



## PHPD Programs Dean's Message



I am writing this message in mid-November.

The presidential campaign and election outcome has left many of us in the public health community saddened, concerned, angry, and questioning what the future holds. If public health is collective action “to advance societal and environmental conditions that allow all members of society to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health” as reflected in our [mission statement](#), how best to move forward? I would not deign to answer this question for others, but would suggest that an active citizenry and an informed one will be needed to critique and perhaps protest some of the changes that are likely to be proposed by the incoming administration.

I spent the week before the election in Denver at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA), as I do every year. Reconnecting with former students, and seeing them flourish as public health professionals, is always a particular highlight. Along with many alumni of our program in health communication and other members of the Public Health Education and Health Promotion

Section, I was thrilled to honor Professor Tim Edgar, as he received the Everett Rogers Award, given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to public health communication. We are privileged to have him join our faculty. *(See page 1 article)*

Nowhere is the rich fabric of public health in greater evidence than at APHA. The sheer number and range of topics can be immobilizing. Prison health, the opiate epidemic, accountable care organizations, aging, reproductive health, physical activity, climate change, structural racism, and so much more – that is the fabric’s warp. And the thousands of attendees are its weft: diversity abounds along dimensions of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability status. “Creating the Healthiest Nation: Ensuring the Right to Health,” the theme of the APHA meeting, takes on new meaning given the early discussions of how and to what extent the Affordable Care Act may be dismantled, and to anticipated assaults on women’s reproductive rights.

As confirming as it is to be among colleagues who largely share one’s views, I do believe one of many “lessons learned” from this election is the consequence of not interacting with those who do not. One of the luxuries afforded by our information age is the ability to curate the news and opinions one reads or hears. Social media can assist in this by framing issues around group think, with vitriol delivered to dissenters. Greater openness across the deep divides in evidence during the recent campaign would be one welcome result.

Certainly, the work of public health does not depend upon who occupies the White House. Yet, I would argue the need for our work, as practitioners of public health, has never been more evident. APHA’s Public Health Action campaign, PHACT, is but one of myriad ways to get involved. Choose your organization and choose your stance – whatever you elect to do, I hope you will do something.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aviva Must".

Aviva Must, Ph.D.  
Dean, Public Health and Professional Degree Programs

# Improving Documentation Practices for Breastfeeding Peer Counselors



Caitlin Pohl, MPH

Caitlin Pohl, MPH'16

This past summer I had the pleasure of implementing my Applied Learning Experience (ALE) with the Massachusetts Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which is a supplemental nutrition program funded through the United States Department of Agriculture Food and

Nutrition Services that aims to safeguard the health of low income women and children. While there are over 100 WIC offices across the state, I carried out my ALE from the state office housed within the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in Boston. My preceptor,

Rachel Colchamiro, is the state's WIC Nutrition Coordinator and was instrumental in the development and implementation of this project.

My ALE consisted of a quality improvement project for the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program. The program is one of WIC's strategies to achieve its goal of improving the nutritional status of infants by allowing WIC-eligible women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to be paired with a Peer Counselor. The Peer Counselors are former WIC participants who are hired to support current participants in setting and achieving breastfeeding goals.

WIC's effort to promote and support breastfeeding is significant because breastfeeding is widely acknowledged to be the healthiest nutritional choice for infants. Breastfeeding contributes to various health, emotional,

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## Food Allergies: A Growing Public Health Concern

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Many institutions, ranging from restaurants to airlines to colleges, are adapting to rising rates of food allergies.<sup>4</sup> "I have seen a huge increase [in severe allergies] over the last decade," says Julie Lampe, RD, Nutrition Marketing Specialist at Tufts University. "We have all our ingredients and allergens listed on food fact cards, which are at the point of service." Tufts Dining Services also trains new staff to avoid contaminating allergen-free food with ingredients from other dishes and to direct questions to an appropriate supervisor. A well-intentioned but incorrect answer, reassuring someone that the allergen is not present, can lead to a dangerous allergic reaction.

