

The Public Health Herald

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I love May. I honestly do. It's such a transitional period in the year. We see the fruits of all the rainy, gray days of April, with the bursts of green getting more and more vibrant each day. Green houses start to open, and so do our windows. Plus Farmer's Markets pop up, and we get to celebrate the Mothers in our lives. But there's a bittersweet notion to it as well. We see the end of the school year, and we say goodbye to our practicum students and interns at work while they get ready to head into the job market. Many of us also see our children transition from one grade to the next, and marvel at the changes in their faces and skills from the start of the year. It's a blink, isn't it?

We're going to have several transitions this May here at JCPH! First of all, Emma had her little girl, Valerie Jane on April 30th! Congratulations Emma! She's so very beautiful!! We're so happy for you! Also hoping you'll bring her in so we (or in all honesty, I) can get a little baby fix!!! Of course, Sarah will also be transitioning to maternity leave this month, so please get in any social media requests you have ASAP! We will have a contracted employee, Gretta, who will start helping us in June for about 10 hours a week. We'll also welcome Luis Torres as the EH Admin Assistant to the Admin Division – Luis will start on Monday, May 19th. Our Temp Fiscal Manager, Chia Fu, will join us on May 12th, and sadly, we'll say "See you later" to Matt on Friday, May 23rd. Party details to come 😊 We'll be keeping you in our thoughts, Matt!

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month, and I'm grateful we had that presentation at All Staff about how to protect ourselves from burnout and compassion fatigue. This is just a reminder that our EAP is confidential and provided at no cost to you. Please utilize it if needed. There is no shame or stigma in protecting our mental health. Another reminder – our insurance benefits cover mental health visits and our sick days can also be utilized for mental health. I know there's a lot going on, and while it's important to pay attention, it's also important to take breaks. Do something you enjoy. Me, I'm looking forward to getting my fingers in some dirt and planting my garden and my flowers. Also, I'm making sure my bike tires are pumped up so Mare and I can hit the bike trails. Sweat, dirt and fresh air keep me sane, but do whatever works for you. The crazy will still be there when you get back.

We are helpers, and helpers can't pour from an empty cup. Prioritize filling your cup and help your colleagues top off when you notice they're getting a little low. I know you will, and that's what I love about this team. Whenever I go to a State level meeting, I'm constantly getting kudos about the amazing work you all do, and while it doesn't surprise me, I am always so proud that others see how fabulous you are. I'm so grateful I get to work with you all.

In Health,

Danielle

DIVISION UPDATES

Administration:

- Catalina has been a fantastic help in assisting Susan while she is covering the duties of the EH Admin Assistant vacancy. Thank you Catalina for being an exemplary team player over the past few weeks.
- Lo has been instrumental in helping get the Inventory management system set up and running, troubleshooting existing processes, and improving them with the breadth of knowledge few possess.
- Susan has been doing a fantastic job, filling in the responsibilities of the EH Admin Assistant and taking on as much as she can handle with the additional workload that the role demands.
- Christine has been working with Matt, Roberta, and Hianca to get FY26 grants squared away before absences come up. This will be a big help in getting the next year rolling smoothly with all of the upcoming changes.
- Alissa has been working on the final testing phases for Workday, and meeting with staff regarding their grant progress and what needs to be spent out. She has been a huge asset in ensuring that nothing slips through the cracks.
- Admin Division as a whole have had many changes over the past couple of months, and I am so proud of the flexibility and team spirit the division has shown in this adversity.
 - They have all done a fantastic job completing not only their assigned tasks but also assisting their teammates with theirs.

