



In this Issue



Welcome

Guest Editor:

Christian Spears, MSW, MPH

President's Corner

Watsonian Member
Spotlight

IMPACT Program

PHAP Socials

Member Updates

In Memoriam

Corrections

Opportunities

Questions - Contact

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Watsonian Members,

Welcome to the Summer Edition! We enjoy highlighting sizzling, hot public health stories from our members in the field and retirees. Since our last newsletter, the CDC has received notable recognition for its work, yet encountered some alarming stories that have caught the attention of our nation. Recently, the CDC received six awards and six honorable mentions across seven categories in the FY2013 HHS Green Champions Awards. The CDC recognized the 25th anniversary of the discovery of hepatitis C virus (HCV) and celebrated the recent therapeutic advances that have the potential to halt the progression of HCV infection and disease. Achievements such as these continue to instill confidence that the CDC remains the premier health agency and will continue to provide meaningful recommendations for our nation's health and safety.

Safety has always been an important focus at the CDC and with the summer brewing, there are definitely concerns at hand. During summer, we condition ourselves to prepare for unpredictable events, such as natural disasters, but have we prepared for preventable disasters? Current stories of fatal drowning or accidental child deaths due to extreme heat have caused many to look to us for additional guidance. Accordingly, CDC Director, Dr. Tom Frieden, emphasized in an agency-wide email the need for a culture of safety regarding the recent norovirus scare and laboratory incidents. This culture should not only be exhibited in the services and products we provide to our nation but within our workplace. He also mentioned, "We can only succeed in our mission of protecting people from health threats with a culture of safety, and the first step is ensuring the safety of our own staff". Therefore, as we work each day to improve the wellbeing of others, let us not forget, pursuing a healthy lifestyle and demonstrating work safety begins with each worker, in and out of the field. Your health and safety is the number one priority. Remember you make a difference so be safe and stay cool.

Sincerely,

Christian C. Spears MSW, MPH

PHAP Fellow, Class of 2013

Watsonian Newsletter Guest Editor

President's Corner

Deymon X. Fleming, MPH, DHA

Wow. Preparing for and then delivering the Bill Watson Memorial Program just made my year! Talk about lucky. What a way to start a new Watsonian Society presidency...on just about as high a high as there is likely to be. I mean how can that challenge possibly be topped during the rest of the year? On the other hand, what a way to break in a new recruit...by being handed one of the toughest assignments as my first order of business, namely doing justice to the memory of a man whose giant footsteps we are all following and whose shoulders we have climbed on top of to see the vision he has given us for our future. I am proud to say that his family was very pleased with the tribute.



Whew. All of that said I want to thank everyone - whom I called Bill Watson's Army - who participated in this "event of events". Thank you for showing up and supporting the program. I would like to especially thank all of those who pulled together as a team and delivered a fabulous program - from all of the speakers, including, Tom Ortiz, who got things going with his introductions, Dr. Alan Hinman and Dr. Bill Foege who provided reflections, Fred Martich who compiled and delivered selected readings, Elvin Hilyer, Virginia "Ginny" Bales Harris, to Joseph F. Giordano who provided personal remembrances. And of course, let me not forget all those behind the scenes who made the event possible. They include the Task Force for Global Health, CDCF, & Carter Consulting for sponsoring the event; Amethyst Auza for the video tribute; Bob Kohmescher for the photography and others.

During the planning of the Bill Watson memorial, the Society that "Bill built" continued its mission by electing officers. I am very excited to announce the 6 new Watsonian Society officers; President Elect- Nick Farrell, Treasurer- Heather Duncan, Recorder- Dawn Broussard, Field Staff Representative- Deborah Carr, Retiree Representative- John Miles, and Exemplar- Walter Chow. It is encouraging to see the amount of interest in moving the organization forward. I also want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the outgoing officers for their tremendous amount of work and dedication, Andy Heetderks, Elizabeth Sullivan and Bob Kohmescher. Your efforts will not be forgotten and we of course will continue to call on you.

