

YOUR PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION



CENTRAL NEW YORK
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A Publication of the CEPH-accredited CNYMPH Program, a joint program of SUNY Upstate Medical University & Syracuse University

'CYCLE OF HEALTH' TV SHOW: 'WE NEED THESE STORIES'

In 2013, Dr. Maritza Alvarado got a phone call from Hugo Acosta, owner-publisher of CNY Latino newspaper, asking if she'd be interested in joining a "health show with a twist" on Syracuse's public television station.

It wouldn't just be distilling health information and tips; it would delve into health-related stories of people in Central New York.

Dr. Alvarado, a pediatrician pursuing her MPH degree in the CNYMPH Program, had never imagined herself in front of TV cameras. But she decided to give it a try.

She's now a regular interviewer and a medical health consultant on WCNY-TV's "Cycle of Health," which has been on the air five seasons.

"The fact that people are willing to come forward with their stories is amazing," said Dr. Alvarado, whose unpaid work on the show is doubling as her capstone for the MPH degree.



photo credit WCNY Public Media

Her fellow TV hosts are Rich O'Neill, PhD, professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Upstate; George Stanley, MD, obstetrician and gynecologist at Syracuse Community Health Center and a graduate of Upstate's College of Medicine, and John Parker, MD, orthopedic surgeon at Syracuse Orthopedic Specialists. The host is Susan Kennedy, a veteran television producer and anchor.

After learning Dr. Alvarado was interested in the TV show idea, Acosta shared her contact information with

WCNY. Station executive Jim Aroune called to talk about it, asking her to think of cases that had affected her, either involving her own patients or others she had heard about.

One case had stayed with her for two decades – premature triplets she had cared for as a pediatrician. One of the triplets came down with meningitis and died at four months. There was no vaccine then. Dr. Alvarado had stayed in touch with the parents over the years, and interviewed them for one of her first "Cycle of Health" segments.

Her other segments include a woman who had been sexually abused by a family member ... a breast cancer survivor whose sister died of the disease, inspiring her to devote her energy to reaching out to minority women and helping them advocate for their own health ... and Ronnie Brower, a Syracuse man who succeeded in overcoming morbid obesity.

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CNYMPH CONTACT INFORMATION

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TRAVIS HOBART, MD, MPH JOINS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE



Dr. Travis Hobart has joined Upstate's Department of Public Health & Preventive Medicine as Co-Director of the Foundations

of Reasoning in Medicine course and Director of the Population Health for Physicians clerkship in the medical school. He is also an assistant professor in Pediatrics.

Dr. Hobart brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in both clinical and population health. His areas of interest include injury prevention, environmental health, nutrition and obesity prevention. He works with community partners to place students in real life experiences, and will be a guest lecturer in CNYMPH courses.

On a personal level he enjoys spending time with his family, gardening, and learning about edible and medicinal plants.

FREE CLINIC IN SYRACUSE A CREDIT TO MPH PROGRAM

The driving force behind the Rahma Health Clinic on Syracuse's south side is recent Master of Public Health graduate Mustafa Awayda, MD.

Dr. Awayda is the clinic's medical director and a physician at the Syracuse VA.

Rahma, which means "mercy" in Arabic, was founded by a group of citizens concerned about the large number of uninsured local residents and their resulting poor health, Dr. Awayda said. The staff is composed of local



physicians, other medical professionals and community members who volunteer.

The Rahma Health Clinic is licensed as an Article 28 Free Clinic by the New York State Department of Health. Setting up a free clinic reflects the Islamic tenet of "ongoing charity," providing something that continues to provide a benefit, Dr. Awayda said.

The clinic is open Saturdays for several hours and occasionally on Wednesday evenings. Patients and

THE CNYMPH CLASS OF 2016

Leesha Alex (Helm) *

Moustafa Awayda

Kaylan Celestin

Nicole Cifra *

Matthew Cortese *

Laura Gregor

Thomas Grisham

Karen Janiszewski

John Martens

Malcolm Philogene

Kyle Plante

Michael Rosenthal

Adetokunbo Shobaloju

Brittany Sprague

* MD MPH Degree

PUBLIC HEALTH CERTIFICATE GRADUATES

David Putelo

Patricia Forken

insurance companies are not billed. Rahma is sustained by board member contributions, donations and grants, with help from an annual fundraiser in October.