Environmental Health:

- Emma and Laura attend the Public Health Conference of Iowa PHCI
- Laura received the "Rookie of the Year" awards through the Iowa Environmental Health Association (IEHA)
- Laura completed DIAL requirement of FDA Standardization. The process consisted of joint food inspections, food flow charts, HACCP principles and Risk Control plan demonstration. Jesse Bockelman oversaw the training.
- April 11th multiple staff participated in the first annual JCPH Public Health Showcase Day. Students and interested professionals attended a series of public health presentations throughout the day. Ethan and Laura both presented on water and food safety topics.
- Food program received a new 3 year NEHA FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant of \$55,500.00 to continue work on the VNRFRP maintenance and continuous improvement of Standards and also for travel/training.
- Watershed program received and additional \$35,000 in PWG funds to continue services through FY25. The watershed team spent the initial funds received of \$50,500.00



Meet Valerie! Emma and her partner welcomed Valerie on April 30th. Everyone is happy, healthy, and home as of May 2nd. Congratulations Emma!

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Environmental Health continued:

- Ethan participated in a PFAS Gazette article <https://www.thegazette.com/environment-nature/state-tells-eastern-iowa-airport-to-expand-forever-chemical-search/>
- Ethan and James attended a PFAS conference at the Graduate Hotel
- Laura, Emma, and Tim attended virtual 2 day training Basics of Onsite Wastewater

Community Health:

- Amelia's practicum student, Nathan, presented his findings on the evaluation of the TB program. Nathan reviewed JCPH TB data and surveyed past latent treatment patients on their experiences and compared variables like regimen length.
 - Findings were consistent with national trends in research and the tools created to evaluate the program may be used to continue to evaluate the program. Barriers like transportation and language were coming, but so too was wayfinding in HHS, which is, also common.
- Several staff have students presenting posters or final projects at the College of Public Health in May.
 - Several students are from the student epi team, the disease prevention specialists annual cohort of students who are trained to support disease investigations during outbreaks, immunization audits, and for other aspects of outbreak support.
- Jamie and Giselle are interviewing several students to support community health assessments this summer and fall along with the wellBQ.
 - The wellBQ is the county employee wellness program's biannual climate survey based on the dimensions of health and NIOSH's (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) framework.
- Cole supported HJC's recent food waste distribution survey and the report is available online.
- Giselle and Lisa will be presenting to the region 6 local public health service meeting on Credible Mind. The information was sought out after the public health conference of Iowa as others had interest in learning more.
- Susan attended the CBJ's (Corridor Business Journal) award ceremony where she was recognized as a Woman of Influence among 10 other women in the Linn (second) and Johnson County area. Congratulations Susan!
- Karrey met with Proteus to establish an MOU (memorandum of understanding) for adult vaccination. The group discussed several ways the vaccine for adult program can support our local FQHC (federally qualified health center).
- Nate supported the response to the Coralville Apartment fire as part of the COAD (community organizations active in disaster).
 - As part of the MRC (medical reserve corps), he and Cole also assisted several family members moving belongings, and providing resources as families moved out.
- Lisa and Jamie presented to NAMI on mental health and shared information about HealthyJoCo.
- Sam has been appointed Historian for the IPHA (Iowa Public Health Association) and will sift through boxes of records and historical artifacts to preserve in perpetuity.
- Jennifer recently spoke on a panel for Johnson County's Empowerment day with several other experts on refugee and immigrant health.
- Nate, through a general travel stipend, attended the National Emergency Preparedness Summit in Texas.
 - Nate will also attend the annual MRC meeting which is held in conjunction with the conference.
- Jennifer, Rachel, Nate, and Amelia recently attended the highly infectious disease committee where the workgroup comprised of disease prevention specialists and preparedness planners will collaborate on improvements to the statewide plan.
 - Johnson County is in a unique position where the only special pathogen unit in the state is located at the university hospital; the other assessment facilities are in Des Moines.
- Nate and Karrey met with the Iowa Heart Foundation to plan with and build a local heart health team in our MRC (medical reserve corps unit)
- Sam met with researchers at the CON (College of Nursing) about Alzheimer's research in rural Iowa. The program mirrors several other dementia prevention programs, but is specifically geared toward rural areas. It plans to have RN students administer the program.
- Lisa and Susan are completing a community assessment with partners and agencies for opioids and stimulants as part of the OD2A (overdose 2 action) grant in our addiction prevention program.
- Karrey, Giselle, and Kristy met with Pfizer to discuss employee wellness vaccination clinic planning. Flu (and COVID) clinics will be right around the corner before you know it.
- Sam has been selected as a peer reviewer to review abstracts for the National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media, or commonly known as the NCHCMM, by many.
- Nate and Sam reviewed and completed a cybersecurity assessment with IT for the emergency preparedness service area.
 - IT works behind the scenes to secure several areas of our infrastructure, but things like password management and implementing behaviors to prevent phishing in email are things everyone can do to safeguard our stuff.
- Lisa has an intern supporting the KEYS Dementia prevention program at the Senior Center and the program wraps up later this month.
- Susan, Lisa, Brycen, and the grants staff met recently to debrief and craft next steps on opioid settlement fund disbursement for phase 2 and more information will be presented at a BoS meeting.
- Nate will host another Americorps Intern this summer for CPH's (College of Public Health) Disaster Prepwise program. So far, this Americorps program has not been cut, unlike the other 17 across the state.
- Sam completed the PHII's (public health informatics institute) Informatics Academy, an 8 week course learning about the SLDC (software development life cycle).

