

MPH Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2011; Volume 5, Number 1

Public Health Connections from the Last Frontier



Affiliate Faculty Profile: Barry Weiss, MD

Dr. Barry Weiss has been an affiliate faculty member for the Master of Public Health program at UAA since 2005. This program has a team of affiliate faculty members that are not paid, but volunteer to help students, program staff, and alumni in a variety of ways. "It's a way for them to connect with students and faculty, and be part of the program," said Dr. Rhonda Johnson, MPH program coordinator.

Dr. Weiss is a physician who specializes in family medicine and geriatric medicine. During much of the year, he is based in Tucson, Arizona where he is a Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine. Some of his roles include instructing medical residents at the University Medical Center, helping new faculty develop skills to be teach-

ers, and editing medical journals.

Dr. Weiss and his wife bought a condominium in Anchorage and now travel north for a winter ski break and for most of the summer months. Weiss and his family enjoy backpacking, kayaking, and hiking, and they often spend summer days backpacking through places that can be reached only by flight. Weiss competed in the Tour of Anchorage ski race again this March.

Weiss has also traveled in Alaska with the Master of Public Health program. In 2007, he was a visiting professor and flew to Kotzebue to lecture about health literacy, another one of his areas of expertise. Health literacy focuses on how to obtain, process, and use health information to make decisions.

Dr. Rhonda Johnson said she hopes students will look to Dr. Weiss and other affiliate faculty as mentors. Affiliate faculty can serve on thesis committees, be key informants for public health projects, consult on grant proposals, and also provide guidance in their areas of expertise. "We want more people to realize he and other affiliates could be a resource," Dr. Johnson said.

MPH students or alumni who would like to work with Dr. Weiss on a project can find his resume on the MPH faculty website (http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/mph/mph_fac.htm) or contact him through Dr. Johnson. 👍



MPH Alumni Association:

Dan Lien, President ('07)
Tammy Zulz, Vice-President ('07)
Amanda Walch, Secretary ('08)
Ann Potempa ('09)

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UAA



Visit the MPH web site: <http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/mph/>

MPH Alumni Updates

Lisa McGuire '08

(Meadow Lakes, AK)

Lisa recently returned from a year in Haiti, working on post earthquake public health issues with the International Services division of the American Red Cross. She continues to work as an independent contractor, working closely with nonprofit organizations, tribal communities, and others on program design, management, evaluation, and funding acquisition. Lisa plans to return to Haiti on a short term basis in the near future to work with other organizations, but is currently re-adjusting to life back in Alaska. She is excited to do lots of backpacking and mountain biking this summer.



Dan Kiley '06

(Anchorage, AK)

Dan continues to maintain his private dental practice off Lake Otis Parkway in Anchorage. He also serves on Alaska's Health and Human Services Commission for the Municipality of Anchorage and on the Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee for the State of Alaska's Medicaid Department.



Dan Lien '07

(Eagle River, AK)

Dan continues to be a proud member of the UAA MPH Alumni Association where he strives with his fellow alumna to link together the ever-expanding group of program graduates. He works as a therapeutic manager for GlaxoSmithKline and remains fascinated with the mile-a-minute changes taking place in the health care world. He lives in Eagle River, AK with his wife Terry and kids Kelsey (12) and Tucker (8).



Amanda Walch '08

(Anchorage, AK)

Amanda started a new position this academic year in the Dietetics and Nutrition Department at UAA. She is enjoying working with students and dietetic interns, and remains tied into the MPH program through the Alumni Association. Amanda spends her free time with her husband and four children. She is active in the community, spends as much time outdoors as possible, and engages in extracurricular activities at her kids' school.



Lisa Balivet '08

(Anchorage, AK)

Lisa is a data manager for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services, Infant Learning Program. After graduating from the MPH program, she completed the CDC 10X10 informatics training program and recommends it highly! Lisa holds a special interest in the use of telemedicine for infants and toddlers with disabilities throughout rural Alaska.



Cheryl Case '11

(Yellowknife, Canada)

Cheryl is working as a communicable disease specialist with the Government of Northwest Territories (NWT) in Yellowknife, Canada. She started her health career in the NWT as a medical lab technologist in 1980 and then pursued a career in public health. Cheryl states that life in the north is wonderful on both the professional and personal levels. 🍷



Check Us Out Online!

Did you know that as an alumnus you can stay connected to all the alumni in the program? Simply go online where you can view profiles of all alumni, find out what thesis projects students have completed, and view all past issues of the MPH Alumni newsletter: <http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/mph/alumni>

Plus, take a moment to update your current information.

Save the Date!