Whoa. And of course, most of all I, on behalf of all former and current members of the Watsonian Society want to thank the star of the program in memoriam - Bill Watson. His 28 plus years of incomparable service and principles we salute. His ideas, challenges and visions will continue to inspire us all in what we have dedicated our careers and our lives to do. Thank you Bill Watson from the bottom of our hearts. We shall never forget the gift of your memory.

Watsonian Member Spotlight – Kristen Brusuelas, MPH

PHAP and past Watsonian Newsletter Guest Editor, Priyanka Oza, interviewed Kristen Brusuelas, MPH, for this edition of the Watsonian Newsletter. Ms. Brusuelas is the Director of Field Service Office, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support.



How were you introduced to the field of public health?

My father worked in Public Health; he sparked my interest. When I was looking to finish undergrad, I was vocal to my advisors that I was interested in working for the CDC. During that time, they were recruiting for a program similar to PHAP. Recruiters were looking for people to do fieldwork in STD; that is how I came to CDC.

What has been your most challenging career assignment thus far?

Different assignments were challenging for different reasons. When I first came to the immunization program in Los Angeles, LA County, I had some negative experiences with a few former federal assignees. The county had a cascade. They had to cut a number of contract positions. There was little stable leadership at the state health department. I had to re-establish CDC's reputation and hire a good chunk of staff in contract positions. It was fun, but I certainly had a lot of challenges.

Has there been a time in your career where your opinion regarding a particular matter differed from the opinions of your higher ups? How did you handle the situation?

Yes, I have differed on topics such as staff utilization. It is all a process of negotiation and discussion. I am always interested in hearing why people thought what they did, while I make my case to come to a decision. In the end it was a respectable agreement of "ok let's try it. You are the one ultimately responsible, so go ahead and deliver." It doesn't always work, but it's worth the effort.

How do you handle difficult interpersonal relationships in the workplace?

It is all about relationships. Everything we do is reflective of how we handle and build relationships. The first thing I try to do is have mutual respect for all parties when I approach a situation. If you are always respectful, people will remember and appreciate that. You can discuss your differing opinions. In the end, as a manager, you may end up making the same decision. However, gaining that info and respect is the way I try to engage in my interpersonal interactions. It is healthy to have some conflict, and have differing opinions, but you have to approach it with a level of respect.

What do you enjoy most about working with PHAPS and PHPS fellows?

The enthusiasm and the fresh approach is what does it for me after 23 years in the profession. You can get bogged down in the politics and the day-to-day operations of the job. Working with young professionals always reminds me of why I originally went into public health. The enthusiasm and altruism; the starry eyed altruism is still there. The cool work and the global mission is still there. It also gives me hope for the future. Those of us on the second end of our career, enjoy the interaction with youth, because it lets us see that there is someone to take our work to the next level.

What do you think is today's biggest public health challenge?

The post-ACA health system transition. It is a new-world-order for public health. The biggest challenge for public health is to know how that changes our world and to be ready to leverage and utilize the collaborative relationships to continue achieving the public health mission.

What are you most proud of regarding the PHAP program?

I'm proud that there are these really smart, great, young people that get an opportunity to work in public health. I am proud to see people enroll in local health departments. I take pride in creating a program where I can see these movers and shakers make a change. I feel proud to be a part of that.

Do you have a public health mentor? If so, who? How has this person impacted your career development?

I do, I have a number of mentors. Glenn Koops, Ed Mihalek, and a lot of other folks at CDC. These are all people currently within or retired from CDC. I think it has been incredibly important to me to talk to folks who have been there or have had great experiences. To be able to get guidance or to hear from their experience is absolutely wonderful. Sometimes to vent your frustrations and have someone assist you in guiding you to your next steps. To get that rational guidance when you need it. And my father of course, I turn to him quite a bit for guidance.

What advice do you wish you had when you were beginning your career?

The challenge for me was balancing the professional and personal commitment. It is different for everyone. You have to decide what that is going to be. For me, I dedicated a lot of time and effort to my career, which worked for me. You work hard to open some opportunities that lead you to incredible career choices. Sometimes, you have to lean back and think about your personal life. I have gotten different advice to keep that balance and am thankful for it.