Dr. Awayda, who received his MPH this year, attributes much of the clinic's growth to the program. "Every single course in the MPH program helped us set up Rahma," he said. The clinic was founded in 2010 and began seeing patients in late 2012.

All of the clinic's services are free. Appointments are requested at (315) 565-5667. <http://www.rahmahealthclinic.com>

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CNYMPH TRAINING HELPED LAUNCH MIDWIFERY PROGRAM



Heather Shannon at Community Campus

Soon after Heather Shannon started in the CNY Master of Public Health program seven years ago, she knew exactly what she wanted to do with the degree.

"Because of the MPH program I realized there was a void, a problem of women receiving access to care, primarily prenatal care," Shannon said.

After earning her MPH in 2012, Shannon worked to establish the Midwifery & Gynecology clinic at Upstate's Community Campus. It opened in 2013.

"I lived my dream," she said. "This is the first of its kind in the U.S. – a provider-based practice in a university setting. We collaborate with MDs, but it's not built-in, and they're not overseeing us. That's an old-school misconception."

The belief that midwives provide only obstetrical care is perhaps the biggest misconception about midwifery, said Shannon, who is a Certified Nurse Midwife.

"There were misconceptions, and I had to dispel those myths even to the professionals," she said. "We provide health care to women. It's a full-service practice."



In the clinic's early years, "I did a lot of networking and educating, getting the word out," Shannon said. "Now our biggest draw is self-referrals from families and friends (of former patients). We have a name in the community."

About 70 percent of the center's patients are on public insurance.

"We don't have low-risk clientele. We're dealing with high-risk patients," Shannon said. "That was our purpose and our vision, to improve access to care and improve perinatal outcomes."

Despite these risk factors, the center's low-birth weight rates and pre-term birth rates compare favorably with national benchmarks, such as Healthy 2020 and the March of Dimes, Shannon said.

That's a boost for Syracuse, which historically has had problems with infant mortality rates. "We're successful and our patients are well cared for," Shannon said.

The Midwifery & Gynecology Clinic is sustainable financially and its caseload is growing. Annual deliveries have increased from 90 to 183 to 206 its first three years.

In addition to delivering babies, the clinic provides gynecological services, family planning and treatment for minor medical conditions. Cancer patients, surgery cases and extremely complicated cases are referred to specialists.

"We cooperate with the perinatal center, and if it's merited we send the patient there," Shannon said. "We have a medical director who comes in a half day a week to see the complicated patients."

Being part of an academic medical university helps. "It's nice to be with Upstate and connected to all specialties," Shannon said. "It makes it easy to send patients to specialists and get them into primary care. It helps streamline health care, which is what Upstate and Obamacare are about – keeping people out of emergency rooms."

The education and training Shannon received in the CNYMPH program was "the key piece to put the puzzle together" to start the Midwifery program, she said. "I couldn't have done this without that knowledge. The light bulb goes on, and you realize, 'This makes sense!'"

The skills Shannon developed include conducting a community needs assessment; program development, evaluation and management; strategic planning and goal setting.

"I didn't have this knowledge until I went into the program," she said. "I'm smarter about what women in this community need."

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CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ORGANIZES 9/11 DAY OF SERVICE

On Sunday, September 11, 2016, at 11 a.m., one hundred and thirty six students, faculty and staff participated in Upstate's Day of Service to provide a valuable service to the community.

Coordinated by the Center for Civic Engagement and supported by the Upstate Foundation, Consortium for Culture and Medicine, Office of Interprofessional Education, and the Center for Global Health and Translational Science, the day started with a personal, pre-recorded message from Upstate's President, Dr. Danielle Laramée-Arena, who was unable to be in attendance due to another obligation.

In her remarks, the president reflected on the meaning of service, especially for those aspiring to be health professionals. She challenged the students to "... have courage, be bold in asking questions ... and ask questions that have not been asked before." She also instructed them to be tenacious in obtaining data to inform their decisions and actions.