Dr. John Leung, Director of the Food Allergy Center at Tufts Medical Center, Co-Director of the Food Allergy Center at Floating Hospital for Children, Allergist, and Assistant Professor at Tufts University School of Medicine, has another concern: misdiagnosis. In his practice, for example, he saw a young boy who was incorrectly diagnosed with an egg allergy. "In daycare, at three years old, he had to stand aside because he couldn't eat birthday cake," says Dr. Leung. "He became very socially isolated."

Dr. Leung worries about the impact of misdiagnosis,

which can lead to needless dietary restrictions and even nutritional deficits. He notes that this issue disproportionately affects families who cannot access quality healthcare or cannot afford to take time off from work for an appointment.

More research is needed to understand the causes of food allergies. In the future, perhaps a pill or vaccine will prevent allergies. For now, health professionals work to raise awareness to protect those with allergies without provoking unwarranted anxiety or isolation.

For more information about allergies, visit the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/food-allergy>. For more about food allergies at Tufts, visit <https://dining.tufts.edu/nutrition/food-allergies-and-intolerances>.

1. Diseases, N.I.o.A.a.I. Food Allergy. [cited 2016; Available from: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/food-allergy>
2. Kattan, J., The Prevalence and Natural History of Food Allergy. *Curr Allergy Asthma Rep*, 2016. 16(7): p. 47.
3. Plus, M. Food Allergy. [cited 2016; Available from: <https://medlineplus.gov/foodallergy.html>
4. Jones, S.M. and A.W. Burks, The changing CARE for patients with food allergy. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*, 2013. 131(1): p. 3-11; quiz 12-3.

## Lisa Paradis, MPH '09, President-Elect, PHPD Alumni Association



Lisa Paradis, MPH '09

Cayla Saret, MPH '17

"When thinking about going back to school [for my master's degree in public health], I thought, I love epidemiology, but I really like the communication side, too. When I discovered the Tufts [MPH – Health Communication] program I knew, 'This is just perfect. It's both worlds.'"

Lisa Paradis earned her

MPH with a concentration in health communication in 2009 from Tufts University School of Medicine and currently serves as the Research Analyst for the President's Cancer Panel. She is also President-Elect of the Tufts Public Health and Professional Degree Programs (PHPD) Alumni Association.

After completing her BS in rehabilitation and human services at Boston University, Paradis focused on breast cancer prevention at the Dana Farber Institute, where she says health communication tools played an important role as she recruited trial participants. After that, she edited medical publications. All the while, she says, "I just kept coming back to public health."

Even with her experience in the field, Paradis says her classes at Tufts "helped me get a better understanding of how we do research." For her Applied Learning Experience (ALE) with the Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition, she spoke with small business owners, constituents, and legislative aids to develop campaign messaging in support of legislation to enable all workers to earn paid sick time. A few years later, the coalition helped pass the law. After graduation, Paradis stayed in touch with friends from Tufts. While living in Washington, D.C., she would come to Alumni Association meetings and events when she visited Boston. She wishes she had more time on campus as a student, which was part of what drew her to run for a board position.

She will spend a year as President-Elect of the PHPD Alumni Association, learning about the position from

Jennifer Towers, MS – Health Communication '13, the current President. Paradis says Towers makes the role look like a wonderful way to connect to alumni and to give back. "[Towers] was a leader at Tufts for so long, and she knows so much and so many people in the community that I can't think of a better person" to support her in the transition.

Paradis hopes to expand alumni involvement and other opportunities for interaction with current students that she greatly appreciated while she was in the program. She feels it is important to show students the many "real-world possibilities" that exist after graduation. She also wants to facilitate the expansion of the Alumni Association in order "to increase connections with the growing alumni" population, both within and beyond Boston.