What lessons did you learn from arduous transitions in your career?

I was in the field for so long and moved to so many different places. The most valuable thing I took away from it is all the perspective I was able to gain.

Kristin Brusuelas Follow-Up: From Spring 2014 Watsonian Newsletter Article, "Q&A With A PHA"

In the Spring 2014 Edition of the Watsonian Newsletter the "Q&A with a PHA" article featured Christian Spears, MSW, MPH, a PHAP serving in St. Petersburg, Florida who asked a question of Ms. Brusuelas. This follow-up recaps the question and includes Ms. Brusuelas's answer.

Question:

"As a young public health apprentice/professional, how did you retain the zeal to continue working in the field all over the world without becoming discouraged after seeing the many societal issues that you couldn't change?"

Response:

This is a good question and an issue that I certainly struggled with. I remember a supervisor advising me early in my career to create some distance between personal and professional life. You need that to prevent the mental burnout that can come from dealing with severe poverty and disparity issues affecting people on a daily basis. I always have tried to balance personal and professional by having a way to disconnect and refresh each day or week. For me, that has been exercise and family. I came to CDC with an interest in making a difference and changing the world! Through the years I have found that sometimes you have to focus on changing one little part of the world that contributes to the bigger picture. I set small tangible goals for myself in the field that helped me to feel like I was achieving incremental successes. Every once in a while, I would come across a patient who really made me feel like my efforts were worthwhile and who really made a change for the positive because of a contribution I made in his or her life. Those stand out for me and kept me going. Try to keep it all in perspective and remember that you cannot help others if you do not keep yourself healthy first. That would be my best advice. kb

“IMPACT” Program Provides Training to Boost Effectiveness of Public Health Programs in Low-Resource Countries

By Lauren Thrash, Senior Advancement Officer of CDC Foundation and

Rebecca Hartz, Senior Program Officer of CDC Foundation

Submitted by Pierce Nelson, Vice President for Communications of CDC Foundation

Without strong public health management and efficient organizational performance, many important global health initiatives in low-resource countries fall short of their intended goals. How can this challenge be addressed?

One approach now being readied for roll out is to provide a high-quality, accelerated training experience for public health managers in developing countries. This effort is being supported through a one-year planning grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the CDC Foundation. The program, titled Improving Public Health Management for Action, IMPACT for short, is being led by CDC’s Division of Global Health Protection in CDC’s Center for Global Health.

CDC plays a key role in this effort based on the agency’s 60-year track record of training public health workers, including Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers and public health advisors. Following graduation from CDC training, many officers and advisors serve long careers at CDC and other public health agencies at the federal, state and local levels.

These individuals make substantive contributions to public health by leading everyday efforts to prevent and control a myriad of health issues from vaccine preventable diseases to injuries to global pandemics. Importantly, some of the paramount achievements in public health—including global eradication programs, such as smallpox, as well as solving disease outbreaks with no known cause, such as Legionnaires’ disease—have featured graduates from CDC-based training programs.

But CDC has not kept the knowledge that it passes on to its trainees within the agency. Through its Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), for instance, CDC has exported training to support enhanced epidemiology and laboratory capacity in lower-resource public health agencies around the world (65 countries and counting).

A logical extension of this highly successful science and technology transfer is a program like IMPACT that will export CDC's management training expertise to Ministries of Health to create a cadre of well-trained, mid-level public health professionals who can improve health program management. The program management knowledge and skills put forward through IMPACT are aimed at achieving efficiency and effectiveness resulting in better use of existing resources and demonstrating a worthwhile investment for additional funding. At this time, several countries are under consideration for participation in the effort.

Of course, ensuring that other countries are better prepared pays dividends to the United States as well. That's because outbreaks of infectious diseases from contaminated food as well as the pandemics associated with influenza, SARS, HIV/AIDS, TB, and polio from another country are very real threats—MERS-CoV being the latest example. Identifying and addressing these threats early—before they reach U.S. shores—is vital. Also, introducing better management concepts and practices in low-resource countries has other benefits, namely that U.S. government and non-government financial support can be more effectively deployed.

