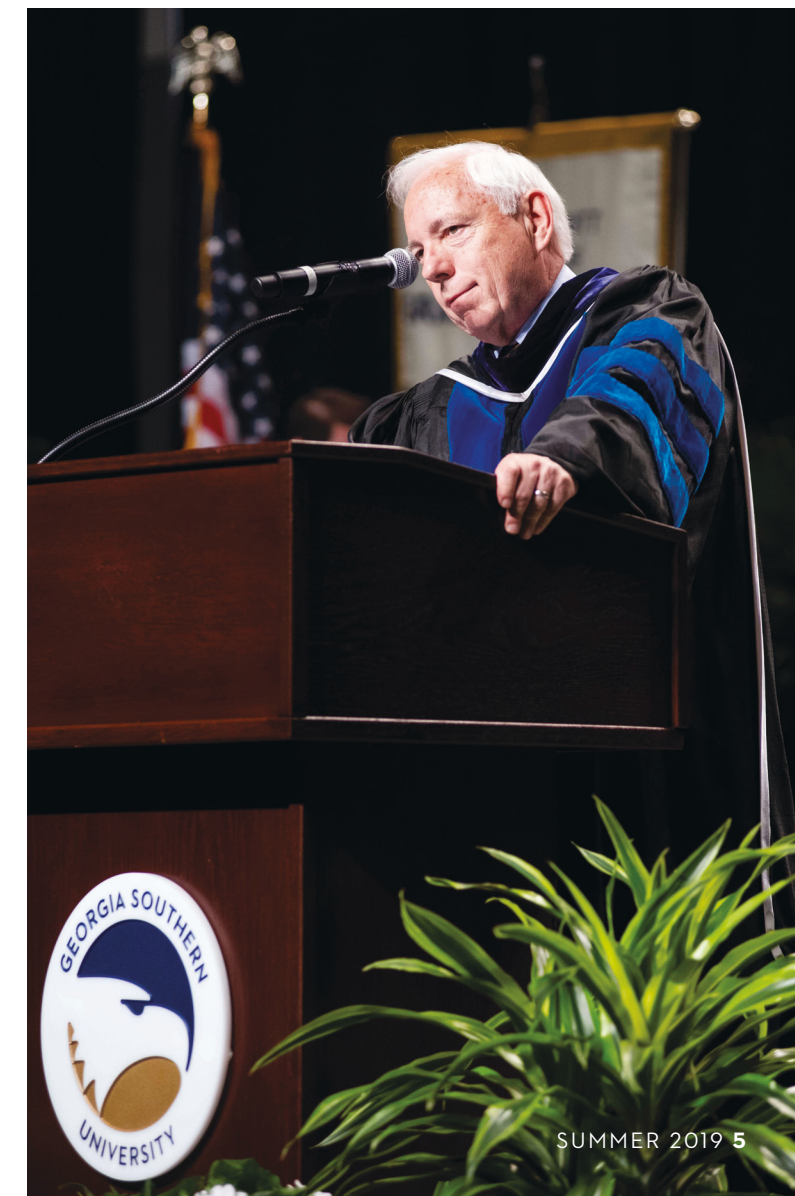
During my tenure as dean we hired 33 of the College’s 42 faculty members, most of them assistant professors. My department chairs, associate deans and I mentored each new hire, emphasizing the school mission, the importance of teaching excellence and practice-based scholarship. To support this, I hired an associate dean for practice and research and I also hired a director of online learning to help faculty develop online classes and programs while integrating the best of technology. I created opportunities for faculty involvement in governance through a faculty assembly and elevated the status of the Student Advisory Committee.

In keeping with my belief that public health should play an important role in a well-rounded liberal arts education, we established our first undergraduate public health degrees with concentrations in health promotion, global health and environmental health. Recognizing the importance of health policy in all aspects of public health, I added a DrPH in Health Policy. Student interest prompted addition of a DrPH in Epidemiology.

My cultural diversity focus led to an invitation to Albania where I created a program bringing two of their best students to JPHCOPH every two years for an MPH. The first cohort have continued to our DrPH. The second cohort are well-established. Because of our large international contingent, I instituted a yearly multi-cultural event celebrating the foods, dance and music of different countries. In addition, we established a Diversity Committee that sponsors programs and updates the dean about diversity matters.

Finally, we have expanded our highly successful Center for Addiction Recovery, meeting a broad range of student needs and are expanding to the Armstrong Campus.

After 49 years in academe, I am ready to turn my hobby of furniture making into a full-time occupation. I will miss the wonderful people I have met at Georgia Southern, even as I move toward new challenges and opportunities.



Can owning a pet affect your health?

Students and faculty work together to answer this question

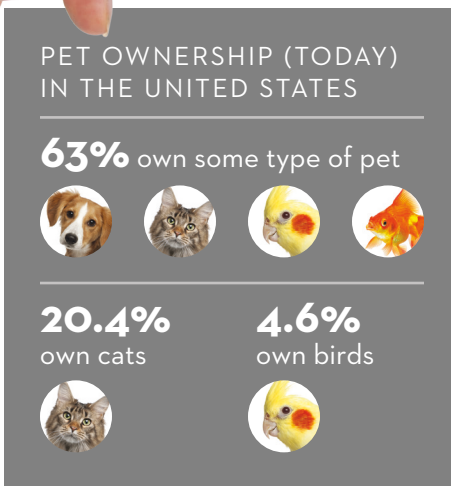


Can owning a pet increase your chance of getting cancer?

The health benefits of owning pets have been well-documented. However, what if that isn't the full story? Are the benefits true only in certain circumstances? Is there another side to the story?

A research team in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) led by professor and medical epidemiologist, Jian Zhang, M.D., DrPH, (other faculty investigators include community health educator, Andrew R. Hansen, DrPH, and environmental health scientist, Atin Adhikari, Ph.D.) has been exploring the other side of pet ownership—could the effects be detrimental to your health?