Paradis "turned everything upside-down" to move to D.C. for a health communication fellowship available through the National Cancer Institute that she first learned about in class. The position "felt like a dream job," and led to a full-time role for the President's Cancer Panel. She often encourages students to apply for such fellowships, which she says can facilitate access to federal government positions.

Paradis enjoys the political aspect of her work, even though it can lead to complications – for example, the weeks-long federal government shutdown in 2013 delayed a report for months. Panel members are independent White House appointees, she explains, and they consider many factors when selecting a topic area to investigate, particularly the likelihood of a topic area to result in actionable recommendations to the President. They amplify their impact by gathering more stakeholders. For example, physicians contributed to a report on underutilization of the HPV vaccine. The Panel found that some physicians were not recommending it as compellingly or frequently as other immunizations. This discovery led to collaboration among groups including medical societies, the Centers for Disease Control and the National Cancer Institute to increase vaccination rates.

"What's great about the public health program," says Paradis, is that the "concrete skills" taught at Tufts allow students to thrive in any subject area. For example, she

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# Improving Documentation Practices for Breastfeeding Peer Counselors

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and economic benefits for both mothers and infants.<sup>1</sup> However, breastfeeding rates are found to be lower among WIC participants as compared to the national average.<sup>2</sup>

Peer Counselors offer support to WIC participants through in-person meetings in a WIC office setting, as well as via phone, text, and email. After meeting with or contacting participants, Peer Counselors are responsible for documenting their services using an electronic Management Information System (MIS) called Eos. Documentation helps ensure the quality of services by helping Peer Counselors keep track of what has and has not been working for participants in terms of breastfeeding. Although Peer Counselors are trained to use the Eos system for documentation, my ALE project grew out of the observation by the state WIC office that there has been inconsistent documentation of services across Massachusetts in recent years. The WIC state office is concerned with documentation of Peer Counselor services not only because documentation helps ensure the quality of services provided, but also because it creates a written record of all Peer Counselor activities. This written record is useful in regards to planning and funding efforts on the state level.

The specific aims and objectives of my ALE involved identifying barriers and facilitators to Peer Counselor documentation. By reaching out to Peer Counselors and other key informants within the WIC program, I set out to understand the experience of documentation. I worked toward my project aims and objectives by conducting focus groups with Peer Counselors, in-depth interviews with WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators, and an online survey that was distributed to all Peer Counselors in the state.

In hindsight, the most poignant moment of my ALE was conducting focus groups with Peer Counselors from across the state of Massachusetts. Fortuitously, during the first week of the ALE implementation semester, the peer counselors held a retreat. I used this opportunity to ask them about their experiences with documentation and the Eos system. I took away more than just valuable information for my report. Having the opportunity to

meet Peer Counselors from different offices across the state allowed me to hear first-hand and understand the passion that the women have for the work that they do. This helped me frame my ALE early on as a project that aimed to make the documentation process easier for Peer Counselors, and shift my mindset away from being too highly critical.

Over the course of my ALE, I found that many of the inconsistencies in documentation stemmed from the mobile nature of the Peer Counselors' work. Peer Counselors are typically expected to document their services while in the office where they have access to a computer. However, most Peer Counselors exceed expectations by contacting breastfeeding mothers all hours of the day via phone calls, texts, and emails. Peer Counselors do not always have access to Eos when they have contacts with participants, creating a lag time between contact and documentation. This is one of the greatest barriers to documentation that I found.

In summarizing my findings and recommendations for my preceptor at WIC, I kept in mind the passion that the Peer Counselors have for their work, which I experienced during the focus groups. The ALE resulted in recommendations for improving the Eos system, looking into mobile solutions for documentation, and modifying the training manual for Peer Counselors. I am grateful to my preceptor and all of the WIC staff who were supportive of this project, and look forward to seeing how WIC utilizes the findings from this ALE.

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2012). Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics*, 129. doi: 10.1542/peds.2011-3552.
2. Hedberg, I. (2013). Barriers to Breastfeeding in the WIC Population. *The American Journal of Maternal and Child Nursing*. 38(4), 244-249.

