



SPARTAN PULSE

Presented by: MSU MPH Student Advisory Board

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SAVE THE DATE

Attention: All students, faculty, and staff!

Join us Wednesday, September 15th from noon - 1pm for our first annual Fall Welcome event hosted by the Student Advisory Board. More information to come, so keep an eye out for our flyer.

PROGRAM UPDATES

by Connie Currier, DrPH, MPH and Pavneet Banga, MD, 2022 MPH Candidate

From the Accreditation Committee:

As part of the accreditation process, the MPH Program has been engaged in a self-study of the Program's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement related to the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation criteria, which has led to the development of a preliminary self-study report. This has been an ongoing process that began in February 2019 with the submission of the initial accreditation application. The final report was submitted to CEPH for review on June 9, 2021.

community partners, and members of the general public are invited to provide feedback on the [preliminary self-study report](#) to CEPH by October 11, 2021.

A site visit with the CEPH accreditors is scheduled for November 11-12, 2021 and a final decision on accreditation status will be made by March 2022.

Please submit comments either by email or postal mail directly to:

Emily Albers, MPH
Accreditation Specialist
Council on Education for Public Health
1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 220
Silver Spring, MD 20910
ealbers@ceph.org

All students, alumni, faculty, staff,



PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE NEWS

by Amanda Moser, BS, 2022 MPH Candidate

Texas Law and Critical Race Theory

The Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, recently signed into law a bill that restricts how America's racism can be taught in the state. Abbott wants to prevent the teaching of "critical race theory" in public schools, although the term is not explicitly used in the bill. So, what exactly is critical race theory? Critical race theory is a "discipline, analytical tool and approach that emerged in the 1970s and '80s".¹ Fundamentally, critical race theory examines racism and discrimination in the US and focuses on the fact that racism is *structural* - it is built into our American systems, institutions and policies – and systemically disadvantages racial and ethnic minority populations. Critical race theory does not seek to lay blame, but rather explains how the actions of the past are affecting the present. One key concept of this theory is racial formation. It rejects the idea that race is a fixed category that has always meant the same thing. One example of racial formation discussed in the [article](#) was the fact that the racial category of "Black" was created as slavery was evolving. Part of being "Black" in America was being less than human and Europeans that moved to America became "White" through simply being against the Black presence.¹

The new Texas law that Abbott is trying to get passed is being described as an effort to stop the momentum over the last year and a half of people trying to raise awareness of racism. Some teachers are worried that if this bill is passed it will make it more difficult to discuss issues of race and racism in the classroom. How is this a public health issue? The American Public Health Association has declared structural racism a public health crisis and a significant contributor to racial and ethnic disparities in health. Read more here [Structural Racism is a Public Health Crisis](#).

INTERVIEW WITH JENNA KOELSCH

by Pavneet Banga, MD, 2022 MPH Candidate



Background: Jenna (pictured above) graduated from Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in 2019 with a degree in Medical Laboratory Science. She is working at University of Michigan (U of M) as a medical lab scientist in the field of genetics. Jenna started the MSU MPH program in January 2021 and is currently in the second semester of the program.

I recently sat down with Jenna for a Zoom chat.

Q: Can you tell me about the Equality walk you organized? What was your inspiration? Have you ever organized another event like this before?

INTERVIEW WITH JENNA KOELSCH (cont.)

A: Growing up in a small town of Ionia, which is predominantly White, my social circle was small, and we were all shut off from racial and social issues. After the death of George Floyd, I became aware of police brutality. This event became a reckoning among my friends and coworkers. Since there was no outlet for our emotions because of limited accessibility to events and marches, I decided to organize something at my place of work. I reached out to my lab manager at U of M in 2020 who fully supported my idea of organizing a walk. Soon after, the Department of Pathology at the University lent their support to organize this event. This walk is now an annual event in the Pathology Department.

This was my first time organizing an event on a large scale. It was fun collaborating with the facilities and operations team and learning about teamwork.

Q: How is the MPH program at MSU helping you achieve your goals?

A: The Equality walk helped us organize a fundraiser for the We the People Opportunity Farm. I was inspired to organize the fundraiser during my Community Health Assessment assignment in HM 801 class with Dr. Connie Currier. We were able to raise \$1200 by supporting the fundraiser which helps break the incarceration cycle in Black population through providing basic farming schools.

The MPH program has given me context to incidents such as the death of George Floyd. Dr. Renee Canady's Health Equity class has helped me learn about social justice, racial equity, and systemic racism. Learning about these concepts has helped me understand the reasons behind organizing events such as the Equity walk and helped me

on a personal level by being passionate about systemic racism.