Participants also heard from a panel of community members who shared their stories of growing up in the area, the needs of the community, and ways to get involved by strengthening existing, on-going programs and initiatives. After the panel discussions, students were intentionally assigned to interprofessional groups where they were asked to reflect on the information presented. The discussions were facilitated by student leaders and faculty.

By 12:30 pm, students, faculty and staff boarded buses to their assigned service locations, which included the Matthew 25 Farm in Tully, NY; Rescue Mission Warehouses in Baldwinsville and Liverpool, NY; Salvation Army's Booth House, Barnabas House, and Family Shelter; City Parks - Schiller Park and Wilson Park - in the City of Syracuse.

At the end of a long day, volunteers had sorted approximately \$2,500 worth of donations to be distributed to various Thrifty Shopper locations, cleaned up and organized parks that will be used by children and families from under-

"In 2009, Congress designated September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance in an effort to provide a productive and respectful way to honor the memories of those who were lost on 9/11. This charitable service day has turned into a forward-looking way to honor the sacrifice of those who were lost and those who united in response to the tragedy. Each year Americans of all ages and backgrounds participate in activities to pay tribute to 9/11 victims and heroes by joining together in service projects to meet community needs."

-- Corporation for National & Community Service

served communities, painted bedrooms that are being used by shelter families, cleaned and sanitized toys and equipment being used by children.

-- Simone Seward, CCE Director

A SAMPLING OF COMMENTS FROM POST-EVENT SURVEYS

"I liked interacting with the other students – interesting to see the different perspectives brought by each college."

"It opened my eyes to a desire to find my purpose in this community."

"... a good majority of our patients need a lot more than just a physical diagnosis/treatment. A lot of people in this

community just need someone to listen to them. Talking about their story and issues they want addressed is key."

"Further strengthened my commitment to get involved in the community."

"This day, just like other volunteer opportunities, was a great reminder of

how amazing it feels to dedicate some time to benefit others. This directly relates to the positive impact a health care provider, and I as a future physical therapist, can make for many people."

"I appreciate more the similarities in our students, rather than the differences." (From a facilitator.)

INTERNSHIP IN D.C. FOCUSED ON GLOBAL MALARIA DATA



MPH student Jean Fidele Munezero

Jean Fidele Munezero spent the summer putting his public health training to good use, analyzing and disseminating malaria data for USAID in Washington, D.C.

USAID (United States Aid for International Development) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty.

Jean Fidele is working toward his MPH degree through Upstate's Medical Scholars program before attending medical school. The eight-week internship with USAID was his field placement for the CNYMPH program.

"I'm in the global health bureau, specifically the malaria division as a malaria case management intern," Jean Fidele said by phone during his internship. "I'm helping extract and analyze data from the annual Malaria Operational Plans."

The data is from 19 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and a few countries in Southeast Asia where the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) has partnered with local governments to fight malaria. This analysis will guide the PMI team as it reviews current activities in the field and also help with future plans.

Jean Fidele said he's always been interested in infectious diseases, in part because he grew up in countries that were affected by malaria and other diseases.

He was born in Rwanda, and at age 4 fled the civil war and genocide with his family, moving at first to the Congo (then known as Zaire) and Kenya before settling in Togo, in West Africa. He and his parents and four siblings came to the United States in 2008 through the Department of State's Refugee Resettlement program, and ended up in Buffalo.

Jean Fidele earned a biology degree from Canisius College in Buffalo and came to Upstate in 2015.

The MPH program is a good fit and he appreciates the guidance of his advisor, associate professor Paula Rosenbaum, PhD, he said.

"I like the way Public Health approaches issues, by taking look at the bigger picture," Jean Fidele said. "It's good to provide treatment to individuals, but sometimes addressing health issues on a population level makes a big difference; I want to have a wider perspective as a future physician."