UAA's Center for Addressing Health Disparities through Research and Education (CAHDRE) will be co-sponsoring the first Health Disparities Summer Institute on campus this July 14-15, 2011. For more information, contact Rhonda Johnson or visit the CAHDRE web site: <http://cahdre.uaa.alaska.edu>. 🇺🇸



UAA MPH Alumni Tammy Zulz ('07), Lisa McGuire ('08), and Ann Potempa ('09) at the 4th annual Meet and Greet night in December at the Snow Goose Restaurant. This annual event draws a great mix of current students and MPH alumni and serves as the perfect networking opportunity. More than 40 people attended.



Alumni Association Announces Scholarships for Textbooks

The UAA MPH Alumni Association has created a series of Global Health Scholarships for current students. These \$50 awards are available for reimbursing textbook costs for Summer 2011.

Applicants must be currently accepted into the MPH program and in good academic

standing. Applicants should 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 thesis project to pursue this interest. Submit your completed essay with contact information to MPH Alumni Association board member Tammy Zulz (tsc3@cdc.gov). The deadline is May 20, 2011 and recipients will be notified in June 2011. 🇺🇸

Alumni Profile: Bruce Myers

Bruce will receive his MPH in May 2011. He has worked in the pharmaceutical industry for over 20 years in a variety of sales, marketing, and managed health care roles. Bruce is currently a Regional Sales Director with Biogen Idec and is responsible for managing sales, reimbursement, and nurse teams in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

Bruce has owned and operated a small business with nine employees and learned first-hand the struggle small employers have providing affordable health care benefits. He has also served on the board of a health-related non-profit and spent time lobbying the Washington state legislature for improved health insurance on behalf of their clients.

Bruce completed his MPH in the spring of 2011. His thesis, "Managed Care Perspectives on Biosimilars," focused on the perceptions and plans of key decision-makers at managed

health care insurers on a new class of generic-like biological medicines. "Public health is all of our responsibility--not only the role of the dedicated public health professional. I am proud of my UAA MPH degree and hope to leverage it to bring change to my industry." Specifically, Bruce is interested in increasing patient access to biological therapies by reducing their cost through the development of a robust market for "bio-generic" or "biosimilar" biological therapies.

In his spare time, Bruce enjoys kayaking and motorcycle riding with his wife, playing with their four granddaughters, and daily exercise. He resides in the Seattle area.



MPH Alumni Newsletter

Sign Up for Summer and Fall Courses - Alumni Welcome!

Four distance education graduate electives (HS A690) are being offered this summer:

Practice-Based Qualitative Research Methods
Dr. Gabriel Garcia

Cross-Cultural Health Issues
Dr. Nancy Nix

Public Health Leadership
Dr. Linda Chamberlain

Innovation Practices in Telehealth
Dr. Virginia Miller and others

This Fall, the following elective will be offered:

Infectious Disease Epidemiology
Dr. Tom Hennessy

Congratulations ...

to the Spring/Summer 2011 MPH graduates:

- Ambrosia Bowlus
- Cheryl Case
- Peggy Cobey
- Kelby Murphy
- Bruce Myers
- Lillian Ruedrich



At Prelude Lake on the Ingraham Trail, Yellowknife

Coordinator's Corner

It's good to be back in Alaska after my Fall 2010 sabbatical with the Institute for Circumpolar Health Research (ICHR) in Yellowknife, NWT, Canada. I encourage you to check out the ICHR website (<http://ichr.ca>) and the photos from my blog (<http://alpengllocal.blogspot.com>), or to contact me with specific questions. I hope additional collaboration with our circumpolar neighbors will be one of many positive outcomes of this experience.

We are actively planning for our second Summer Institute for Circumpolar Health Research to be held June 13-17, 2011 in Oulu, Finland in conjunction with the annual meeting of the International Network for Circumpolar Health Research (INCHR). Congratulations to MPH students Jen Jones, Graham Knapp, and Megan Tompkins who had abstracts accepted for presentation in Oulu, and who also earned travel scholarships from INCHR. For more information on the INCHR and the Summer Institute, please visit <http://arctichealth.oulu.fi/suomi>. New members always welcome!

Also, congratulations to MPH students Bruce Dotterer, Jen Jones, Jordan Lewis, and

Rebecca Sprague who had abstracts accepted to the tri-ennial Congress of the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA) to be held in Akureyri, Iceland June 22-26. For more information on IASSA, please visit www.iassa.org.

Our nationally accredited program continues to grow. We just admitted 12 new MPH students, bringing the total number of active students to more than 110. Our alumni ranks are also growing and expected to reach over 40 this summer. Thanks to the MPH Alumni Association who inaugurated the first MPH Alumni Textbook Scholarships this summer; we appreciate your continued interest and support!

We will also admit our first students to a new undergraduate minor in public health beginning Fall 2011. If you are interested in learning more about this exciting new option, and/or being considered for possible adjunct faculty roles, please contact me.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer ahead! We love to hear from you.

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