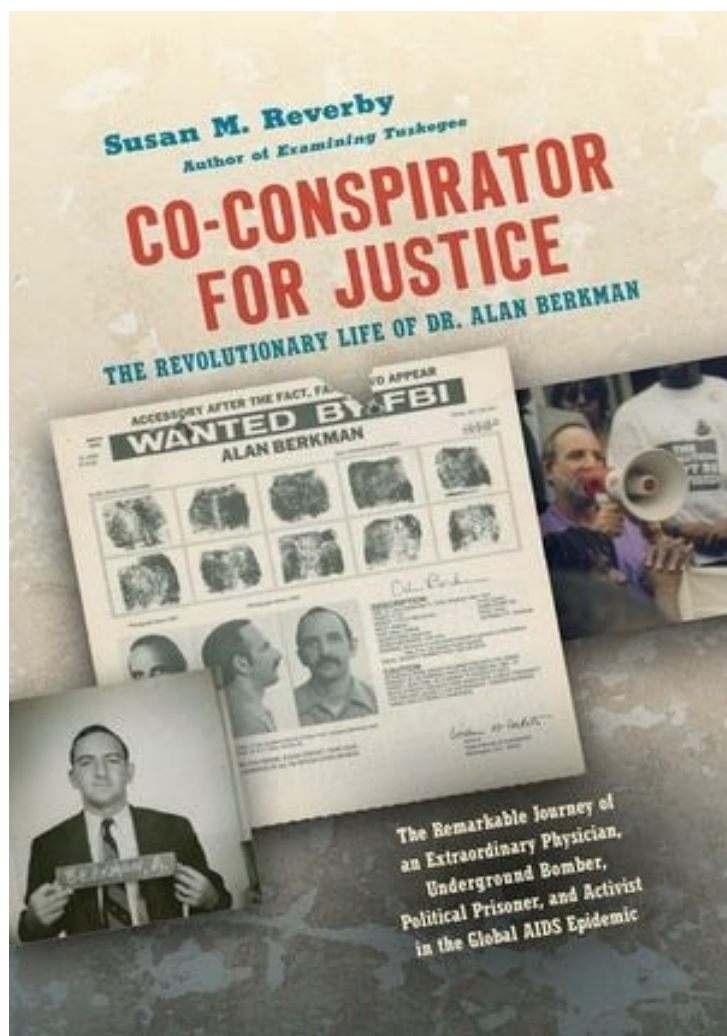
Q: What are your thoughts about police brutality? What changes do you want to see in the community?

A: It felt good to just do the walk around the facility and the kneeling demonstration with a moment silence as a gesture against police brutality. There are systemic changes that need to happen starting from the personal level such as recruiting a police force that believes in racial equity and equality. There should be reallocation of resources towards social service and police reform.

Q: Where do you see yourself going from here?

A: I want to bridge gaps between laboratory science and global health. I want to pursue an internship with Dr. Currier in the Ghana program. Moreover, I am interested in joining a new project in Ethiopia being organized by the director of genetics lab at UofM. My future plan is to engage in social justice work in to low- and mid-income nations focusing on social determinants of health. My ten-year plan is to join the Peace Corps and work closely in global health.





BOOK REVIEW:
***Co-conspirator for Justice: the Revolutionary Life of Alan Berkman* by Brenden Smith, BA, 2023 MPH Candidate**

“Be willing to act, even though the decision to act carries the risk of being wrong. I say that with humility knowing that some of my decisions to act were wrong.” These are the words of the late Alan Berkman turned global health activist and academic. Susan Reverby, author of *Examining Tuskegee*, details the complete life of Berkman in *Co-conspirator for Justice: the Revolutionary Life of Alan Berkman*. Reverby tracks Alan’s life trajectory from prominent medical student to an, the political prisoner to outspoken radical organizer, political prisoner, and eventual global health activist.

Berkman's ambitions as a young student revolved around becoming a famous medical researcher, hoping to be the next groundbreaking force within the field. These goals did not last long, however, as he was soon drawn towards what use his medical training could be in the ongoing fights against racism and imperialism of the 1970s. His worldview would be shaped drastically by his experiences providing medical care at the takeover of Wounded Knee as well as serving at community health centers giving care to the poor. Eventually, his radicalism and sectarianism would drive him to the underground where he and other comrades carried out targeted symbolic bombings. Berkman and his comrades would eventually be prosecuted for these actions and Alan himself was incarcerated for eight years. After serving his time and documenting the horrendous medical care he received while fighting several rounds of cancer, Alan shifted to a life and career in public health, using his principles and compassion to improve the lives of those battling the HIV/AIDS epidemic across the globe.

Co-conspirator for Justice challenges norms and boundaries of what we consider conventional public health. As someone with an interest in social movements and radical politics, I was immediately drawn to Alan Berkman’s story. His later focus on global health shows the potential of a commitment to justice in the context of public health practice. Much of his work focused on fighting for access to HIV/AIDS treatment options for the global South that were protected under intellectual property rights. This fight draws strong parallels to the ongoing issue we are seeing today with the sharing of patent rights for the COVID-19 vaccine.



SPARTANS FOR THE CURE

by Rachael Weisbrod, BS, 2022 MPH Candidate

Join your fellow Spartans in Public Health in the fight against breast cancer on Sunday, October 17th, during the Susan G. Komen MORE THAN PINK Walk.