# Faculty Notes

**Libby Bradshaw, DO, MS, Academic Director for the MS - Pain Research, Education and Policy Program (PREP) and Daniel Carr, MD, MA, Director of the PREP Program** recently had a content analysis of Tufts' medical school curriculum, prepared with medical students as collaborators accepted for publication in *Pain Medicine*. The project was funded by a Tufts Innovations in Education grant. They also participated in Governor Baker's working group to develop competencies in pain and addiction to be required of all Massachusetts medical school graduates.

**Alia Bucciarelli, MS, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine**, gave a presentation titled *Using Plain Language Writing and Design Principles to Improve Public Education Materials* for the Public Education Track of the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in September.

**Beth Buyea, MHS, PA-C, Assistant Professor of Public Health & Community Medicine**, is developing an Inter-professional Pilot Program for the physician assistant programs and dental schools that's pending an IRB approval. Beth is also writing a book chapter on Inter-professional Education for an Applied Therapeutics Pharmacology textbook.

**Daniel Carr, MD, MA, Director of the PREP Program**, recently participated in Massachusetts Department of Public Health Drug Formulary Commission. He also completed a 4-year term as Chair of the Acute Pain Special Interest Group of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP). One of Carr's many activities with IASP included organizing an international symposium; "*Are Postoperative Opioids Obsolete?*", at its World Congress on Pain in September in Yokohama, Japan.

**Lisa Gualtieri, PhD, ScM, Assistant Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine**, won an honorable mention award for RecycleHealth.com in the Philips Wearables Challenge. Lisa was given the award by Carla Kriwet, Business Group Leader, Patient Care and Monitoring Solutions at Philips Health.

**Barry Levy, MD, MPH, Adjunct Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine**, has recently given and will soon be giving several presentations on the health consequences of climate change, including at the University of Connecticut School

of Medicine, the Boston University School of Public Health, at a Physicians for Social Responsibility symposium, and at Tufts for public health doctoral students and for veterinary medicine students.

**Alice Lichtenstein, DSc, Senior Scientist and Director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the HNRCA, Stanley N. Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy**, delivered a speech in Copenhagen, Denmark, titled; *Designs, and Demands of Controlled Dietary Interventions-Lessons Learned*. She was also a speaker at Let's Go! National Childhood Obesity Conference in Portland, Maine in September 2016.

**Pamela Katz Ressler, MS, RN, HN-BC, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor, Pain Research, Education and Policy**, delivered a keynote address at the inaugural conference of the Children's Palliative Care Coalition of Michigan titled *Building Resilience: Supporting Families through Diagnosis and Bereavement*.

**Margie Skeer, ScD, MPH, MSW, Assistant Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine**, has several new publications in press in the *Journal of Substance Use*, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* and *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, one of which includes "Testing a Brief Substance Misuse Preventive Intervention to Parents of Pre-Adolescents: Feasibility, Acceptability, Preliminary Efficacy. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*".

# Alumni Notes

## MPH

**Toby Beckelman, MS/MPH '14**, started a new position as the Healthy Guidelines Coordinator for the Hawaii State Department of Health. In this role she's developing and implementing statewide nutrition and physical activity programs.

**Arielle Carpenter, MPH '11**, recently moved to Houston, TX and is the Healthcare Innovation Lead at the Texas Medical Center Innovation Institute. She is in charge of programming and curriculum for their digital health and medical device start-up accelerator and bio design fellowship programs.

**Nicholas Gordon, DMD/MPH '14**, was featured as part of a series entitled "Dentist on Display" by Tufts University School of Dental Medicine for his work in dental public health. He is now enrolled in a Pediatric Dentistry Residency Program at Boston University.

**Ashley Grant, MPH '11**, recently moved to New Orleans to begin a PhD program studying water systems and policy at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. She recently published a protocol paper based on a study conducted in five cities in Russia.

