

# MPH Alumni Newsletter

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*Public Health Connections from the Last Frontier*



## Adjunct Faculty Profile: Linda Chamberlain, PhD, MPH

The UAA MPH program is distinguished in many ways, most importantly by its diverse student body and its highly acclaimed staff. Adjunct faculty members are vitally important to the MPH program at UAA, bridging the University and the greater public health community in and around Alaska.

Dr. Linda Chamberlain is among these prestigious adjunct faculty. She earned her MPH from Yale and her PhD in public health from Johns Hopkins. Dr. Chamberlain taught the course HS 690 Public Health Leadership during the summer semester.

**What work are you currently involved in?** I am the founding director of the Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project. My doctoral work provided the foundation and was instrumental in securing the original federal capacity building grant for this project which is based in the State of Alaska's Division of Public Health. I am a Kellogg Leadership Fellow, Group XIV, and through

my leadership development as a fellow, and also as a dog musher, I have developed a leadership model and lecture series that I have shared throughout the United States and Canada.



### **What do you hope students will take away from the course you are teaching?**

I hope students will take away the belief that everyone has the opportunity to lead and the skills to recognize and maximize those opportunities throughout their education, career, and lifetime. This is a skills-based course where students acquire knowledge and strategies to explore different leadership styles, reflect on their own approaches to leadership, prioritize essential leadership skills, analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and apply what they are learning to personal leadership experiences.

I cannot think of any student in any area of study that should not take a leadership course. In this course, we examine how leadership is part of all aspects of our lives (personal, career, community, and family). In other words, leadership has the potential to be part of everything we do and it is important that we balance leadership in the different domains of our lives to be all that we can be. Public health organizations emphasize the importance of integrating leadership training into public health education to prepare us to deal with the many challenges and complexities that occur daily in our field.

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### MPH Alumni Association:

Dan Lien, President ('07)  
Tammy Zulz, Vice-President ('07)  
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UAA



Check out your alumni profile and visit the MPH Website: <http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/mph/>

## Dr. Chamberlain (continued . . .)

**What are you most interested/passionate about in public health?** I specialize in the field of domestic/family violence which was not even considered a public health issue when I started in this field; now this topic is a public health priority. New terrain, unaddressed issues, and thinking outside of the box are aspects of public health that excite me. How do we rise to the challenge and make the connections between issues that have tremendous implications for public health but may not be part of the traditional public health approach or model? Public health is dynamic and constantly changing. An essential quality in leadership today is adaptive capacity – the ability to adapt and identify resources to thrive in changing environments and build new and culturally relevant responses. I believe being passionate about what we do is a prerequisite for public health and authentic leadership.

**What skills do public health professionals need today?** In addition to leadership training, I would say advocacy skills are essential. The model of leadership we have developed, which is called advocacy leadership, emphasizes the importance of advocacy skills. I also think it is imperative to have strong analytical skills to be able to sort and decipher the immense amount of information around us. While every public health professional does not need to know how to conduct an analysis,

they do need to know how to interpret and rate the quality of scientific data.

**What role can alumni play in today's public health world?** Alumni can be mentors to students and people who are new to or coming up the ranks in our field. Emerging leaders need exemplary mentors, and alumni have a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills to share. Mentoring is a reciprocal process that will also benefit the mentor by keeping them in tune with what students and young professionals need to soar in our field.

**What are your interests outside of public health?** In addition to dog mushing, I have a profound interest in Alaska and circumpolar history. On the weekends during the summer we operate a dog mushing museum to educate visitors about the history of dog mushing in the Arctic.

**What do you find most interesting about UAA's MPH program?** The diversity and caliber of students at UAA's MPH program is outstanding. Since I teach on-line, the students in my course are from many different regions of Alaska, Canada, and sometimes the Lower 48. They are often highly accomplished in their careers and bring immense experience and broad perspectives to our discussions.

To reach Dr. Chamberlain, email her at: [howlinghusky@gci.net](mailto:howlinghusky@gci.net). 🍷

## Alumni Association Announces First Scholarship Winner!

The UAA MPH Alumni Association awarded the first \$50 Global Health Scholarship to Megan Rose for Summer 2011. Congratulations, Megan!

The next Global Health Scholarship will be awarded again for Fall 2011. The \$50 award is available for reimbursing textbook costs during the semester. Applicants must be currently accepted into the MPH program, be in good academic standing, and have an interest in international/global health issues.

To apply, write a short 250 word essay describing your interest in international/global health and how you plan to use your MPH coursework and/or your thesis project to pursue this interest. Email your completed essay with contact information to MPH Alumni Association Vice President Tammy Zulz at [tsc3@cdc.gov](mailto:tsc3@cdc.gov). The deadline is September 16, 2011 and recipients will be notified in October 2011. 🍷



## MPH Electives Choices Continue to Grow - Alumni Welcome

When the UAA Master of Public Health Program enrolled its first students in 2003, the number of elective courses was extremely limited. In the past five years, the MPH faculty has tripled in size (from two to six full-time faculty) and added more affiliates. The program is offering more and more electives in Alaska, and creating new opportunities afar.

Dr. Nancy Nix taught a special independent study during two summers, taking students to Mongolia to study global health. Dr. Rhonda Johnson offered independent studies connected to summer circumpolar health research institutes in Denmark and Finland. Dr. Gabe Garcia taught the course "Practice-Based Qualitative Methods," and Dr. Liz Snyder taught "Soil, Water, and Public Health."