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE UPCOMING GRAND ROUNDS

12:15-1:15 PM | Weiskotten Hall | 766 Irving Ave. Syracuse, NY | Lecture Hall 2231

THURS. NOVEMBER 17, 2016

Utilization of the Group Concept Mapping Methodology in Health Care, Public Health & Research

Scott R. Rosas, PhD

Senior Consultant, Concept Systems, Inc.
Ithaca, NY

THURS. FEBRUARY 16, 2017

What is New in Public Health & Its Relationship with the Healthcare Sector

Indu Gupta, MD, MPH, MA, FACP

Commissioner, Onondaga County Health Department

Grand Rounds presentations are free and open to the public. Registration is not required.

For more information contact Laura Schad, Grand Rounds Coordinator, schadla@upstate.edu

CNYMPH FACULTY, ALUMNI AND STUDENT PUBLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS

- 1: Rapid Weight Gain in Pediatric Refugees after US Immigration.Olson BG, Kurland Y, **Rosenbaum PF, Hobart TR.** J Immigr Minor Health. 2016 Jul 8. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 27393334.
- 2: Cognitive and Affective Representations of Active Surveillance as a Treatment Option for Low-Risk Prostate Cancer.Lyons KD, **Li HH, Mader EM, Stewart TM, Morley CP, Formica MK,** Perrapato SD, Seigne JD, Hyams ES, Irwin BH, Mosher T, Hegel MT. Am J Mens Health. 2016 Jun 29. pii: 1557988316657041. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 27365211.
- 3: Student HPV vaccine attitudes and vaccine completion by education level. Suryadevara M, Bonville JR, Kline RM, Magowan C, Domachowske E, **Cibula DA, Domachowske JB.** Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2016 Jun 2;12(6):1491-7. doi: 10.1080/21645515.2015.1123359. Epub 2016 Feb 2. PubMed PMID: 26836052.
- 4: The Impact of Administrative Academic Units (AAU) Grants on the Family Medicine Research Enterprise in the United States. **Morley CP, Cameron BJ, Bazemore AW.** Fam Med. 2016 Jun;48(6):452-8. PubMed PMID: 27272422.
- 5: Nasopharyngeal pneumococcal carriage rates among HIV-infected adults following widespread pediatric use of conjugate pneumococcal vaccine-13. Feola TD, Bonville CA, **Cibula DA, Jose S, Nattanmai G, Domachowske JB, Suryadevara M** Hum Vaccin Immunother. 2016 May 24:1-6. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 27215541.
- 6: Relationship between dental caries and metabolic syndrome among 13,998 middle-aged urban Chinese. Cao X, **Wang D, Zhou J, Yuan H, Chen Z.** J Diabetes. 2016 May 4. doi: 10.1111/1753-0407.12424. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 27147550.
- 7: Family Medicine or Primary Care Residency Selection: Effects of Family Medicine Interest Groups, MD MPH Dual Degrees, and Rural Medical Education. **Wei McIntosh E, Morley CP.** Fam Med. 2016 May;48(5):385-8. PubMed PMID: 27159099.
- 8: Discrepancies Between Cross-calibrated DXA Scanners: Pediatric And Adult Female Body Composition: Dowthwaite JN, Dunsmore KA, **Rosenbaum PF, Scerpella TA.** 1984 Board #136 June 2, 2: 00 PM - 3: 30 PM. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2016 May;48(5 Suppl 1):551-2. doi: 10.1249/01.mss.0000486657.26223.41. PubMed PMID: 27360809.
- 9: Reduction and Motor Function Improvement by Hematopoietic Growth Factor Treatment in Chronic Stroke in Aged Mice: A Treatment Frequency Study. Cell Transplant. Liu Y, Popescu M, Longo S, Gao M, **Wang D, McGillis S, Zhao LR.** Fibrinogen 2016;25(4):729-34. doi: 10.3727/096368916X690791. Epub 2016 Jan 26. PubMed PMID: 26817662.
- 10: Cost-effectiveness of SHINE: A Telephone Translation of the Diabetes Prevention Program. Health Serv Insights. Hollenbeak CS, Weinstock RS, **Cibula D, Delahanty LM, Trief PM.** 2016 Jul 6;9:21-8. doi: 10.4137/HSI.S39084. eCollection 2016. PubMed PMID: 27429556; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC4936790.
- 11: Utilization of palliative care and acute care services in older adults with advanced cancer. Sharma N, **Sharma AM, Wojtowycz MA, Wang D, Gajra A.** J Geriatr Oncol. 2016 Jan;7(1):39-46. doi: 10.1016/j.jgo.2015.12.004. Epub 2016 Jan 4. PubMed PMID: 26769146.
- 12: Status of underrepresented minority and female faculty at medical schools located within Historically Black Colleges and in Puerto Rico. Mader EM, Rodríguez JE, Campbell KM, **Smilnak T, Bazemore AW, Petterson S, Morley CP.** Med Educ Online. 2016 Mar 9;21:29535. doi: 10.3402/meo.v21.29535. eCollection 2016. PubMed PMID: 26968254; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC4788771.
- 13: Incorrect Insulin Administration: A Problem That Warrants Attention. Trief PM, **Cibula D, Rodriguez E, Akel B, Weinstock RS** Clin Diabetes. 2016 Jan;34(1):25-33. doi: 10.2337/diaclin.34.1.25. PMID: 26807006
- 14: Healthy Immigrant Effect: Preterm Births Among Immigrants and Refugees in Syracuse, NY. Miller LS, Robinson JA, **Cibula DA.** Matern Child Health J. 2016 Feb;20(2):484-93. doi: 10.1007/s10995-015-1846-3.
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- 16: Lost in Translation: NIH Funding for Family Medicine Research Remains Limited. **Cameron BJ, Bazemore AW, Morley CP.** J Am Board Fam Med. 2016 Sep-Oct;29(5):528-30. doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2016.05.160063. PubMed PMID: 27613784.
- 17: A Practice Facilitation and Academic Detailing Intervention Can Improve Cancer Screening Rates in Primary Care Safety Net Clinics. Mader EM, Fox CH, Epling JW, Noronha GJ, Swanger CM, Wisniewski AM, Vitale K, Norton AL, **Morley CP.** J Am Board Fam Med. 2016 Sep-Oct;29(5):533-42. doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2016.05.160109. PubMed PMID: 27613786.
- 18: STFM Launches a New Journal Focused on Family Medicine Education: "Peer-reviewed Reoprts in Medical Education Research" (Primer) **Morley CP, Nolte T.** Ann Fam Med. 2016 Sep;14(5):478-9. doi: 10.1370/afm.1987. PubMed PMID: 27621167.
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INTERVIEW