A few of the key features of IMPACT include the following.

- In each country, the program will be owned and managed by ministries of health and will target training to develop program- and operations-level managers for their public health system.
- Public health workers will be selected competitively for training.
- The training program will be driven by adherence to core areas of competency, with a two-year work plan for each assignment.
- Program graduates will likely be reassigned to a ministry of health post in a state/district or large urban public health department in a program management position.

For more information about the program, contact IMPACT Program Team Lead Patrick McConnon (pmcconnon@cdcfoundation.org). Lauren Thrash (lthrash@cdcfoundation.org), CDC Foundation senior advancement officer, can answer questions about program funding.

PHAP Social Events

The Watsonian Society sponsored two PHAP socials during June 2014. The first on June 9 was in conjunction with the CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, 2014 STD Prevention Conference. The second event held June 11 was co-hosted by the CDC's Office of State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support.

Each event welcomed current and retired PHAs, Watsonian

members and PHAP/PHPS alumni to participate in the festivities.

Many also invited colleagues to the events which provided a great opportunity for networking and possibly laid the groundwork for potential mentor/mentee relationships for some of those in attendance.

Both events were held at Atlanta-area Taco Mac locations and light refreshments were served.



Dawn Broussard and Keith Wells



(l to r) Jessica Simpson, Veronica McCants, Akanksha Ary



Norm Fikes



(l to r) Kevin O'Connor, Michelle Joe, Deymon Fleming



(l to r) Angelita Vassar, Karen Gavin, Marti Eisenberg



(l to r) Yvonne Cruz and Michelle Joe



(l to r) Veronica McCants, Brandon Butler, Michelle Joe

Member Updates

Antonia Spadaro – “Reframing the Playing Field”

Antonia Spadaro pens “Reframing the Playing Field” under the pseudonym Antonia Joy. The book details a woman’s struggle to rebuild her life after a deadly accident takes a toll on her physical and emotional health. The novel can be purchased and reviewed on Amazon.com.

http://www.amazon.com/Reframing-Playing-Field-Antonia-Joy/dp/0615997643/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1406673036&sr=8-2&keywords=antonia+joy

Phillip J. Finley DHSc, MPH – “When All of God’s Children Eat Cereal”

Phillip J. Finley, DHSc, MPH, Public Health Advisor pens 5th children’s book, “When All Of God’s Children Eat Cereal”. The book is a celebration of God’s love for all children. The book can be purchased on Amazon.com.

http://www.amazon.com/Why-All-Gods-Children-Cereal/dp/0996033629/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1406679022&sr=8-1-fkmr0&keywords=when+all+god%27s+children+eat+cereal

Victor Tomlinson – “Man of Action”

Victor Tomlinson, retired from the Division of TB Elimination, recently penned, “Man of Action”, a thriller about an ex-Navy Seal who conducts search and rescue missions around the world. The book can be purchased from Amazon.com.

http://www.amazon.com/ManActionVictorTomlinson/dp/1499368984/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1406682820&sr=8-1&keywords=man+of+action

Clyde Younger “Ernest, Santa’s Favorite Elf”

Clyde Younger has written a children’s Christmas book entitled “Ernest, Santa’s Favorite Elf.” It is about bullying, global warming and the inability of our world leaders to achieve peace. It can be purchased from Barnes and Nobles or Amazon.com.

http://www.amazon.com/ErnestSantasFavoriteClydeYounger/dp/1457528576/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1406683202&sr=8-1&keywords=ernest%2C+santa%27s+favorite+elf

In Memoriam

Mildred "Polly" D. Turner, 93, the mother of retired PHA and former Watsonian Society president, Paul Turner died on April 24, 2014, in Columbia, SC.