The team, including both JPHCOPH master's and doctoral students, analyzed large data sets from the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey conducted almost 30 years ago. The team was able to link more than 17,000 survey participants with a national data bank of death certificates to ascertain whether each survey participant remained alive. If



not, what cause(s) of death were listed on the death certificate? These unique longitudinal data sets of nationally representative samples offer the JPHCOPH team a 360-degree view on the relationship between pet ownership and health effects, both beneficial and potentially harmful. A series of research reports have been generated and published in various nationally and internationally recognized journals.

Exploration on human-animal interactions is still relatively new. Some previous studies have shown positive health effects, but the results have been mixed. It's well documented that companion animals improve the survivability of cardiovascular patients, but it remains unclear whether pets are also good in prevention of cardiovascular mortality among populations without well-documented cardiovascular risk factors.

The first study¹ from the pet research team looked at the relationship between pet ownership and the risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases among generally healthy adults, and found that owning a cat significantly reduced the hazard of dying from stroke, especially in women. Owning a dog didn't seem to impact the cardiovascular outcome at all. **Great news for cat owners!**

Cancer is the second leading killer, claiming more than a half million lives in this country every year. The second study² from the pet research group examined the relationship between pet ownership and cancer. The results were very interesting and surprising. Women, not men, were found to be more likely to die from cancer if they owned a pet. Further breaking down the data, research found that it was birds and cats that put women at an elevated risk of dying from cancer compared to those who had neither birds nor cats. Women who owned birds were 2.41 times more likely to die of cancer and those

who owned cats were 1.48 times more likely. **Not good news for women who love their birds and cats.**

Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer in this country, and it is estimated that 154,000 Americans died from lung cancer in 2018. The third study³ specifically examined the risk of dying by pet owners from lung cancer. The findings confirmed with more confidence that women were vulnerable to the

cancer risk associated with birds or cats. Women who owned birds or cats more than doubled their risk of dying from lung cancer compared to their counterparts who did not keep a cat or a bird in the home. Interestingly, the risk was not significant at all for dog owners or for male pet owners of any type of pet. The detrimental effects from pets was not explained by cigarette smoking or other conditions. **Good news for men and dogs, but women with cats and birds have a lot to think about.**

“Even too small to be detected statistically, any detrimental health effect, if overlooked, can be translated into substantial impact at population level just because more than 60 percent of US homes have pets.”

Jian Zhang, M.D., DrPH

The researchers continued their efforts by assessing the relationship between pet ownership and colorectal cancer, the second leading cancer killer in this country. The fourth study⁴ found that, again, a cat was significantly associated with an elevated risk of dying from colorectal cancer, especially, in women. The observed detrimental effects the cats conferred were not explained by confounding effects from socio-demographics, cigarette smoking, sedentary life or atopic conditions. No association was found with having a dog. The evidence consistently points to cats and birds, women were observed to be more vulnerable for both lung cancer and colorectal cancer independently, making the researchers believe that the

chance played a very limited role in this series of studies.

The recent National Pet Owners Survey shows that 63 percent of American families have companion animals living in their homes; and this number is continuously climbing. Any detrimental impact of pet ownership, even too small to be detected statistically, if overlooked, can be translated into a substantial health impact at population level. The students and faculty are making continuous efforts looking at links between pet ownership and a number of other health conditions to explore public health strategies and clinical practices to maximize the benefits of pet ownership and minimize the potential detrimental impacts. In the meantime this research effort presents great opportunities for graduate students to get hands-on research experience and build up their research identity.



Love me or leave me?

PAPERS PUBLISHED (SO FAR) BY OUR PET RESEARCH TEAM

¹Pet Ownership and the Risk of Dying from Cardiovascular Disease Among Adults Without Major Chronic Medical Conditions. Authors: Imala Ogechi, Cassandra Snook, Bionca M Davis, Andrew R. Hansen, Fengqi Liu, and Jian Zhang. Journal: *High Blood Pressure & Cardiovascular Prevention* 2016 Sep;23(3):245-53.

²Pet ownership and risk of dying from cancer: observation from a nationally representative cohort. Authors: Brian Buck, Kamalich Muniz-Rodriguez, Sarah Jillson, Li-Ting Huang, Atin Adhikari, Naduparambil Jacob, Yudan Wei, and Jian Zhang. Journal: *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*. 2019 Feb 13:1-12.

³Pet ownership and the risk of dying from lung cancer, findings from an 18 year follow-up of a US national cohort. Authors: Atin Adhikari, Naduparambil K. Jacob, Andrew R. Hansen, Yudan Wei, Cassandra Snook, Fengqi Liu, and Jian Zhang. Journal: *Environmental Research*. 2019 Jun;173:379-386.

⁴Association between pet ownership and the risk of dying from colorectal cancer: an 18-year follow-up of a national cohort. Authors: Atin Adhikari, Yudan Wei, Naduparambil Jacob, Andrew R. Hansen, Cassandra Snook, Chad E. Burleson, Jian Zhang. Journal: *Journal of Public Health*, First Online: 23 April 2019.

Class project becomes reality

Students partner with local health departments for inaugural drive-thru flu clinics

Jessica Schwind, Ph.D., assistant professor of epidemiology in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH), along with master and doctor of public health students partnered with the South Central Health District, the public health authority for 10 counties in middle Georgia, to make getting flu shots a little easier.

“Roll In, Roll Down, Roll Out,” was the slogan for the two inaugural drive-thru flu shot clinics that enabled community members in Wheeler and Treutlen Counties to receive flu shots without leaving their cars.

“Drive-thru clinics are important to the community for many different reasons,” noted Schwind. “These clinics encourage community members to get vaccinated against influenza, which is still a major cause of sickness and death in the winter across the U.S. Additionally, it serves as an emergency preparedness exercise for community members in case the health district needs to rapidly dispense immunizations or medications. Should a public health emergency arise, an informed community is an empowered community.”

Students in a social epidemiology course earned credit hours by creating a proposal for the successful development, implementation and evaluation of drive-thru flu clinics. They also learned valuable lessons in public health initiatives.



South Central Health District nurse administers a flu shot to a drive-thru clinic participant.