Clinical Services:

- Amy H. continued to track WIC appointment data to assess the utilization of WIC services and percentage of completed appointments. Over the past 12 months, we saw an increase in the number of active WIC participants from 2,696 to 2,885. The percentage of completed in-person appointments also increased from 65% in April 2024 to 80% this month.
- I-Smile @ School staff (Missy R. and Jess E.) screened 135 students in April and identified 35 students with tooth decay (25.9%). Detecting decay and tracking its prevalence allows for early intervention and targeted outreach.
- ITS staff attended the HIV STI and Hepatitis Bureau Contractors meeting, where Brycen M. and Fatou T. presented on Successful Disproportionately Impacted Population Engagement Strategies.
- Brycen M. and Fatou T. participated in the first Public Health Showcase, presenting on ITS services and the intersection of substance use and communicable disease.
- Emily J. and Hianca A. developed printable resources designed to inform current and potential clients about the Healthy Pregnancy Program and maternal health services provided by our amazing nurse, Hayley A.



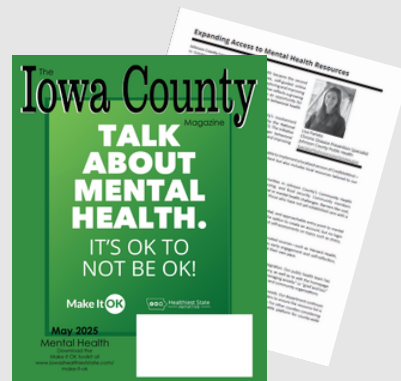
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Clinical Services continued:

