

# The Public Health Herald

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

I go back to December all the time....like seriously, wasn't it just last December? 2023 has felt like such a blur. The old adage is true – the days are long but the years are short. I truly love this time of year, but it can also be so challenging. There are so many things I enjoy about the holidays – the lights, the movies – OMG, the movies!!, baking cookies (see my favorite holiday cookie below – bonus it's egg free for any others dealing with food allergies), and this year, getting to see the excitement through Maren's eyes. But, let's be honest, this time of year can also be hard. There's an expectation to be "merry," when you might feel anything but. Whether you're dealing with a loss, complicated family relationships, or just missing the sunshine, this time of year can intensify those feelings. Those feelings are valid. Do what you need to do to take care of yourself. Find something – even if it's small - that brings you joy. Conversely, if you know someone who is struggling or lonely this time of year, reach out. Giving of your time is truly a gift to yourself.

Thank you for all of your amazing work throughout this year. You truly make a difference, and I want you to know how much I appreciate each and every one of you!

In Health,

*Danielle*

## PHAB UPDATES

Through the ages there have been collaborations that changed the course of history and advanced humanity:

Jay-Z + Linkin Park = Collision Course

Doritos + Taco Bell = Locos Tacos

Watson + Crick = DNA structure

Ben + Jerry = Punny Ice Cream Flavors

[insert artist] + Taylor Swift/Drake = Billboard Top 10



DPM's favorite Cookie Recipe: [Orange-Cranberry Shortbread Cookies](#)

On 12/20/23, JCPH will be adding to this list... a collaboration NO ONE saw coming...

### Social Committee and PHAB

Join us for Cookies, Cocoa, and the Airing of Grievances as we celebrate Festivus! For those who may not know what Festivus represents here's a recap of the lore:

Many years ago on December 23rd, a caring father went to buy a doll for his son. He reached for the last one on the shelf, but so did another man. Words were exchanged resulting in fisticuffs while also leading this endearing father to realize there had to be another way... a Festivus for the rest of us!

Kristy has graciously donated the Festivus Pole (very high strength-to-weight ratio) this year and it is up to everyone in the department to fill it up during the Airing of Grievances. This is your opportunity to unload any and all problems/complaints you have about PHAB before we apply for reaccreditation next year and go into 2024 with only positivity! The Festivus Pole will be traveling around the department starting next week – please focus any grievances on PHAB (no names unless a grievance is about how I am handling the process!) and have fun with it as these domains are inanimate and can handle it. Let's fill up the Festivus Pole in hopes of a Festivus Miracle!

Details on the Cookies and Cocoa portion will be sent out next week – we look forward to celebrating this "holiday" with you all!

Mike

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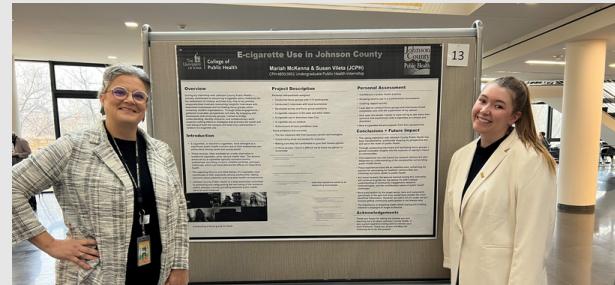
## DIVISION UPDATES

### Community Health:

- Susan Vileta and her team of students ran several focus groups with restaurateurs and staff. The goal to understand their knowledge of current e-cigarettes laws and perceptions of vaping. It has been several years since the local e-cig law has been passed and understanding the awareness, knowledge of enforcement, and impact may guide future work to strengthen this crucial public health measure.
- The HealthyJoCo team is canvassing the county. Covering ground high and low, rural and metro. From libraries to stores, using QR codes to secondary roads. As of last week, we've seen over 200 participants so far. We've asked community partners to spread the word and encourage their patrons and clients to offer feedback to help select Johnson County's next top priorities. The team also presented through IPHA's Lunch and Learn to describe implementation of MAPP 2.0.
- Through an opportunity by NACCHO, Rachel attended the Infectious Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Jennifer Miller will coordinate with two Certified Application Counselors this coming fall and winter for the Insurance Marketplace. The additional CAC provides more outreach and contact time in anticipation of more questions and inquiries given the Medicaid Unwind.
- Karrey and Ari have completed the initial portion of the PAVE project to improve COVID-19 and flu vaccination amongst racial and ethnic minorities. Through collaboration with Escucha Mi Voz, countless students and volunteers, the group compiled hundreds of responses to inform education and communication to improve vaccination rates. Thanks to Nate for supporting the effort with MRC volunteers.
- Lisa and Allison Wells, Grants Manager with the BOS office, presented the community health assessment plan for the Opioid Settlement project. Lisa and a team of students along with support from the HealthyJoCo team will coordinate with several community members and partners to develop a Advisory Council and select eligible services for funding.
- Nate continues to work with Luis, with the Americorps Preppwise, to educate and prepare older adults. Nate will be taking Luis on for a Spring Practicum Project as well. At the end of November, Nate completed this year's MRC Operational Readiness Award application for \$10,000.00 to strengthen recruitment. Nate attended the bi-annual College of Nursing Mass Vaccination Simulation in November. The simulation takes roughly 80 CON students and walks them through several roles of the Incident Command System and Mass Vaccination Clinics.
- Sam completed NACCHO's Successful People Management course that took place over the fall and was accepted into NACCHO's Adaptive Leadership Academy for the 2024 cohort which will take place throughout the year.

### Environmental Health:

- EHS II James Lacina presenting to U of I CPH Department of Occupational and Environmental Health, Marek Mikulski, on JCPH Wastewater/Watershed Programs
- EHS Laura Sneller created a Pool/Spa deficiencies tracking Excel tracking program. Years 2013 – 2023.
- EHS Laura Sneller has completed joint field inspections, completing all required elements of new inspector training and has begun independent inspections.
- Food Program received confirmation from DIAL Retail Food Program Lead Julie Kraling that they have officially passed FDA Retail Std's 2, 3, 6
- EHS II Jesse Bockelman assisted DIAL RRC with the FDA recall on Wanabana apple puree childrens pouches due to high levels of lead. Jesse stopped by two Dollar Tree locations to site check that the product was pulled.
- EHS Laura Sneller work with Health Educator Susan Vileta and participated in a group panel discussion with students in U of I Professor Gayle Walter's Health Services class.
- EHS ETF worked with Erin Jordan of the CR Gazette on a story about the GTC program and PFAS testing in JC.
- EHS ETF worked with Jack Brooks – Media Production and CH to assist with a lead awareness video interview for Iowa City's Lead Reduction Program.



### Clinical Services:

- CS added 2 staff members: Susan Szmyrgala, Dietitian and Brycen Myers, Health Educator. Both are deep into onboarding and training. Feel free to come down to CS to introduce yourself if you haven't met them already!
- Hianca is assisting with the Doula Project which is starting to move full steam ahead with interviews of prospective Doula candidates to begin training soon.
- Deb completed all immunization audits for child care providers in record time!
- The final section of new flooring was installed on 12/6/23 to complete this project in CS.
- WIC numbers continued to climb in November.
- ITS received a very good report following their annual site visit.
- ITS staff, joined by Abby Kore, CS RN, participated in Mirage at the U of I on 12/2 completing 45 HIV tests.



### Forms & Events

Social Media & Print Material Request Forms- [HERE](#)

#### EVENTS:

12/20- Festivus (see PHAB update for more information)