“The Georgia Southern Social Epidemiology students were an integral part of the planning and marketing efforts for the drive-thru flu clinics planned for both Treutlen and Wheeler counties. The students conducted extensive research on social marketing for such events, thru-put/time study expectations, and developed marketing tools that were used to advertise the drive-thru flu clinics,” said South Central Health District’s Jodi Bazemore, who spoke to students about preparing communities for emergency pandemics.

“Participating in the Wheeler County drive-thru clinic opened my eyes to the importance of such clinics in rural counties.”

Brian Buck, doctoral candidate

Doctoral student Brian Buck, who hopes to continue research on these clinics in the future said, “It not only helps in developing these important relationships between the community and healthcare providers, but it also provides much-needed access to influenza vaccinations in underserved rural counties.”



(l-r) Brian Buck and Dr. Jessica Schwind from JPHCOPH; Megan Parker, Jodi Bazemore and Dr. Thomas Craft, director, South Central Health District

Brian Buck and Dr. Jessica Schwind ask survey questions of a drive-thru clinic participant.

Up in smoke!

Health hazards of burning scrap tires for meat-singeing

The practice of utilizing scrap automobile tires for meat processing in Ghana (and other developing countries) has been ongoing for well over 50 years. The tires are used to singe the hair off animal carcasses so that the skin itself is part of the meat. Tires are readily available, cheap and burn really well.

The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health's (JPHCOPH) interest on health effects from burning tires in Ghana began through a conversation in 2010 between JPHCOPH Associate Professor of Environmental Health Sciences (with a background in toxicology) Evans Afriyie-Gyawu, Ph.D., and Dr. Kosi Awuma, a professor of agriculture and range science at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, who had noted the prevalence of this practice. Afriyie-Gyawu considered all the potential toxicological and public health implications of the "scrap tire meat-singeing" practice. The anticipated health challenges associated with this practice provided the impetus for initiating the research at Georgia Southern in collaboration with partners in Ghana.

PHASE 1: ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION

In order to change well established practices, understanding the attitudes and perceptions of the public is critical. During the summer of 2013, Afriyie-Gyawu and then doctoral student, Tempest Hill, DrPH, ('15), focused her dissertation research on the attitudes and perceptions of the practice of burning tires for meat-singeing in Ghana. She found that most of



Dr. Evans Afriyie-Gyawu (white coat) discusses the project with participants. Afriyie-Gyawu directs a well-established, JPHCOPH summer program in Ghana, where undergraduate, master's and doctoral students work on a number of projects as part of their academic interests.

"Scrap automobile tires burn very efficiently, are readily available and cheaper than wood or liquefied petroleum gas alternatives. However, smoke derived from tire burning can contain a variety of health hazards and the whole practice warrants comprehensive scientific investigations."

Evans Afriyie-Gyawu, Ph.D.

the participants were aware of the tire-based meat-singeing practice and potential health threats; however, overcoming the perceived barriers to adequately address the issue was a persistent challenge.

PHASE 2: WHAT'S IN THE SMOKE?

In the summer of 2017, the project investigators turned their focus toward analyzing the emissions of chemicals and other pollutants via smoke derived from burning tires. Alicia Brown, DrPH, ('19), based her doctoral dissertation on the occupational health and toxicological implications associated with the practice. The investigative team of four from Georgia Southern collaborated with Professor Daniel Ansong, dean of the School of Medical Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, along with four medical students and an on-site physician in Ghana.

This project involved the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of select air pollutants emitted from tire-based smoke versus liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and firewood during meat-singeing?
2. How do pollutants emitted from burning tires and other fuel sources, during meat-singeing, influence the respiratory function of the people preparing the meat?
3. What are the levels of a substance (called biomarker—indicating short-term exposure to a group of toxic chemicals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs]) in urine collected from workers who singe meat with tires vs. those who use LPG?



Detail of the meat-singeing process

Prior to beginning the research, it was critical that the JPHCOPH team develop a rapport with the workers and ensure there was an element of trust and respect of their culture and social norms. They identified and collaborated with key individuals who were well respected by the meat-singeing operators, and established proper community entry/engagement with the workers. The team had two Q & A sessions with the workers and their leaders to address any potential concerns that they might have had pertinent to the studies.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Smoke from burning tires emitted significantly higher levels of toxic pollutants (i.e., carbon monoxide, benzene, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter) compared to that of LPG gas and wood-based smoke. These values also exceed the air quality standards set by WHO and EPA for each of the pollutants

Alicia Brown, DrPH, is a "Triple Eagle" alumna of Georgia Southern University.

She began her journey in 2008 when she pursued a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. Alicia was introduced to the field of public health by Dr. Evans Afriyie-Gyawu during a forum held to discuss his environmental health research. She returned to pursue a MPH with a concentration in Environmental Health Sciences at JPHCOPH (class of 2015). Her research experience in Ghana during her practicum motivated her to continue with the "tire-based meat-singeing" study and pursued a Doctor of Public Health degree with a concentration in Epidemiology (class of 2019).



Dr. Alicia Brown collects data at a slaughter slab in Kumasi, Ghana.

tested. Additionally, workers reported a number of respiratory symptoms that are associated with exposure to the pollutants found in the smoke including phlegm, wheezing, chest illness, labored breathing, cough and shortness of breath. Finally, the presence of a biomarker, 1-hydroxypyrene (1-OHP) in the urine samples of the workers implies that they have been exposed to PAHs, some of which are known to cause cancer in humans. Workers who use tires for the meat-singeing process had, on the average, higher levels of the urinary biomarker 1-OHP compared to those of individuals using LPG. This suggests that the practice of using tires presents a real and persistent risk to not only the meat-singeing operators but also those who live in close proximity to the meat-processing facilities.

The results of this study were presented directly to the study participants and management team in Ghana in January 2019. Additionally, results will be presented through a keynote speech at the Convention for Biomedical Research Ghana at the end of July 2019 and at a presentation to the Ghana Health Service.

THE FUTURE...

The next step is to engage politicians, clinicians, public health professionals and media to discuss the results of the current study. The JPHCOPH team plans to work with all stakeholders in order to develop effective, economically feasible, culturally acceptable and sustainable intervention strategies to address this issue.