- Hianca A., Emily J., Roberta S., and Deb V. continued building a partnership with the Antelope Lending Library to plan a community car seat distribution event later this year with other nonprofit organizations. We have agreed to be a drop-off site for gently used car seats that will be inspected and installed by car seat technicians from the lending library.
- Kritzia R. received great feedback from a client after their first WIC appointment: "I really liked [Kritzia] and she took time to talk to us. And she was very positive about my husband being very involved with taking care of the baby and going to all his doctor's appointments." Thank you to Amy P. for sharing!
- Clinical Services WIC staff had 2885 active WIC clients in April, with a show rate of 80% - both of these numbers are higher than ever! We implemented a new procedure to call families who missed a health update appointment and offer a phone option, which helps clients avoid missing food benefits and helps us maintain the number of participants served at JCPH.
- Fatou T. and Brycen M. collaborated with the Sixth Judicial District and UIARC MAT Clinic to create a joint MAT and ITS testing clinic at Hope House, to be held monthly.
- Brycen M. attended an open house at Thrive Now, a new for-profit substance use facility in Iowa City. A new partnership was established to offer testing services through ITS.
- I-Smile @ School staff finished their last two ICCSD school screenings in April, serving 135 students. 565 dental sealants were placed with these students. In total for the school year, staff have served 857 students at 14 schools in Iowa and Johnson Counties, placing 4,111 dental sealants!
- Brycen M. presented to undergraduate students at the UI College of Public Health about ITS services, offering insight into public health career paths and fieldwork.
- Fatou T. and Brycen M. were invited to present on harm reduction at Shelter House as part of a new Case Manager training.
- Beth H., Abby K. and Deb V. attended the Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Convention in Ankeny on April 29th & 30th.
- On April 25th, Jessica R., Skyler M. & Grace K. attended the Health Equity Workshop with other Blackhawk & Linn County PH staff.
- Becky H.L. attended the National Oral Health Conference. She gained lots of good information from state and local officials across the country. Many of us are in similar situations; concerns about future funding for oral health programs and the future of community water fluoridation being two of the most pertinent issues.
- Fatou T. and Brycen M. attended the Systems of Care meeting where Board Office staff presented the plan for the State Opiate Response funds. ITS staff will be heavily participating in the initiatives developed using these funds including increased Narcan and harm reduction supply distribution.
- Clinical services staff developed new protocols for Teletask text messaging to standardize communication with clients, decrease response time from staff, and promote follow-ups with clients.
- Kudos to Kritzia from Amy P.! "I had a client tell me last week after meeting with Kritzia for the first time " I really liked her and she took time to talk to us. And she was very positive about my husband being very involved with taking care of the baby and going to all his doctor's appointments. They were daily for the first week of his life."

IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to Lisa for the excellent article on HealthyJoco's work with the platform CredibleMind. Johnson County is one of two counties in Iowa to take on this project & If you haven't had a chance to read all about it, you can find the article on page 4-5 in this month's [Iowa County Magazine](#).



DUTY CALLS

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in honor & appreciation of

Matthew Waldschmidt

AS HE LEAVES FOR DEPLOYMENT

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FRIDAY

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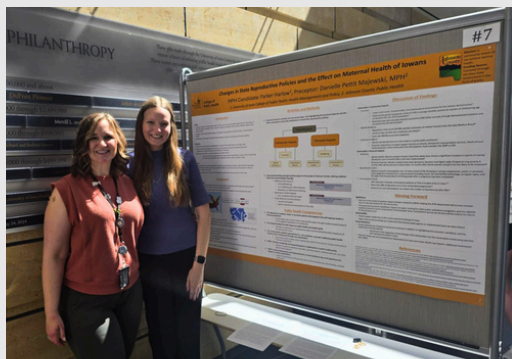
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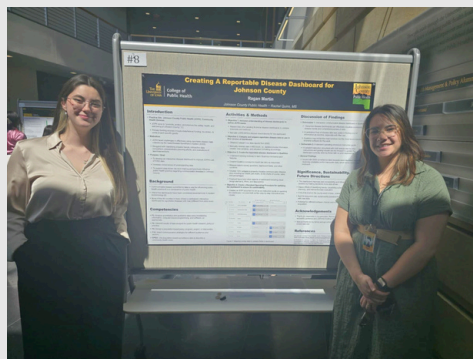
THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

On Tuesday, May 6th our Masters of Public Health candidate students as well as Undergrads presented their work at the Practicum Poster Session at the College of Public Health along with their JCPH preceptor's. Below is a synopsis of their work.

