Upcoming Public Health Events

Oct. 27 – 28: ASSE Occupational Safety Summit, Anchorage, AK.

Oct. 31 – Nov. 4: APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition, Chicago, IL.


Mar. 12 – 18: Arctic Science Summit Week, Fairbanks, AK.

Feb. 2 – Feb. 4: Alaska Public Health Association 33rd Annual Health Summit, Anchorage, AK.

Registration now open! Register before December 15th to get the Early Bird discount, and save even more if you’re a student!

*Students: If you have conducted research during the 2013/14 or 2014/15 school years, consider submitting a poster proposal! Due November 30th at 5pm ADT.
Student Corner
Featuring important announcements from the MPH program!

Thinking about electives?
The MPH Faculty will be releasing a list of potential Summer 2016 electives later this semester. Be on the lookout for this list and remember to give feedback!
Knowing what you are and are not interested in guides course offerings.

Did you know?
Teleconference options are available for most student thesis and project presentations if you cannot attend in person. Watch the MPH Home Base and Facebook for announcements of upcoming defenses.

Connect with us!
There are several ways to keep in touch with the program and receive news, updates, and announcements. Staying connected is easy through our MPH Home Base on Blackboard, the UAA MPH Home Page, and on Facebook, search University of Alaska Anchorage MPH Program Friends! See below for information on our new social media project and other ways to keep in touch.

Infectious Disease Epidemiology is back!
Dr. Tom Hennessy will be offering HS A690: Infectious Disease Epidemiology during the Spring 2016 semester.

MPH SAC Fall Project: Social Media
by Samantha Case

Each semester, the SAC is responsible for conducting a public health-related project. For instance, last spring we helped coordinate a documentary screening and discussion of Anonymous People at UAA. This fall, we’re introducing two new social media accounts on Instagram and Twitter. Our goal with our fall semester project is to increase student engagement and find even more ways to bring our students, faculty, and staff together. We’ll be posting on important public health events and issues pertaining to UAA, Alaska, and around the globe!

If you have something you’d like to share with the MPH program, contact any SAC member to discuss ways we can help using our new social media accounts.

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram today! @UAAMPH
Wildfires can spread rapidly, giving only short notice to nearby residents and can quickly change air quality. By August of this year nearly 5 million acres of Alaska forest had been consumed by wildfires according to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center. There were over 700 fires that had swept across the state. Many were human caused while others were caused by lightening. More recently there was the Twin Creeks Fire on Kodiak Island which threatened many homes. This year, the Student Advisory Council will have a section in the newsletters spotlighting fire safety and prevention.

Wildfires and severe smoke can create dangerous conditions for people, especially those with chronic health conditions. Smoke from wildfires is a mixture of gases and fine particles from burning trees and other plant materials. Smoke can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system, and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases. Learning about current wildfires and wildfire smoke conditions can reduce the health effects the smoke has on you and those around you. Be Aware and Be Informed! The biggest thing you can do is to limit your exposure to smoke. Check out CDC's seven tips for protecting yourself from breathing wildfire smoke below.

1. **Pay attention to local air quality reports.** When a wildfire occurs in your area, watch for news or health warnings about smoke. Pay attention to public health messages and take extra safety measures such as avoiding spending time outdoors.

2. **Pay attention to visibility guides if they are available.** Although not every community measures the amount of particles in the air, some communities in the western United States have guidelines to help people estimate air quality based on how far they can see.

3. **If you are told to stay indoors, stay indoors and keep your indoor air as clean as possible.** Keep windows and doors closed unless it is very hot outside. Run an air conditioner if you have one, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. Seek shelter elsewhere if you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed.

4. **Do not add to indoor pollution.** When smoke levels are high, do not use anything that burns, such as candles and fireplaces. Do not vacuum, because vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home. Do not smoke tobacco or other products, because smoking puts even more pollution into the air.

5. **Follow your doctor’s advice about medicines and about your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease.** Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen.

6. **Do not rely on dust masks for protection.** Paper “comfort” or “dust” masks commonly found at hardware stores trap large particles, such as sawdust. These masks will not protect your lungs from smoke. An “N95” mask, properly worn, will offer some protection. If you decide to keep a mask on hand, see the *Respirator Fact Sheet* provided by CDC’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

7. **Avoid smoke exposure during outdoor recreation.** Wildfires and prescribed burns—fires that are set on purpose to manage land—can create smoky conditions. Before you travel to a park or forest, check to see if any wildfires are happening or if any prescribed burns are planned.