If funded, Afriyie-Gyawu and his team of researchers expect to analyze meat samples singed with tires within the next couple of years. Consumption of this meat could have potential health implications to the people of Ghana and other developing countries.

JPHCOPH Around the World!

Faculty and students have traveled across the state and around the world this past academic year



Kristie Waterfield, DrPH, presented at NACCHO 2019 Preparedness Summit.



Jessica Schwind, Ph.D., was an invited speaker at the One Health Symposium.



Marina Eremeeva, M.D., Ph.D., presented at the International Conference on Phthiraptera.



Marina Eremeeva, M.D., Ph.D., presented at the international conference dedicated to the 110th anniversary of the St. Petersburg Pasteur Institute.



Students participated in Alternative Break focusing on improving Mental Health treatment in Jamaica.



Jessica Schwind, Ph.D., traveled to Nepal for research collaboration, March 2019.



Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., (left) at the 50th Year Celebration of the Population Research Lab



David Oguoma-Richards, Federal Internship with the Syracuse VA Medical Center



(l-r) Greg Evans, Ph.D., with Albanian Public Health program director and Georgia Southern professor, Lori Amy, Ph.D.



Students interned at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital.



Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., (center) at dinner, during a FHI 360 HIV grant site visit



Faculty enjoyed the San Diego Zoo prior to the JPHCOPH social during APHA.



Nandi Marshall, DrPH, in Washington, D.C. for APHA Executive Board meetings



Charles Owens, MSA, addressed community health needs in Effingham County.



INTERNATIONAL

- Dr. Evans Afriye-Gyawu
- Angela Blackwell*
- Dr. Alicia Brown*
- Lacey Cooper*
- La Trina Davis*
- Miatta Dennis*
- Dr. Marina Eremeeva
- Dr. Greg Evans
- Pascal Felix*
- DeShawn Industrious*
- Dr. Jeffery Jones
- Karon Lewis*
- Christina Obierika*
- Catherine Palmer*
- Dr. Jessica Schwind
- Dr. Gulzar Shah
- Tanesha Slocumb*
- Dr. Joseph Telfair
- Reese Tierney*
- Rakhi Trivedi*
- Brianna Williams*
- Laura Witteveen*

DOMESTIC

- Sunmisola Alade*
- Dr. Bettye Apenteng
- Sean Bear*
- Dr. Helen Bland
- Brian Buck*
- Dr. Alicia Brown*
- Dr. Logan Cowan
- La Trina Davis*
- Emily Eisenhart
- Imaobong Ekpo*
- Dr. Greg Evans
- Kavita Gohil*
- Whitney Hamilton*
- Dr. Andrew Hanson
- Devin Hatchett*
- Michela Hizine*
- Darnel Howlett*
- Dr. Jeffery Jones
- Jing Kersey*
- Dr. Linda Kimsey
- Dr. Ramona Lawrence
- Dr. Nandi Marshall
- Dr. William Mase
- Jacquelyn Mesenbrink*
- Chen Mo*
- Neil Morte*
- Dr. Dziyana Nazaruk
- BJ Newell
- David Oguoma-Richards*
- Maria Olivas*
- Lola Onifade*
- Dr. Samuel Opoku
- Charles Owens
- Sarbesh Pandeya*
- Angie Peden
- Kapil Rathi*
- Dr. Julie Reagan
- Dr. Haresh Rochani
- Dr. Hani Samawi
- Dr. Jessica Schwind
- Dr. Gulzar Shah
- Oyindamola Soremekun*
- Dr. Stacy Smallwood
- Dr. Kelly Sullivan
- Dr. Yelena Tarasenko
- Dr. Stuart Tedders
- Dr. Joseph Telfair
- Felix Twum*
- Dr. Robert Vogel
- Kristie Waterfield*
- Dwight Williams*

*Student

Celebrating 10 years of recovery

The Georgia Southern University Center for Addiction Recovery (CAR) hosted the *Blue & White Gala: A Southern Soirée!* in November 2018. The gala celebrated 10 years of unparalleled success providing on-campus resources to students who have faced challenges due to prior addiction.



(l-r) Tom Edenfield, Greg Evans, Doug Collins, Emily Eisenhart, Carl Gooding, Rachel Spence, Al Mooney

Located in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH), the Center serves students who are in recovery from long-term substance use disorders. Many in recovery face social and educational challenges, and CAR is a bridge that helps them navigate the process. Without a program like this, many of these students would find it very difficult to complete their education, find a job and give back to society.

“CAR has helped me thrive at Georgia Southern by providing me with peers who push me to excel in school and be an involved member of the community.”

Carter M., Senior Biology Major

“College campuses are often an abstinence-hostile environment for students who have previously struggled with substance use disorders but who have made a commitment to their long-term recovery,” said Emily Eisenhart, who has served as the director of the program for more than eight years. “With the individual and group levels of public health relapse prevention programs and other social activities we offer, our students can find a space where they not only are able to stay sober, but where they’re able to engage in student activities

and clubs, and find an academic niche and career path they never dreamed was possible.”

Students can apply for admission to the program after completing at least six months of continuous recovery. Students are required to attend weekly relapse prevention seminars and have a wealth of services available to them including individualized academic advising, early registration and scholarships. Students are also actively involved in peer mentoring, service and volunteer projects, leadership and recreational therapy.

In addition to student success, the mission of CAR is to provide services to the local recovery population and educate students, researchers, clinicians, rural and small urban communities about the diseases of alcoholism and drug addiction and the process of recovery. The Center also strives to improve knowledge and understanding of addiction recovery through research.

The Center is nonprofit and funded primarily by donations. To make a donation please visit jphcoph.GeorgiaSouthern.edu/addiction

QUICK FACTS

- » The Center serves about 40 students on the Statesboro Campus and has plans to expand services to the Armstrong Campus.
- » Average GPA of 3.69
- » 90 percent graduation rate—one of the highest of any student group on campus.
- » Less than 2.5 percent relapse rate
- » Graduates have gone on to earn doctoral degrees in pharmacy, physical therapy and psychology, among others.



“CAR helped me realize that I could be a successful college student and be sober. It has been amazing to have the Center as a safe place on campus with love and support from everyone in CAR.”