**Teddy Klug, MPH '16**, relocated to Little Rock, Arkansas, over the summer and started his first year of medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS).

**Daryl Mangosing, MPH '15**, started as a Research Communications Specialist at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS)/Prevention Research Center (PRC) in San Francisco, CA.

Congratulations to **Stephanie Movsesian, MPH '13**, who got married on Cape Cod on October 14, 2016. She is currently works in Product Marketing at athenahealth in Watertown, MA.

**Maya Nussenzweig, MPH '16**, relocated to Washington, DC and joined the Project Management Team at the Henry Jackson Foundation as a Project Coordinator for an HIV vaccine clinical research trial.

**Justin Rice, MBS/MPH '09**, was elected Internal Medicine/Pediatrics Chief Resident Physician at University of Southern California/LAC+USC Medical Center for 2016-2017.

**Stephanie Simms Hodges, MS/MPH '15**, recently relocated to Richmond, VA and joined No Kid Hungry Virginia as the Operations Manager. In this position, she works in the Governor's Office on the First Lady's child hunger prevention initiative.

**Meredith Spacie, MPH '06**, started working as a Healthcare Analytic Consultant with Milliman, Inc. in February 2016, based out of their Seattle headquarters. When not working, Meredith spends time with her husband, Tom, and her children Alice (6) and Sam (4). She welcomes contact from alumni traveling to or interested in the Seattle area.

**Abbie Steiner, MS/MPH '16**, joined Denver Public Health and Denver Environmental Health as a Community Health Epidemiologist, responsible for facilitating state mandated community health assessment efforts for the city and county of Denver.

**Alyssa Tutunjian, MBS/MPH '15**, along with a group from the Division of Trauma at Tufts Medical Center published an article entitled "Is it safe to admit patients with acute injuries to nonsurgical services? A retrospective review" in *The American Journal of Surgery*.

**Karen Wallace, MPH '05**, will be presenting her paper "A Novel Approach to Calculating Medicare Hospital 30-Day Re-admissions for the SASA® Novice" at the Southeast SAS Users Group (SESUG) Conference in Bethesda, MD in October.

## MS-HCOM

**Lucy Berrington, MS-HCOM; '13**, was awarded the 17th annual Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) Media Award for outstanding journalistic efforts in her role as Editor-in-Chief of Student Health 101. The award recognizes journalists who expertly interpret and present difficult-to-understand research and scientific findings on alcohol and alcoholism to the general public.

**Catherine Leamy, MS-HCOM' 15**, presented at San Diego Comic-Con 2016 on using comic books for health communication as a member of a panel with several other Tufts University and Emerson College health communication graduates.

**Jennifer Towers, MS-HCOM '13**, recently took a new position at Gonzaga University School of Nursing and Human Physiology as Assistant Dean.

## MD/MBA

**Shirley Huang's, MD/MBA '14**, family has grown to 4 with a son born at end of last year. With return from maternity leave, Shirley assumed medical directorship of not only hospice and palliative care but also of the new PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) at TRU Community Care, a nonprofit organization in Boulder County, CO.

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## Public Health Rounds

### Editor

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## Alumni Notes

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### PREP

**Jessica Peck-Lindsey, PREP '12**, is in her 5<sup>th</sup> year of practice as an acupuncturist. On September 30, 2016, Jessica spoke at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine for Bio 102 about acupuncture and its role in pain management.

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## Lisa Paradis, MPH '09, President-Elect, PHPD Alumni Association

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has used writing and marketing skills to strengthen the Panel's web and social media presence.

Paradis now lives in Boston, though she travels to D.C. frequently. She is excited to have more time at Tufts. She urges current students to "get all you can out of it while you're here," from classes, to the Applied Learning Experience, to contact with professionals doing interesting work. "It's all pieces of a puzzle. Not any one piece is necessarily bigger than the other. All these little parts work together."



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