This fall, MPH Advisory Board member Dr. Tom Hennessy will once again offer a course on infectious disease epidemiology. In the spring, Dr. Jenny Miller will teach "Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology," and Dr. Betty Monsour plans to teach a new course on toxicology.

This summer, the following three electives were offered.

"Public Health Leadership" has been taught each summer since 2009 by affiliate faculty Dr. Linda Chamberlain. This course provides an overview of leadership styles, and incorporates lessons learned through leadership theories, business management, public health, sports, and other fields.

"Cross-Cultural Health Issues" was developed by Dr. Nancy Nix to help students learn about concepts of culture, cultural values, ethnocentrism, and other topics that relate to health, illness, and health-care delivery.

"Innovative Practices in Telehealth" provides an overview of telehealth, focusing on telebehavioral health in Alaska. Dr. Jenny Miller has co-taught this collaborative course each summer since 2009. Students learn about the history of telehealth and best clinical practices. They also have the opportunity to use telehealth technology.

Alumni are welcome to enroll in any MPH electives. Watch the MPH web site and this newsletter for periodic updates on available courses. Contact the MPH department to register. 👍

## MPH Alumni Updates

### Lillian Ruedrich '11

(Fairbanks, AK)

Lillian directs the Student Services Department and the Interior Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. Recently, Lillian's department—along with facilitation by staff from the Fairbanks Regional Public Health Center—hosted meetings for a new group of public health professionals in the Fairbanks area. This group has not yet been defined, but may become a local chapter of the Alaska Public Health Association or a local advisory committee for the Healthy Alaskans 2020 campaign as it ramps up across the state.

In the coming year, Lillian hopes to develop the introductory undergraduate



public health course HS 220 for online delivery. Outside of work, Lillian is rediscovering the guilt-free joys of evenings on the deck in her first school-free summer in six years.

### Jennifer Adams '10

(Anchorage, AK)

Jennifer has been the Administrator at Alpine Urology in Anchorage for four years. She also serves on the Board of the Alaska Men's Cancer Coalition and helps raise awareness and money to support local Alaskans. This summer she enjoyed the great outdoors and has been shrimping out of Whittier and fishing out of Seward. She has also enjoyed traveling (mostly to Hawaii) and experiencing quiet lazy days at home with her husband and cat. "I work hard to play hard for the most part!" 👍




# MPH Alumni Newsletter

## New Minor in Public Health Offered at UAA This Fall

In addition to the Master in Public Health (MPH), the Department of Health Sciences will now offer a minor in public health. According to Dr. Rhonda Johnson, interim coordinator of the minor in public health program, adding the minor addresses a local and national demand for public health training available to all students, regardless of their main interest of study. "Having the minor is our first big step toward introducing public health content and exposing students to public health perspectives earlier in their careers and earlier in their

academic coursework. This is consistent with several national initiatives to strengthen undergraduate education and prepare more engaged citizens."

To complete the minor, students must earn 18 credits (nine in core courses and nine in additional courses). A brochure providing more details about the minor is available at <http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/dept/>

Dr. Johnson is still seeking instructors for some of the new courses within the minor. MPH alumni are potentially qualified candidates for these adjunct positions. Interested alumni should contact Dr. Johnson at (907) 786-6545 or [Rhonda.Johnson@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:Rhonda.Johnson@uaa.alaska.edu). 

## Coordinator's Corner



Happy almost Autumn 2011! As the summer wanes and the days shorten, we are looking forward to another productive academic year with more than just a change in temperature. Our graduate program is now part of a new expanded

College of Health (COH) that includes all of our previous colleagues, along with a few new ones, including the WWAMI Biomedical program and Allied Health. This restructuring is expected to help support new interdisciplinary curriculum and collaborative research.

We are also looking forward to engaging undergraduate students through the new Minor in Public Health (see article this issue). More than half a dozen new courses have been developed that will support this new undergraduate option and we are currently recruiting for two new doctorally-prepared faculty to help build this and other undergraduate options in our department. Even with new full-time faculty, we anticipate periodic demand for adjunct teachers to support these new courses; to learn more, please contact me.

We also look forward to the opening of the new Health Sciences Building this month; although the MPH program will stay in its

current location at Diplomacy, we are excited to see our nursing, medical, and physician assistant colleagues move to this new state-of-the-art facility. We believe many will benefit from the enhanced training available there.

Congratulations to MPH students Jen Jones, Graham Knapp, and Megan Tompkins who presented at circumpolar health research meetings in Oulu, Finland and Akureyri, Iceland this June. Momentum is also growing for the International Congress of Circumpolar Health (ICCH15) that will be held in Fairbanks, AK August 5-10, 2012. There will be many opportunities for MPH alumni, faculty, and students to get involved in this international gathering. For more information, visit: [http://www.asch.cc/icch15\\_greeting.html](http://www.asch.cc/icch15_greeting.html)

Mark your calendars! The next MPH Alumni Meet and Greet will be held Thursday January 26th in conjunction with the 2012 Health Summit and the 2012 MPH Seminar Days. On Facebook? Consider joining the UAA MPH Students Group and sharing opportunities and insights with the next generation of public health professionals. Drop us a line; we always enjoy hearing from you!

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