Emily McLeod

Ten years of developing biostatistical techniques to impact the health of society

(l-r) Jing Kersey, doctoral student, with professors Dr. Haresh Rochani and Dr. Hani Samawi

Beginning in 2009, under the direction of professor Hani Samawi, Ph.D., the Center biostatisticians began to gather weekly to discuss their work. What began as an informal meeting of like-minded faculty grew into an incredibly active group at the heart of the Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics and Survey Research.

Ten years later, faculty and doctoral students continue to meet weekly. They bring to the table problems they may be facing, allowing for the exchange of ideas and discussion of possible solutions. In addition to helping each other with individual research questions, over time this group has worked together to significantly add to the scientific literature through many co-authored papers. For example, in 2018, the group published 11 papers.

“I never miss a meeting. I find this group so valuable both to me as a researcher but also as a training tool for our students”

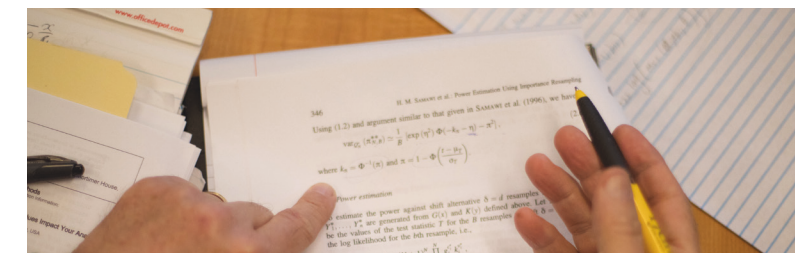
Haresh Rochani, DrPH, Director, Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics and Survey Research

The group also functions as informal research training for students. New doctoral students are given a front row seat observing how researchers approach and tackle questions in the field of biostatistics. Eventually students become active

Biostatistics group at work, April 2019



participants in the group. Indeed, if a student initiates a project for the group then the student generally becomes first author on that paper. Additionally, students can bring questions and concerns about their own doctoral research to the table and get input from a variety of points of view.



Biostatisticians address, analyze and solve problems related to health using advanced statistical methods.

The Center’s biostatistics group has focused its work in the following three areas:

- 1. Missing Data:** Missing Data is very common in the field of social sciences, clinical and diagnostic studies. However, if missing data is not accounted for properly then conclusions made from the data may be inaccurate. Since important health policy may be determined based on the data it is critical that it is analyzed accurately. The researchers have published several papers developing new procedures to better deal with the problem of missing data, in turn leading to more accurate results.
- 2. Accuracy of Diagnostic Tests:** Diagnostic testing is both clinically and economically important in the healthcare system. The group has developed many statistical methods for two-stage and multistage diseases to ensure that clinicians are given reliable data about the accuracy of the diagnostic tests they order.
- 3. Cost-Effective Efficient Sampling Schemes:** Many fields of research, including medical and health studies rely on cost-effective structured sampling schemes to collect data. As costs increase to collect data, this is particularly relevant. The group has published several papers on the modifications of some existing structured and cost-effective sampling schemes and used them to improve statistical inference procedures and model performance in several fields.



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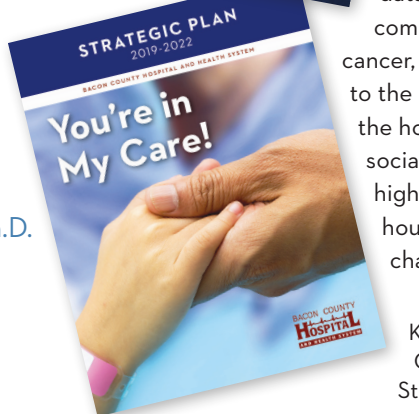
Giann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health's (JPHCOPH) Center for Public Health Practice and Research (CPHPR) has proudly supported rural hospitals and their communities to ensure compliance with the Affordable Care Act requirement that mandates 501c3 nonprofit hospitals complete a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) tri-annually. Twenty-eight rural hospitals and their communities have been served by the JPHCOPH and the CPHPR to comply with the federal mandate since 2012.

"After a career in mostly large, and centrally funded, Naval medical facilities, working with Georgia's rural hospitals has been both eye-opening and invigorating."

Linda Kimsey, Ph.D.



the lead in some areas and community partners spear-heading others. By adopting this community-based approach, the CPHPR team builds long-standing relationships with hospital communities that can lead to other collaborative efforts aimed at improving rural health.

A review of the rural hospital needs assessment data revealed numerous similarities across rural communities including higher rates of obesity, cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease relative to the respective state averages. Further, many of the hospital communities have lower rankings across social determinants of health measures including higher rates of poverty, limited employment and housing, low levels of education attainment and challenges accessing healthcare.

Team members: Bettye Apenteng, Ph.D., Linda Kimsey, Ph.D., Samuel Opoku, MBChB, Ph.D., Charles Owens, MSA, Angie Peden, MPH and Stuart Tedders, Ph.D.

"Data we have collected and analyzed as part of our rural hospital efforts have demonstrated a need for Georgia's rural communities to embrace a social determinants approach to addressing community health needs."

Bettye Apenteng, Ph.D.

HEALTHCARE GEORGIA FOUNDATION

In compliment to the CHNA effort, the Healthcare Georgia Foundation (HGF) engaged the Center to develop a resource guide for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI). CDFIs provide grants and loans to foster economic development in lower income communities. Given the primary purpose of CDFIs, HGF took the lead in providing an educational resource to educate and encourage CDFIs to strategically invest in efforts to address Social Determinants of Health (SDH). Strategic investments to address SDH will greatly advance health and health equity of those living in economically depressed communities.