"Public Health Minute with William Lattimer," radio show hosted by Lehman College. **Christopher Morley, PhD**, spring 2016

Blue: Public Health Faculty

Red: CNYMPH Program Students & Alumni

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

A PASSION FOR EPIDEMIOLOGY

MARGARET FORMICA, PhD

Dr. Margaret Formica's niche in the CNYMPH program is epidemiology, and it allows her to blend her twin passions of research and teaching.

Formica, assistant professor of Public Health and Preventive Medicine and assistant professor of urology, teaches Principles of Epidemiology and Advanced Epidemiology.

"Many students don't know much about it, and it's fascinating to have them gain that understanding," she said of the Principles course. "I get a lot of students who become interested in epidemiology after taking the course. They didn't know about the field before. It's such an important aspect of public health."

Epidemiology -- "investigating the distribution and determinants of disease in the population" -- requires an analytical mind and a love of math, Formica said.

The field can yield important and surprising conclusions that can lead to advances in the prevention, treatment and control of disease in populations -- the essence of public health.

For instance, at the recent Northeast section of the American Neurological Association meeting in Buffalo, Formica presented findings from two cancer research projects.

Formica and colleague Dr. Telisa Stewart are poring over the National Cancer Data Base, looking at the standard of care for renal cell carcinoma and prostate cancer at different institutions.

The data, from 379,000 cases, indicates that in renal cell carcinoma (kidney cancer), academic medical centers tend to do more partial nephrectomies, rather than removing the entire kidney. Partial nephrectomies are seen as a better option.