"In order to be ready when needed, you must also be ready when not needed." – Joe Stam, Chief of Fire and Aviation, Retired

We’ll be continuing our wildfire theme in the Spring 2016 newsletter with Spotlight on Wildfires: Part Two. In the meantime, keep watching our social media accounts for more information!
In May I was able to attend the Institute for Healthcare Advancement’s conference on health literacy with fellow MPH student Jeni Rogers. The National Library of Medicine defines health literacy as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions”. This annual conference seeks to emphasize the importance of health literacy with educational sessions that provide tools for making every health service more health literate. The highlights of the conference included the poster session where we were able to present our poster titled, “Building on Lessons Learned: What Working with Peer Language Navigators has Taught us in Multi-Cultural Anchorage, AK” as well as the performances by the admirable young adults of the Bigger Picture organization, and meeting Ceci Doak, the original health literacy advocate. If you are interested in learning more about health literacy in Alaska, the Anchorage Health Literacy Collaborative is a great place to start.

The MPH SAC Wants YOU!

The Student Advisory Council is looking for students to join in our efforts to connect and engage our student body. We are the students’ voice in the program.

What’s involved?

The SAC meets once each month during the school term and helps facilitate opportunities for student participation in public health activities outside the virtual classroom. It’s a fun way to meet other students in the program and get involved!

SAC duties include:

- Participating in a teleconference once each month during the fall and spring semesters.
- Helping to coordinate a public health project once each semester.
- Contributing to our newsletter.

For more information, check out our website or contact any SAC member. Next meeting: Nov. 11th @ 5pm AST.
As you complete the MPH program, remember you have a library and a librarian to help with your information needs. I’m one of two medical librarians at the Alaska Medical Library, a unit of the Consortium Library. I’m the liaison librarian for allied health and public health. All librarians have created research guides in their liaison areas, which can be found at the library’s website. To find books, journal articles, and websites dealing with public health, take a look at the “Public Health” topic guide. On the opening page of the guide, there is a quick link to CDC Stacks, a voluminous digital library of searchable, downloadable public health articles and reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The guide also has a tab for Alaska-specific information, including links to downloadable reports produced by Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s Epidemiology Center and bulletins and reports from the State of Alaska Division of Public Health. In addition to these publicly available resources, your UAA login gives you access to a number of proprietary databases, including CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature), Cochrane Library (for systematic reviews), Web of Science, Dissertations and Theses Full Text, and Sociological Abstracts. The Consortium Library website also has a link to PubMed. Although PubMed is a free interface to MEDLINE (National Library of Medicine’s database of biomedical literature), accessing PubMed from the Consortium Library website brings up icons directing you to the full text of articles available at UAA. The library has current subscriptions to over 350 journal titles in public health. (For a partial list, click on the “Library Titles” tab of the “Public Health” topic guide.)

In addition to journal articles, you can use your UAA login to access the library’s ebooks. Of course, if you are on the Anchorage campus, you can also check out print books. For a sampling of print and electronic books in the library’s collection, go to the “Library Titles” page of the “Public Health” topic guide. A fast way to search across library content for journal and book titles on your topic is to type keywords into the QuickSearch box on the library’s homepage (https://consortiumlibrary.org).

It is important to know that if UAA does not carry a journal or book that you need, your student fees cover the cost of interlibrary loans (ILL). If you are searching a library database and come across an abstract for an article UAA does not own, look for the “request an interlibrary loan” link, where you can use your UAA credential to request article delivery from another library at no cost to you. Additionally, if the article is only available in UAA’s print journal collection, you can use the ILL link to have the article scanned and emailed to you, a wonderful convenience for off-campus students.

If you would like to receive individualized library instruction, please contact me. You can email me your question, and I can give suggestions how to find the resources you need. Alternatively, I can set up an online meeting via Skype for Business, where I can demonstrate a search on my computer and you can follow along and ask questions. Of course, if you are on campus, feel free to drop by my office or call for an appointment. The Alaska Medical Library is on the second floor of the Consortium Library. My office number is 786-1610, email sbrudie@uaa.alaska.edu.

I wish you the best of luck in your program and look forward to helping you use your library.