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Team members: Nandi Marshall, DrPH, Charles Owens, MSA and Angie Peden, MPH



Dr. Sam Opoku engaging with stakeholders of Effingham Health System in discussions to address the community's health needs

The team uses a community-based participatory research approach in the assessment process in an effort to involve hospital administrators, the board of directors and community stakeholders. Community and hospital work groups are formed to facilitate assessment activities locally. These activities include developing and reviewing data collection instruments, distributing both paper and electronic surveys, hosting focus groups across service areas and key informant interviews. Additionally, core data sets are identified and collected from secondary data sources to serve as the framework for the community and service area profiles. Following the data collection process, the CPHPR team guides hospital and community work groups in establishing community priorities and defining implementation plans. This process encourages a broad-based community approach with the hospital assuming

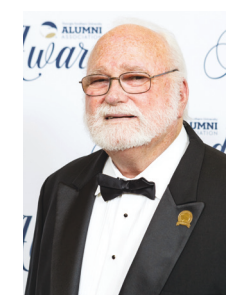
FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE AWARD



Andrew Hansen, DrPH, was awarded the Focus on Excellence medal for Research/Creative Scholarly Activity at the 2018 Georgia Southern University Convocation.

Hansen's team addresses chronic disease prevention at multiple levels, including body weight perceptions and weight loss efforts; revitalization and greenspace along the Statesboro Blue Mile; and increasing physical activity in school age children.

ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD



Karl E. Peace, Ph.D., received the Alumni Service Award—presented to the alumnus, who through volunteerism and/or philanthropy, has made the greatest contribution to the advancement of the University. Peace is the Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Cancer Scholar, Senior Research Scientist and Professor of Biostatistics in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia

Southern. He created an endowment to establish the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, the first college of public health in the University System of Georgia. He is the architect of the Master in Public Health program in Biostatistics and Founding Director of the Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics in the college.



RANDOLPH S. GUNTER DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD

Helen Bland, Ph.D., was presented this award representing outstanding dedication to advocating for diversity issues both in and out of the classroom.



JENNIFER ROBBINS AWARD

Julie Reagen, Ph.D., recently received the prestigious Jennifer Robbins Award for Practice of Public Health Law. The award was presented at the 2018 American Public Health Association national meeting, on November 12, 2018.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY 40 UNDER 40



Dayna S. Alexander, DrPH ('14) Behavioral Scientist Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Atlanta, Georgia.



Nandi Marshall, DrPH ('12) Georgia Southern University 2012. Assistant Professor of Public Health Georgia Southern University, Savannah, Georgia.



David Edward Schott II, DrPH ('16) MBA Business ('16). Chief Operating Officer South Georgia Medical Center, Valdosta, Georgia.

LOAN REPAYMENT AWARD



Raymona Lawrence, DrPH, received the National Institutes of Health Loan Repayment Program Award from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). This is an extremely competitive program, and the NIMHD will repay Dr. Lawrence's student loans in exchange for her work on health disparities research in sickle cell disease.

SOUTHEASTERN GEOGRAPHER



Jeffery R. Finney, MPH student, was awarded Best Paper for his publication in the 2018 *Southeastern Geographer* on "You're out of your place: Black Mobility on Tybee Island, Georgia from Civil Rights to Orange Crush."



Doctoral student Edward Dotherow collects water samples with Dr. Asli Aslan.

HOW SAFE IS YOUR DRINKING WATER?

Most people assume their water is clean and safe, unfortunately that is not always the case.

Evans County, Georgia, wants to find out if their water is safe to drink, and assistant professor Asli Aslan, Ph.D., and her team of students are working to provide answers. In Georgia, one in six homes get their water from private wells. According to the Safe Drinking Water Act, private wells are not regulated and homeowners are responsible for the safety of their own water. Drinking water contamination can cause a variety of diseases from diarrhea to cancer. With a

high rate of cancer, Evans County is actively looking for causes—including testing ground water in its farming communities.

Unfortunately, problems related to the quality of drinking water in rural Georgia are not only limited to the wells themselves. After about 75 years, pipes in older homes often have to be replaced—not an easy solution for most homeowners. By testing both the well and the water out of the kitchen faucet on a regular basis, Aslan can not only identify if there is a problem, but also where it might be coming from (well or pipes). Her team looks for bacterial contaminants (leaking septic and livestock waste), natural bacteria (Legionella, being a pathogen of concern) and chemicals (pesticides, fertilizers, heavy metals) from agriculture and the pipelines.

Homeowners like C. Paul Eason, have welcomed the Georgia Southern team into their homes as one of the community partners in this important research. He is an active member of the Evans County CARES Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has been actively supporting this research project, cancer research, education and the citizens of Evans County who have been diagnosed with cancer.



(l-r) C. Paul Eason, Dr. Asli Aslan, Edward Dotherow in front of the Eason home, built in 1854

TAKING “PRIDE” IN REDUCING AND MANAGING SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Tilicia Mayo-Gamble, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy and Community Health, Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) was accepted into the 2019 Programs to Increase Diversity Among Individuals Engaged in Health-Related Research (PRIDE). She will be a part of the Functional and Translational Genomics of Blood Disorder Program.

“It is an honor to be selected for a prestigious program that has groomed underserved researchers to make strides in biomedical research involving blood disorders.”

Mayo-Gamble, Ph.D.

“I am also grateful that one of the PRIDE mentors is also the JPHCOPH’s Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Research, Joseph Telfair, DrPH. Through his mentorship and



Dr. Tilicia Mayo-Gamble

the support of my department, I am confident that I will excel in the fellowship program,” said Mayo-Gamble. “I take ‘PRIDE’ in having this opportunity to join a cadre of public health researchers who are making a difference in the lives of those impacted by sickle cell disease.”

PRIDE is an all-expense-paid summer institute, research education and

mentoring initiative sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. PRIDE works to broaden the demographic profile of biomedical research by training junior researchers from underrepresented backgrounds to advance their scientific careers and become more competitive for external research funding in heart, lung, blood and sleep disorders. Candidates for this program receive two years of training through two summer institutes, mid-year networking events and research visits with their program mentor.

Mayo-Gamble’s research focuses include implementing community engagement methods, health communication, health behavior, chronic disease self-management, sickle cell disease and patient-centered care.

STUDENTS AT NCUR MEETING

Six students presented at the 33rd Annual National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). This is one of the largest national conferences dedicated to undergraduate research in the country.