The prostate cancer data -- from a separate project at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center -- showed that only about one-third of patients knew their cancer profile, or what stage of cancer they had. Differences in provider communication methods were a factor.

"A letter along with a phone call improved (awareness) compared to a phone call alone, but neither method is very good," said Formica. The use of unbiased "Decision Aids" -- information to help patients decide on a course of treatment for prostate cancer -- would benefit patients.

MPH student Kyle Plante worked on both projects as an independent study and for his MPH capstone.

In a research shift that's indicative of the vast scope of public health, Formica has applied for a grant from the National Institute of Justice to study gun violence in Syracuse.

She and collaborators from Upstate and Syracuse University would use the grant to look at the physical characteristics of neighborhoods as factors in gun violence -- street layouts, the prevalence of vacant lots and buildings, the presence of surveillance cameras -- in addition to other variables.

These research projects allow Formica to involve her students in data collection and analysis. In the Advanced Epidemiology course, each student works on a semester-long project that can lead to a publishable manuscript.

"They all come with such different perspectives," Formica said. "They're really passionate about public health and about the different research areas they're focused on. They keep me interested, too. The students are very innovative with their ideas."

Since joining the MPH faculty in 2011, Formica has seen a younger shift in the student demographic. "We used to have more non-traditional students, but now we're getting more who are right out of college," she said. "In the last two or three years, we've seen more with an interest in medical school."

Formica earned a master's degree in public health at the University of South Carolina, and her PhD in Epidemiology from Boston University.



PHIG PRESIDENT LOOKS TO ENGAGE COMMUNITY

As the new president of the Public Health Interest Group (PHIG) at Upstate, Katie Wood looks forward to a busy year on campus and in the community.

"I'm excited for what the club can bring to the university this year and beyond," Katie said. "A lot of the students are excited and engaged, and they have a passion for public health. They can bring their skills and experiences, help the club become a great place for discussions and expanding knowledge."

In addition to being in her second year in the MPH program at Upstate, Katie is a fellow at Syracuse University's Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at the Maxwell School.

Through the Lerner Center, Katie works on projects on Syracuse's Near West Side, including a nutrition program for customers of Nojaim Bros. grocery store, and a youth recreation program at a city park, "Summer at Skiddy."

"The kids are great," Katie said. "I enjoy the work, and I get to interact with the community, meet the partners and the residents."

Katie, from Guilderland, graduated from SUNY Oneonta with a bachelor's degree in human biology.

"I've always had an interest in health education, and I knew I wanted to go into a health field," she said.

While at SUNY Oneonta, she observed physical therapists and physician

assistants and decided she leaned more toward a broader view of health care rather than a clinical path of treating individual patients. (Her twin sister is a registered nurse).

"I've always enjoyed interacting with people and my internship advisor had a public health background and was interested in health and health careers," Katie said.

Public health – treating and engaging with entire communities as "the patient" – came into focus.

"When you're doing community engagement work, you have to work with residents of an area and help determine how to fix something," she said. "The community teaches us."

One of Katie's goals for PHIG is to bond with a community engagement partner that the group can call its own. She's working on establishing a relationship with the CanTeen of Central New York, a "safe place" after-school program based in a northern suburb of Syracuse.

Marnie Annese, program coordinator for Upstate's Center for Civic Engagement, said the CanTeen does great work with youths (in grades 8-12) who would otherwise be disconnected.



MPH student Katie Wood

"Katie's passion for public health and her persistence have led her to finding creative ways to engage her fellow MPH students," Annese said.

PHIG is open to all Upstate and SU students. In addition to Katie as president, the e-board members are Desirree Pizarro and Shaelyn Cavanaugh (co-vice presidents); Kia Stroughton (secretary) and Jeremy French-Lawyer (treasurer).

'WE WERE ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE WHO REALLY NEEDED IT'

Upstate Master of Public Health students Nadia Yosuf and Tia Marks spent a good part of their summer knocking on doors in Cayuga County.

Despite what some residents thought, Tia and Nadia weren't selling anything. Just the opposite.

