

Virginia Tech Center for Public Health Practice and Research Fall 2017 Newsletter



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Virginia Tech
Center for Public Health
Practice and Research

What We Do. Who We Serve.

The Center for Public Health Practice and Research (CPHPR) at Virginia Tech engages interdisciplinary faculty, staff, and community organizations to enhance public health practice and research in the region. The Center is housed in the Department of Population Health Sciences of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

The Center supports community-based projects by collaborating with community partners to compete for and secure funding, as well as providing public health content and service expertise such as research design, external evaluations, needs assessments, and other document writing.

The Center collaborates with university partners (faculty, staff and students) on grant writing, study design, program implementation, and evaluation.

The overarching goal for the Center is to enhance public health practice and research, particularly in Southwest and Southside Virginia, Central Appalachia, and across the region.

Workforce Development

Part of the mission of the CPHPR is providing workforce development throughout the region. CPHPR has conducted several workforce development needs-assessments that have identified the following areas of public health practice as areas of need for training:

- Communication skills
- Cultural competency
- Data management
- Evaluation of programs
- Grant writing and grant management
- One Health
- Research methods
- Survey design



Our faculty are available to work with your organization to design a workforce development training tailored to your needs. We can provide a free training at your organization, which can range from an hour to a half-day. Please direct any questions or requests to CPHPR Project Coordinator, Hannah Menefee at hmenefee@vt.edu.

Ongoing Projects

1422 Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is funding the Virginia Department of Health to implement the PPHF: State and Local Public Health Actions to Prevent Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke in five health districts in Virginia. The Center is conducting the statewide evaluation of the program.

West Piedmont 1422 Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

West Piedmont Health District is one of the five health districts implementing a CDC-funded prevention program focused on obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke prevention. The Center is conducting the evaluation of the project.

Youth Health Education Leadership Institute (YHELI) Danville

The Center is evaluating the Youth Health Equity Leadership Institute in Danville, Virginia. The goal of YHELI is to increase graduation rates in high schools in Danville. The Center is monitoring a variety of indicators around risk behaviors, self-efficacy, and self-reported leadership and conducting a photovoice project.

USDA Balanced Living with Diabetes

Adult onset diabetes is a prevalent and increasing health issue. Rural communities are disproportionately suffering from the morbidity, mortality, and social and financial costs associated with this disease. In response, Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech is implementing Balanced Living with Diabetes (BLD), which is being implemented in 16 rural counties in Virginia. Center staff travel across the state to evaluate the effectiveness of the BLD programs.

Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth Obesity Prevention Program in Pulaski County

The New River Health District received funding from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth to implement an obesity prevention initiative in Pulaski County. Project team members and community partners facilitate access to healthy foods and nutrition education programs. The Center is conducting an evaluation of the program.

Drug Free Communities and Partnerships for Success

The Center has partnered with Blue Ridge Behavioral Health (Roanoke Area Youth Substance Abuse Coalition and Roanoke Prevention Alliance) and Piedmont Community Services (Drug Free MHC and FRESH coalition) to evaluate their Drug Free Communities and Partnerships for Success community programs.

Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Planning - Roanoke/Alleghany Health Districts

The Center is working alongside the Roanoke/Alleghany Health Districts to complete community health assessments and community improvement plans for Alleghany/Covington and Botetourt counties, utilizing a MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships) framework. Center responsibilities include facilitating stakeholder meetings, gathering community-level secondary data, collecting primary quantitative and qualitative data, analyzing data and preparing reports, sharing results with the community teams, determining health priorities, selecting evidence-based interventions for each health priority, and developing evaluation strategies.

Community Recovery Program

Piedmont Community Services implements the Community Recovery Program (CRP) in the City of Martinsville, Henry and Franklin counties. CRP helps recovering addicts continue their recovery journey by offering assistance and support in the areas of education, employment, finances, family, support/leisure, mental health, sobriety, physical health, and housing. The Center is conducting an evaluation of this program.

Project Highlight: Five-Year Virginia Cancer Plan – Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia

The Center is collaborating with the Virginia Department of Health and the Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia (CACV) to develop a comprehensive five-year cancer plan for Virginia. The Center collected and synthesized quantitative data, facilitated four working sessions with the CACV State Plan Committee, and is coordinating an iterative process to develop and compose the five-year plan. The plan will be disseminated in early Spring 2018.