JPHCOPH students at NCUR meeting. (l-r) Brandon Scott, Brandon Curtis, Miranda Griffen, Eboney Hall, Tyler Hutson with professor Dr. Helen Bland; not pictured JPHCOPH student Sissy Gatch

ENAR MEETING

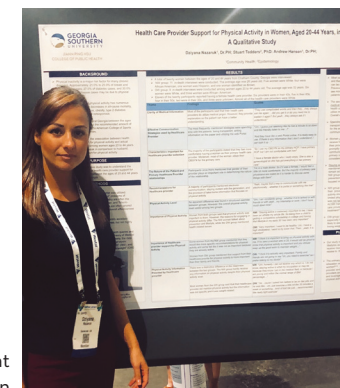
JPHCOPH biostatistics students and professors attended the 2019 Eastern North American Region International Biometric Society (ENAR) meetings in Philadelphia.



(l-r) Jing Kersey, Kavita Gohil, Dr. Hani Samawi (JPHCOPH professor), Chen Mo, Sarbesh Pandeya and Dr. Varadan Sevilimedu (JPHCOPH graduate)

APHA

Many JPHCOPH students and faculty flew west to present at the 2019 American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting in San Diego, California.



Dr. Dzyiana Nazaruk at an APHA poster session

NEW GRANTS (2018-2019)



Atin Adhikari, Ph.D., assistant professor of environmental health sciences, was awarded a grant to look at farmer’s exposure risk to dust and microorganisms associated with cotton harvesting in Georgia as well as the performance of the N95 facepiece respirators, particularly during cotton harvesting.



Andrew Hansen, DrPH, received a Rural Health Network Development Program Grant subcontract to evaluate a Care Coordination and telemedicine program designed to help high risk, underserved patients get access to care for the treatment of chronic disease.



Nandi Marshall, DrPH, is working with the YMCA of Coastal Georgia and Healthy Savannah to implement a recently awarded five-year REACH grant from the CDC. The project title is: Savannah/Chatham County REACH Project: Healthy Opportunities Powering Equity (H.O.P.E). In the first year of the grant, Dr. Marshall and her team will facilitate the use of Photovoice with low-income African-American mothers in Chatham County, Georgia, to identify cultural, social and political barriers to breastfeeding.



Stacey Smallwood, Ph.D., received a grant for a project called “PrEP U: HIV Prevention Education for University Student Health Centers.” This initiative is designed to provide education and resources to clinicians and other stakeholders who are in a position to provide HIV screening and prevention services, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), to populations at risk of HIV infection, specifically young adults at colleges and universities.

NEW ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTMENTS



The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) was pleased to announce that **Joseph Telfair, DrPH** (left) was appointed

to the new position of Associate Dean for Practice and Research. **Gulzar Shah, Ph.D.** (right) was appointed chair of the Department of Health Policy, Management and Behavior.

"I am very excited about these appointments. They should help us better serve our students and move to the next level of recognition in both the University system and among other schools of Public Health."

Former Dean Greg Evans

PROFESSOR APPOINTED TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE



Nandi Marshall, DrPH, was appointed to serve on the United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC), specifically the CRASH Committee, formed to enhance the USBC's governance, membership, personnel and coalition's ability to build structures, systems and a culture of inclusiveness and mutual support for all peoples in regards to breastfeeding. This is a national appointment and Marshall will serve two three-year terms.

NEW BLOG SERIES

Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., has a new blog series with the journal *JPHMP Direct* called "Health Informatics Innovations & Applications." You can find the link at: jphmpdirect.com/health-informatics-innovations-and-applications

STUDENT WORKSHOP



Saroyi Morris, DrPH, district program manager, Coastal Health District was an invited speaker. She spoke on "Interviewing and Résumé Building for Public Health Professions." Dr. Morris (right) is pictured here with Angie Peden, MPH, assistant director of the Center for Public Health Practice and Research, who arranged the lecture.

NACCHO PRESENTATION

Gulzar Shah, Ph.D., William Mase, DrPH, and Kristie Waterfield, DrPH, presented at the 2018 Public Health Informatics Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 21, 2018.



Their joint session was titled: Local Health Department Information Systems, their Interoperability and Impact on Health Disparities.

The conference was presented by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

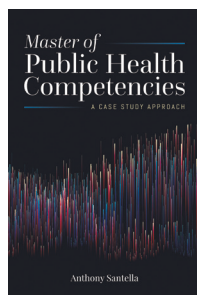
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOP

Center for Public Health Practice and Research welcomed area health professionals to the third annual skills-based workshop for professionals in public health, healthcare and related settings. The workshop was held on the Statesboro Campus, February 13, 2019.



2019 HEALTHCARE SYMPOSIUM

The College welcomed retired **Army Major General David Rubenstein** to speak at the 2019 Healthcare Symposium. Major Rubenstein spoke about current issues and leadership in healthcare.



BOOK

Master of Public Health Competencies: A Case Study Approach

Three faculty (**Moya Alfonso, Ph.D., Nandi Marshall, DrPH, Gulzar Shah, Ph.D.**) and three of our graduate students (**Abraham Johnson, MPH, Jannapha Hubeny, BSPH, Maria Olivas, MPH**) co-authored two chapters in this publication.

AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The first cohort of MPH student AHEC Scholars completed year-one of their two-year fellowship.



Oluwatosin Balogun



Lisa Caccione



Alexandria Marbury



Ashley Paine

The Georgia Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Scholar Program is an initiative that seeks to develop, prepare and sustain a culturally competent, interdisciplinary, healthcare workforce that is prepared to deliver high quality, patient centered, healthcare services and to prepare health professions students for practice in a rural and/or medically underserved community.



SCOTLAND MITCHELL
Congressional Healthcare Policy Intern

In spring 2019, **Scotland Mitchell** served in Congressman Earl L. "Buddy" Carter's Washington, D.C. office as a congressional healthcare policy intern. She worked directly with the legislative staff in researching proposed legislation regarding maternal mortality, writing

form letters and co-sponsor memorandums, drafting responses to constituent correspondence and serving as the front line of communication between the office and the constituents of Georgia's First Congressional District.

"When tasked with researching issues or coordinating projects for the office, Scotland's passion and drive were unmatched. Furthermore, she personally sought out and attended numerous briefings, meetings and hearings to increase her own knowledge of various health-related policy areas."