Corrections

The spring 2014 edition of the Watsonian Society's newsletter failed to mention Mr. David Roberts was elected to serve as the Awards Committee Chair. Here is a reprint of this year's elected officers.

Watsonian Society 2014 Elected Officers	
President	Deymon Fleming
President Elect	Nick Farrell
Treasurer	Heather Duncan
Recorder	Dawn Broussard
Field Staff Representative	Deborah Carr
Retiree Representative	John Miles
Exemplar	Walter Chow
Awards Committee Chair	David Roberts

Opportunities

Share your experience in THE WATSONIAN!

We would like to hear from you about the experiences that you have. The deadline for all submissions is **the 3rd Tuesday of each month.**

Send stories to:
paddington6@gmail.com.



Request for Mentors from the Professional Development Committee of the Watsonian Society

Mentors needed for interested Public Health Mentees!

We need additional mentor volunteers! As chair of the Professional Development Committee, I often get requests from new public health professionals for mentors. Some requests are from interested PH Professionals outside of CDC and some from within CDC. Some are already 685 Public Health Advisors and some are currently in a different series and express an interest in transitioning to the 685 PHA series. In the past several weeks, I have received many such requests. Most of these requests will require a one-time, one hour call with the mentee. If you are interested in assisting aspiring public health professionals, or professionals in transition, please send your name and your locating information along with any areas of expertise that you could offer to a protégé, to Howard G. (Tim) Miner at HMiner@cdc.gov.

Thanks in advance for your continued efforts to sustain the
Public Health Advisor (PHA) series.

Interested in being involved? Don't know who to contact? Have ideas for the Watsonian Society? Searching for an opportunity to Personalize Your Watsonian experience?

We welcome you to join a WS committee!!!

Committees
Awards Chair and member: To develop and maintain a mechanism to give recognition to exceptional PHAs each year. Through conference calls, created an awards proposal, a nomination form and an instruction sheet, and developed criteria for scoring nominations.
Communications Chair and members: To evaluate, create, and implement effective methods for communicating with the membership; to recommend the types of communications, the contents, and the timing. The development and distribution of the newsletter, manage of the listserv, watsonian email, update the website for content, and reactivate our facebook page. *Committee Chair: Veronica McCants
Community Service Chair and members: To coordinate community service projects that complement the mission of PHAs and CDC. *Committee Chair Candice Nowicki
Events Chair and members: To develop and organize activities and special events bringing members, prospective members, friends, and families together. Main activities are to coordinate the annual meeting, social events, receptions, picnics, etc. *Committee Chair: Camille Gonzalez
Family Support Chair and members: To support PHAs and their families during times of need, e.g., illness, disaster, death. Main activities are to send cards and other expressions of support during times of need. *Committee Chair: Michael Fraser
Membership Chair and members: To identify ways to recruit new members and retain and better serve the current membership. This group will also be working to update critical information needed in our database in order to develop a profile of our members. *Committee Chair: Kristin Brusuelas
Professional Development Chair and members: To develop methods and establish mechanisms to advance the professional skills of PHAs that will make the series and individuals more essential and more efficient in the changing world of public health. (This will complement efforts of the agency.) This includes facilitating connections between mentees and senior level mentors. *Committee Chair: Tim Miner



NARFE – Sign Up Today

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is the *only* association solely dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing the benefits of America's active and retired federal employees, and their survivors. Now more than ever, you need to support this organization that looks after your interests. We don't need to remind you of the need to have someone representing your interests on the Hill as Congress looks at ways to reduce budget deficits. Unfortunately, benefits for federal employees and retirees always seem to be the first item on the table.

Whether you're a current employee or retired, sign up today. For information, visit <http://www.narfe.org/departments/home/articles.cfm?ID=1569>. There's a CDC Chapter of NARFE – Chapter 1419. Be sure to indicate that as your chapter number. If you'd like to know more about CDC's chapter, contact Bob Kohmescher at bobk340@comcast.net.

Membership dues are:

One year	\$45.00 (for new members)
Two years	\$86.00
Three Years	\$123.00

Submitted by Bob Kohmescher