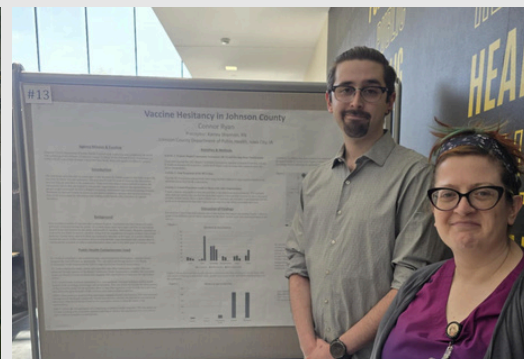
MPH STUDENTS



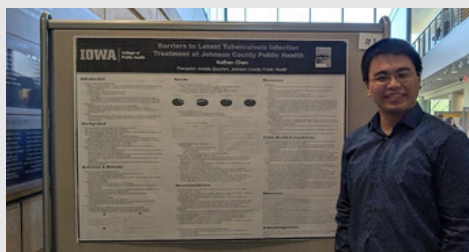
Parker Harlow, MPH Candidate in Policy presented her practicum with preceptor, Danielle Pettit-Majewski. Parker spent her practicum researching the impact of the Dobbs decision and Iowa's Heartbeat bill had on both maternal health outcomes and community outcomes. She wrote two position papers on the topics, as requested by the Board of Health. They will be on the agenda to approve later this year.



Ragan Martin, MPH Candidate in Epidemiology, collaborated with Rachel Quinn on developing a communicable disease dashboard, which will eventually be available to the public on our website. We're currently awaiting additional disease data from the state before its release. The dashboard will display counts and rates for all reportable illnesses, including STIs, Hepatitis C, and HIV (which is still in progress). It will also feature disaggregated data by gender, race, age groups, and ethnicity for each illness. At present, we have data spanning from 2014 to 2023.

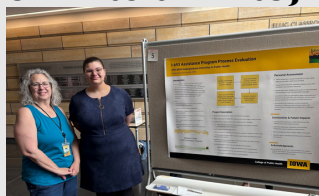


Connor Ryan, MPH Candidate in Community and Behavioral Health wanted to focus on vaccines at the local level, making us the perfect match! Karrey Shannon had a dataset that had been collected as part of the Partnering for Vaccine Equity grant through NACCHO, which included geographic data that JCPH hadn't done anything with. He decided build up his GIS skillset by mapping the data and correlate it with the field clinics Karrey had been holding through the Bridge Access and Vaccines for Adults programs. The dataset was filled with social needs data in addition to vaccine-related responses, and the map gives us perspective on services that are missing in the community, particularly among refugee, immigrant, and migrant workers in the Latinx and Black African populations in the area.

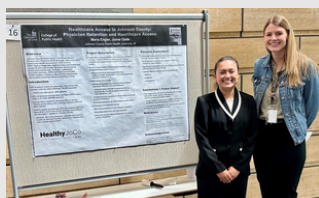


Nathan Chen, an MD/MPH student, completed his practicum with JCPH preceptor Amelia Slaichert. His project included data analysis and key informant interviews to identify barriers to latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) treatment at Johnson County Public Health (JCPH) and provide recommendations to improve treatment completion rates.

UNDERGRAD PROJECTS



Ainsley Weisse is a sophomore Public Health student who worked with Jennifer Miller this spring to perform a review and evaluation of the I-693 assistance program. This program provides assistance to refugees when they are applying for their green card as they complete their vaccination paperwork and review. She was able to speak to many of our recent participants and get feedback on the system. Using her report to guide us, we will keep working to make our services as accessible and helpful as possible.



Maria Engler, undergraduate public health candidate presenting her experiential learning opportunity with preceptor, Jamie Gade. Maria spent her EL assisting with the healthcare access health priority, specifically looking at physician retention of medical residents by first launching a survey to understand this issue more clearly. She researched applicable survey frameworks utilized in other states, and translated that into our own survey to launch at a later date.



Ainsley Menning is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a Bachelor of Science in Statistics. Her project, in collaboration with Rachel contributed to our latent tuberculosis database by entering historical data from 1997 to 2007. In addition, she conducted an analysis of treatment completion rates for various latent TB medication regimens and explored potential factors influencing those rates.