Three days a week from the end of May into August, they went door to door in designated neighborhoods to give away free household safety items, including smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

"It was interesting to see people's reactions," Tia said. "You'd knock on the door, and they'd say they were 'all set.' But then they'd realize they're not at all. You never know."

The donations were part of the Cayuga Community Health Network's Healthy Neighborhoods program, run by CNYMPH alumna Jessica Soule. Jessica called Upstate looking for two students to help over the summer, and Tia and Nadia signed up.

"We saw such a wide array of people," Nadia said. "Everybody was appreciative, no matter what walk of life they're from."



MPH students Nadia Yosuf and Tia Marks

That included an older couple who were especially grateful for the installation of six combination smoke-carbon monoxide detectors and other items they received – including a broom, mop, laundry detergent, bathtub grips, a jar opener and an ice pack.

"The woman actually started crying and gave us hugs when we left," Nadia said.

"Both of them were just so happy," Tia said.

The items Tia and Nadia distributed depended on the needs of the residents – smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers ... flashlights and night lights ... baby gates and cabinet locks for homes with young children, "grippers" for people with limited mobility, mattress covers for anyone with asthma, etc. They also gave out buckets with cleaning supplies.

Nadia said the three trips each week to Auburn were worth it. "We were able to help people who really needed it," she said.

They were accompanied by county health officials and Auburn fire fighters, who checked for natural gas leaks and for proper placement of detectors.

"Working with the Auburn Fire Department was great," Nadia said. "They'd grab a drill and install the smoke detectors," Tia said. "And it was nice to see them interacting with kids if there were any there."

The Healthy Neighborhoods project served as Nadia's and Tia's field placement in the Master of Public Health curriculum.

2016 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER NICOLE CIFRA

The class of 2016 chose MD/MPH candidate Nicole Cifra to be its commencement speaker. Nicole became interested in public health during her medical school training after listening to a fellow MD/MPH and other public health students talk about health care, population health and the field of public health. She spoke about her hesitation of adding an additional year to her studies, but how that year was totally worth it, and about the impact it will have on her as a practicing physician.

Nicole confessed that she had a very limited appreciation for how broad public health is as a discipline. After she entered the public health program, she soon discovered she was in classes with professionals from a diverse range of educational and work backgrounds. There were students from various healthcare disciplines, teachers, political science majors, biology majors, veterinary medicine, athletic trainers, and more.

"In classes, with all of these unique perspectives, we discussed and

sometimes debated, issues such as healthcare access, health-related policies, disparities in care and cultural and behavioral determinants of health," Nicole said. "Each student brought a unique and

thought is that public health is the glue that holds a healthcare system together. It is a mindset geared towards system-based problem solving, population health outcomes and evidence based interventions.



Nicole Cifra, MD, MPH

valuable perspective to the table." She spoke about all of the diverse career paths some of her classmates will pursue: research; public health policy; healthcare administration; non-profit work; environmental health; health education, and many clinical health care areas.

After completing her public health training, Nicole said her response to the question, "What is Public Health?" is very different today than it was two years earlier. She explained that her

"I also submit to you that public health is the future," Nicole said. "As our healthcare system evolves, issues such as access, prevention and the use of data to inform decision-making are more crucial than ever. We, as public health professionals, are fluent in this language, giving us both the ability and responsibility to be a part of these discussions, no matter what corner of public health we find ourselves in."

While at Upstate, Nicole was a recipient of the 2015 National Public Health Service Award for her efforts in eating disorders advocacy and she also received a Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence.

Nicole is a first-year medical resident in pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center's Strong Memorial Hospital.

CNYMPH TRAINING HELPED... *continued from page 3*

It's a lot of problem solving, and you also learn about public health programs that are available to patients."

Shannon credits the late Richard Aubry, MD, MPH, with encouraging her to pursue a Master of Public Health degree. Dr. Aubry, who retired from Upstate in 2013 after

50 years on the faculty, was a founder of the Regional Perinatal Center.

"I owe it to him," Shannon said. "He had always wanted to start a midwifery program to reduce the numbers of infant deaths. We're doing much better but we're still not there."