Project Highlight: USDA - Preventing Opioid Abuse in Rural Virginia

The Center is collaborating with Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension, the VT Institute on Policy and Governance, and the Virginia Rural Health Association on this opioid abuse prevention project.

The goal of this project is to increase health literacy regarding opioid abuse and misuse, reduce unhealthy youth behaviors associated with substance abuse, improve life skills (such as positive youth protective factors and skill-building outcomes), increase peer resistance skills, decrease rates of adolescent substance abuse/misuse, and reduce lifetime prescription drug misuse. The Center is responsible for developing and overseeing project outcome and process evaluations for the Promoting School-Community-University Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER) and Hospital Patient Education Program (HPEP) models.

New River Academic Health Department

To date, 30 VT MPH students have conducted their practicum at the New River Health District, we have conducted numerous joint practice-based research projects, several joint research articles have been published and the AHD has been featured at several national conferences. Find out more here: <https://cphpr.mph.vetmed.vt.edu/nrahd.html>

CPHPR Graduate Research Assistant

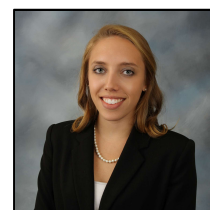
Last year's CPHPR Graduate Research Assistant, Shelbie Turner, MPH, is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies at Oregon State University. We wish her all the best!



Shelby Borowski, MS is the current Center Graduate Research Assistant. Shelby is currently a dual-degree student at Virginia Tech. She is a second year Master of Public health student in the Public Health Education concentration. She is also a fourth year doctoral student in the Human Development program, with a concentration in Family Studies. As a graduate assistant for the Center, Shelby assists with evaluation activities including implementing data collection measures, analyzing data, and disseminating evaluation findings via reports and presentations – for several projects.

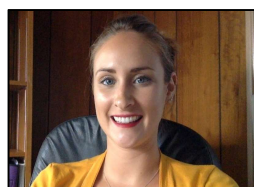
CPHPR Graduate and Undergraduate Research Assistants

Harper Lovegrove is a first year Master of Public Health student in the Public Health Education concentration. Additionally, she is completing dietetics courses in order to pursue a dietetic internship to become a Registered Dietitian. As a Graduate Research Assistant in the Center, Harper is assisting with the evaluation of a CDC 1422 grant focused on creating a local and joint approach to prevent and reduce high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and stroke within West Piedmont Health District.



Megan Kearney is a second year Master of Public Health Student in the Infectious Disease concentration. Megan is assisting with the Community Health Assessment in Botetourt County. Megan will conduct stakeholder meetings, develop customized surveys, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to determine major actionable health concerns in Botetourt County.

Madeline Murray is a first year Master of Public Health student in the Public Health Education concentration. As a Graduate Research Assistant in the Center, Madeline is assisting mainly with the evaluation of the statewide CDC 1422 Grant which is focused on creating a local and joint approach to prevent and reduce high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and stroke. She is also assisting with several other projects.



Laura Nelson, MS, MPH is a second year PhD student in Human Development and a graduate of the MPH program at Virginia Tech in both the Infectious Disease and Public Health Education concentrations. As a Graduate Research Assistant at the Center she is assisting with a Community Health Assessment for Alleghany/Covington and a USDA funded project supporting rural health and safety education on opioid misuse in rural Virginia.

Samantha Seay is an undergraduate field study student studying Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise. She will be graduating in December 2017. Samantha currently hopes to enroll in the VT Master of Public Health Program in the Fall of 2018. At the Center she assists with assessing evaluation plans for projects in the West Piedmont area, where she is originally from. She is learning about the need for action plans and logic models dealing with issues in communities.



A Note from the Director and Associate Director



Kathy Hosig, Ph.D., MPH, RD
Director, CPHPR

Thank you for catching up on what is happening at the CPHPR. The Center is now six years old, and we are proud of its growth and accomplishments, many of which are highlighted in this newsletter. This work would not be possible without the support of our local and state partners. We thank you for the continued trust and support.

If you are interested in hearing from us or working with us, please contact us.

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A special thanks to Virginia Tech's Institute for Society, Culture and Environment (ISCE) for continued support!



Sophie Wenzel, MPH
Associate Director, CPHPR