Internship Site Supervisor

INTERNSHIP & PRACTICUM SITES 2018-19

Undergraduates Internship Sites:

- African American Health and Information Resource Center
- AID Atlanta
- American Red Cross
- Chatham Co. Mosquito Control
- Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition
- Coastal Health District
- Cowart Family YMCA
- East Georgia Regional Medical Center (EGRMC) Breast Health Program
- Infection Prevention
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- Girls on the Run
- Georgia Southern Univ., Environmental Health and Safety
- Georgia Southern Univ., Health Services
- KSU Health Promotion and Wellness Center
- Memorial Health
- Safe Haven
- St. Joseph's Candler Hospital (Bioethics)
- Susan G. Komen
- The Gardens of Savannah
- U.S. House of Representatives
- Union Mission
- Upstream Consulting

Graduate Practicum Sites:

- "Healthy Savannah"
- American Red Cross
- Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School
- Candler Hospital Wellness Center
- Center for African American Health Disparities
- Centers for Disease Control Office of the Chief, HIV Surveillance Branch
- Chatham Co. Health Dept.
- Chatham Co. Safety Net Planning Council
- City of Cochran, Initiative for Community Housing Team
- City of Houston Health Department
- City of Savannah
- Clayton State University
- DeKalb Medical Health Systems
- East Central Public Health District (ECPHD)
- East Georgia Healthcare, Statesboro Pediatrics
- East Georgia Regional Medical Center
- Fort Valley State Univ.
- Georgia Dept. of Public Health Coastal Health District Office of Epidemiology, Chronic Diseases Infectious Disease
- Georgia Tech., Dept. of Environmental Health and Safety
- Georgia Outreach, LLC
- Georgia Southern Univ., Health Services, Office of Health Promotion
- Georgia Southern Univ., School of Health and Kinesiology, Biomechanics Lab
- Health Southeast Georgia, Inc.
- Meridian Clinical Research at the Savannah Neurology
- Morehouse School of Medicine Community Health & Preventive Medicine
- The Satcher Health Leadership Institute, Division of Health Policy
- National Center for Birth Defects and Dev. Disabilities
- Northeast YMCA in Marietta, Ga
- Ohio State Univ. Medical center
- One Health
- Union Mission
- Rape Crisis Center of Savannah
- Savannah Wildlife Rescue Center
- St. Joseph Candler Preventative Medicine and Wellness Center
- St. Joseph/Candler Hospital
- St. Mary's Health Center & Good Samaritan Clinic
- Tema General Hospital, Ghana Health Service, Ghana
- The campaign of District 1 House candidate Lisa Ring
- Wastewater treatment plan, ReWa in Greenville, SC.

Undergraduate



Philip Raffray's ('19) path to a degree in public health wasn't direct, but like many hard-fought goals it has been exceedingly rewarding.

He began his college career in 2012 at then-Armstrong State University in Savannah but took a leave of absence when he couldn't find an academic major that fit his interests. He also needed a little time to re-evaluate his goals.

Upon his re-entry into college at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, he took some advice from his father and tried a

course in public health. That was all it took. He was hooked. "I was blown away at how interesting these subjects were to me," said Raffray.

Raffray took advantage of all that Georgia Southern has to offer, joining clubs, working on campus and making good use of the academic support options provided at the University. All that hard work paid off and Raffray graduated as a Dean's List member.

"Being a part of this college at Georgia Southern gave me the tools to succeed."

Graduate



In 1987, at the age of nine, Georgia Southern graduate **Abraham Deng Ater, DrPH, ('18)** was one of an estimated group of 20,000 South Sudanese boys who trekked more than 1,000 miles by foot to Ethiopia and Kenya to escape civil war. Those who survived became known as the "Lost Boys" and lived in mud huts across sprawling refugee camps for upward of two decades.

Ater was able to relocate to the U.S. in 2001. With him came high hopes of completing his late father's wish—to earn a good education. In December 2018 he earned a Doctor of Public Health in Public Health Leadership.

An Atlanta-based public health researcher in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global HIV and Tuberculosis Division, Ater is also co-founder of United Vision for Change, a private foundation dedicated to building schools and health clinics in rural towns of South Sudan.

His long-range plans involve returning to East Africa to work in clinics, organize health workshops and empower local health workers to improve community health.

"Georgia Southern gave me this opportunity to succeed," said Ater.

"I plan to improve the health status of those who live in rural areas in East Africa and other parts of the world."

Alumni



Since graduating with a doctoral degree in Community Health Behavior and Education, **Anne Odusanya, DrPH, ('18)** moved to Madison, Wisconsin. Odusanya is the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Unit supervisor for the state government in Madison. She directs and supervises the staff of

the state CYSHCN Unit consisting of the program areas of newborn screening, birth defects prevention and surveillance,

Zika surveillance and response, promotion of medical home implementation and youth transition to adult care.

With regard to the American Public Health Association, Dr. Odusanya was nominated to be a Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Section Councilor as part of MCH leadership. She was invited by the MCH Section chair to develop and serve as a co-chair for the MCH Professional Development Committee as a result of her work as an MCH Senior Student Fellow (2017-18) and an MCH Student Fellow (2016-17). The MCH Professional Development Committee aims to establish mentoring and professional development opportunities for MCH Section members.

Snapshots



JPHCOPH at APHA 2018: Joseph Telfair, DrPH, completed his term as president and is now officially in the role of past president of APHA. Faculty, staff and students enjoyed meeting with colleagues and alumni at the San Diego Zoo for our reception.





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GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville—and online instruction. The leading higher education institution in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

JIANN-PING HSU COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The mission of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) is to improve health, eliminate health disparities and health inequities of rural communities and underserved populations globally through excellence in teaching, public health workforce development, research, scholarship, professional service and community engagement. The college offers degrees at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral level and is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health

The College is endowed by Dr. Karl E. Peace as a tribute to his wife and an enduring celebration of her life characterized by “a zeal for excellence, consideration of others, intelligence and scholarship, honesty, kindness and humility.”

To learn more please visit our website at GeorgiaSouthern.edu/jphcoph