MELISSA VITALE CONDUCTS FIELD WORK IN ECUADOR



During the summer, MPH student Melissa Vitale worked under the direction of Dr. Anna Stewart-Ibarra in Machala, Ecuador doing Dengue Fever, Chikungunya, and Zika Virus prevention and research for her field placement project.

Dr. Stewart-Ibarra is the Latin American Program Director of Upstate's Center for Global Health & Translational Science. Due to Machala's location in the tropics, and on the Pacific coast, it is a hot spot for Dengue Fever and an ideal location for research and public health efforts. Melissa did field work that included taking blood specimens from residents and mosquito samples from areas around homes where a person suspected of being infected with Dengue lived.

She also traveled to the city of Huaquillasto as part of team to meet with local public health officials to provide information about Upstate's surveillance program and to see if it was a project they would be interested in having implemented in their city. The local public health officials were extremely receptive to the information and the project team

will work to move the implementation of the research forward there.

Melissa reported that it was interesting to see the dichotomy of how work in Machala was conducted, versus how the same work would be carried out in the U.S. She said it was an eye opening and humbling experience. While living in the community she was working in, Melissa was able to understand, and in some instances, experience some of the hardships the Ecuadorian people face. Many people live in the depths of poverty in cane homes with no doors or windows. Others do not have access to piped water or trash removal. All of these factors contribute to the prevalence of the mosquito-borne diseases in the communities. She also realized that preventing Dengue is not their main concern. Daily living and providing for one's family in this country is all consuming. Melissa said, "I was able to gain a level of empathy that I don't think I would have ever gotten otherwise. As a future physician, this is valuable insight that I will carry with me throughout my career. Some other important lessons I

learned through this experience are the difficulties of working abroad. There were many procedural and cultural differences. For me, the language barrier was the most frustrating because it was apparent at all times. As a result, my Spanish language skills greatly improved."

She credits her public health course work for providing a great foundation for working in the field this summer. Melissa commented that she came to really understand that public health professionals also need to be flexible, creative and able to adapt to various situations. Lastly, she mentioned the importance of education, and not assuming that people know things that may seem intuitive. Education is a foundation for public health and it should be incorporated into every public health intervention for complete success. Melissa was extremely grateful to have this global experience and plans to continue to work in a global health/public health setting. She encourages all Upstate students to take advantage of opportunities to live and work abroad in their field because it is a unique and special experience.



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LIZZY MCINTOSH ELECTED CHAIR OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

MD MPH Student Lizzy McIntosh has been elected Chair of 2017 AAFP National Conference of Residents and Students. Lizzy, now a fourth-year medical student, has been integrally involved in national AAFP activities for the last several years and has presented posters at several conferences.

'CYCLE OF HEALTH' TV SHOW *continued from cover*

Sharing Brower's inspirational life change on television showed viewers that such a transformation can happen. "It's not easy, but it can be done," Dr. Alvarado said of shedding hundreds of pounds. "That's what I like about the show. We focus on that particular person, within a larger context."

For her capstone research, Dr. Alvarado is researching health communications and the effectiveness of the personal medical narratives on the show. She plans to finish her degree requirements in December.

"Health communications is changing," Dr. Alvarado said, citing

the pervasiveness of electronic medical records and the attention physicians must pay to electronic documentation, coding and reimbursement. "We're losing the patient's story, the ability to hear their story. But people are starting to realize we need these stories to make a diagnosis. It's the context for why they're there."

Interviewing people for the televised segments requires different skills and techniques than the ones she used as a practicing pediatrician.

"Yes, we use our interviewing skills but the questions we're getting to are different," she said. "In medicine, we're trying to make a diagnosis, but here

we're trying to get people to open up and tell their story. It's different."

Dr. Alvarado considers herself semi-retired, with a consulting business in which she advises not-for-profits on management strategies and administrative issues.

She's also involved with Healthy Syracuse, a collaboration of agencies that aims to reduce health disparities in treatment and in policies. The group looks at a variety of issues related to health, including education, housing, transportation and employment.

[http://www.wcny.org/television/
cycleofhealth/](http://www.wcny.org/television/cycleofhealth/)

CNYMPH CONTACT INFORMATION