This year, the MSU Division of Public Health has formed a team, captained by MPH student Rachael Weisbrod, and everyone is invited to participate! Although the walk will be held virtually, those interested in connecting with peers, faculty, and alumni of the program are encouraged to meet at the Michigan State Capitol Building for the opening ceremony at 1:30pm, with the walk to follow at 2:00pm. After getting in our 6,000 steps, participants are invited to a potluck hosted by Dr. Connie Currier, Assistant Professor of the Master of Public Health Program.

If you are unable to attend in person, you can still support the Susan G. Komen cause. By downloading the “More than Pink” app found in your Appstore, you can track your steps, earn badges, and fundraise along with other members of the team. You can also [register for the MSU Division of Public Health team](#) and/or [make a donation](#) that will go toward breast cancer research, addressing gaps in care, and so much more.

The first 10 people to register for the MSU Division of Public Health team will receive a free MSU Public Health beanie, and the next 20 are eligible for a lanyard. Every participant who raises (or donates) \$100 or more, or who is currently living with or is a

survivor of breast cancer, will receive a free MORE THAN PINK Walk t-shirt.

To learn more about the event, visit the [Susan G. Komen website](#). You can also send questions to Rachael Weisbrod, at weisbro3@msu.edu.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM:

By: Abhishek Sharma M.D., MPH 2022 Candidate

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services – Community Resource Program

https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970_7664---,00.html



Inside the MDHHS website, you can access volunteer resources as a part of their Community Resource Program. Volunteers have the opportunity to work closely with their local county offices and provide service to their community while honing new skills and networking with various community engaged service organizations. In addition, you are also reimbursed for your mileage and meals if the volunteer work demands it. The opportunities provided are a great way to actively better your local community and its members, besides getting a great job experience to furnish on your resume.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM: (cont.)



Food insecurity has always remained a public health problem that has persisted through generations in the United States. In 2020 alone, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 42 million Americans have experienced food insecurity with 13 million potentially being children (America, Accessed on July 26, 2021a). Many families do not qualify for federal aid-based nutrition programs and the problem is worsened by systemic racial injustices that increase the starvation among African American, Latino and Native American families (America, Accessed on July 26, 2021a).

Feeding America for the last 40 years has grown to be the largest domestic hunger-relief organization that promotes reduced food wastage and finds ways to ensure everyone has access to nourishing food and a food-secure future via local food banks, meal programs and better utilization of surplus food (America, Accessed on July 26, 2021b).

By accessing the Feeding America website, you can engage your community to end hunger by finding local food banks and pantries to volunteer, start a fundraiser or even donate individually.

CAREER CORNER

by Alec Bennett, BA, 2022 MPH Candidate

University of Washington, School of Public Health- Career Development Resources:

<https://sph.washington.edu/careers/resources>

The University of Washington, School of Public Health's website features Career Development Resources which are full of relevant and useful information pertaining to finding a career in public health. This external resource includes a job search and networking engine, tips for writing cover letters and resumes, and a guide to negotiating and evaluating job offers. In addition, an in-depth breakdown of strategies to use during interviews is available. Have you heard of the **STAR** method for answering behavioral questions?

STAR stands for:

- S**ituation — the context of what happened
- T**ask — what you were supposed to do
- A**ction — what you did to accomplish the task
- R**esult — what you accomplished

When followed correctly, the **STAR** method for answering questions can show a future employer how past behavioral situations might influence your success in their company. Learning specific interview strategies could give you an upper hand during your job search!

CAREER CORNER (cont.)

MPH Student Work Experience Database

The faculty of the MSU Master of Public Health program are looking to gather information from current and former students regarding their work experiences. Faculty would like to invite students with real-world work experience in related fields to develop a collection of information that will enhance and supplement our MPH courses. Students may be asked to participate as guest speakers or pre-record an interview about their jobs and experiences in the workforce. If you are interested in participating and filling out a brief survey about your employment, or have any questions regarding this database, please contact Dr. Sharia Phillips (phill874@msu.edu).



American Public Health Association (APHA) Student Assembly Membership Benefits :

<https://www.apha.org/>

The APHA student assembly aims to improve the future of public health by providing young public health professionals and students professional development opportunities, career advice, and information regarding the latest public health topics. Every student admitted into the Michigan State MPH program automatically becomes a member of the

APHA and receives these benefits, including:

- Access to the American Journal of Public Health
- APHA press briefings/ bookstore
- APHA's annual meeting & expo
- Networking opportunities with public health professionals
- Career development center
- Public health job postings

ABOUT THE MSU MPH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD (SAB)

The SAB is a student-led organization that offers members opportunities to serve on program committees with faculty, participate in volunteer opportunities and research, and build connections and communications between students, faculty, and alumni.

If you are interested in learning more...

View our page on the MSU website ([here](#)), check us out on [D2L](#), and join our next meeting – contact Dr. Sharia Phillips (phill874@msu.edu) and mention our newsletter to receive an invite.

If you are interested in joining the SAB...

Complete our brief, 7-question [survey](#) (be sure to have a recent copy of your resume or cv ready [.doc, .docx, or .pdf format]) and join our next meeting – contact Dr. Sharia Phillips (phill874@msu.edu) and mention our newsletter to receive an invite.

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