

# MPH NEWSLETTER

*College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences*

---



## CONTENTS

Director's Message	02
Faculty Spotlight	03
Student Spotlight	04-5
Public Health in the News	06
Upcoming Events / For Your Enjoyment	07
Career Development Opportunities	08

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear MPH Students, Faculty, and Mentors,

We are getting close to ringing in a new year with a level of enthusiasm and optimism that we may not have experienced any year prior. The year 2020 will definitely go down in history due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the many societal challenges that arose as a result. With that said, before we start celebrating the normalcy we hope to see in 2021, let's take a moment to appreciate the resilience and commitment that our students, faculty, and mentors demonstrated during such a challenging year.



To our students, we are incredibly impressed with the perseverance and dedication you displayed inside and outside the classroom. It is obvious that this year taught you an additional set of skills that will continue to benefit you as you finish your education and begin your careers in public health. We are proud to know that you all will be contributing to the future of our profession. The field of public health is more well known among the public than it has been in 100 years. It is possible that for the first time the public knows what an epidemiologist does, the importance of One Health, and the constant changes and challenges that occur in this field. This is an opportunity to use the awareness to our advantage as we move forward as a profession.

We also want to say thank you to the many individuals who mentored our students this past year. We are incredibly grateful for the unique and innovative opportunities you all made available for students to ensure they were getting the project and research experiences they deserve. We appreciate your commitment to our students and our program. To close, we hope you all have a wonderful, relaxing, and healthy holiday break. We look forward to seeing you all again in the new year!

Take care and stay healthy,

Mateja R. Savoie Roskos PhD, MPH, RD  
CAAS MPH Program Director



## Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Jane Kelly, DVM, MS, MPH, ACVPM, ACVM

On December 8, 2020, Dr. Jane Kelly, professor and advisor for the Veterinary Public Health Program, was chosen as the president-elect of the Utah Veterinary Medical Association (UVMA). She has already been working as the director of the Central Utah Diagnostic Lab, where she focuses on veterinary diagnostics, epidemiology, and public health. Upon hearing the news, a colleague of Jane said, "[Jane] is held in [high-esteem] by her colleagues in the veterinary profession throughout the state and her commitment to serving them in this capacity." Jane would like to increase awareness of UVMA and its work for veterinarians and to support her fellow veterinarians in their work. Congratulations, Dr. Jane Kelly!



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ASHLEY SHEESLEY

In this MPH quarterly newsletter, we would like to spotlight Ashley Scheesley, a student of the Veterinary Public Health program. Ashley is specifically interested in what causes animals to get sick, zoonotic diseases, and how habitat destruction increases the number of infectious diseases. Research really fascinates her, and she likes to study how human and animal interactions impact global health.



Ashley graduated with her bachelor's degree in December 2018 and has been working with Doctor Tarbet in the Institute for Antiviral Research since then. She was working when SARS-CoV-2 first started emerging in China. Because of the amount of research and work being done on the virus in the lab already, she decided to start her master's degree and use the institute's research as her project.



Since Ashley likes working with animals, she decided to join the animal model team. They are studying mice and hamsters with COVID-19 that have the human ACE2 gene. Much of her work involves genotyping the animals to determine the correct virus dose for the models. The goal of the project is to find clinical markers in the animals that are matched in humans so new drugs, treatments, and vaccines can be created. In order to do this, the hamster and mice models need to be compared so they know which model is better for analyzing different disease aspects, such as: viral load, cytokines, pathology, clinical symptoms, and different antivirals.

Though the project hasn't been completed yet, Ashley's team has been able to analyze many compounds of interest from the National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization against various coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2.

Ashley really enjoys the Veterinary Public Health program because it is very broad and will open a lot of doors for her. She likes the fact that her project bridges a gap between scientific and laboratory research and public health. In her spare time, Ashley likes to write and is currently working on a couple of young adult fantasy novels. She also loves to read, run, and hike. She tested positive for COVID-19 in July and is still healing from her infection. Her and her husband live in Logan, Utah, with their fluffy bunny rabbit.



# PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE NEWS

## COVID-19 Vaccine Update

On December 1, 2020, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) made recommendations for who should receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the initial stages of vaccination. The ACIP stated that the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine should be given to healthcare personnel and resident of long-term care facilities. If vaccine supplies are limited, the ACIP will continue to make recommendations based on these four goals: to decrease death and disease burden, preserve functioning of society, reduce disease burden on those already experiencing disparities, and to increase the chance for everybody to enjoy health and well-being.

Nine days later, on December 10th, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had an advisory hearing where a panel of experts recommended an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer vaccine, which has shown an approximate 95% success rate in the early Stage 3 clinical trials. EUAs are used for national public health emergencies by allowing medications for which there are no acceptable alternatives to bypass the very final stages of drug testing in order to be available to the public as soon as possible. As of December 11, 2020, the FDA has authorized an EUA for the COVID-19 vaccine, and the first vaccine has officially been given in the United States!



According to the COVID-19 vaccine trials, the expected herd immunity rate should be approximately 70%. This means that 70% of the population needs to be either immune or vaccinated to keep the disease under control and to protect the remaining 30% of the population from contracting COVID-19. More information can be found here from the [FDA](#) and [Intermountain Healthcare](#) websites.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Utah Public Health Association Advocacy Summit

The Utah Public Health Association is holding their annual advocacy summit this January! This four-part event will be held from 12-1 on January 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th. Normally this even involves hand-on training at the Utah Capitol, but this year will be held virtually with no event at the Capitol. This is a great opportunity to network and continue to develop your career as a MPH. Once more information is released about the event, it will be found [here](#). The event is free with an optional donation, and students are encouraged to attend to learn more about creating talking point with legislators and the policy-making process.



Utah  
Public Health  
Association

## FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

The University of Utah recently started a website exhibit to compare effects of the 1918-1919 Spanish Influenza pandemic to the effects of the 2019 SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Specifically, the website discusses news articles in Utah during both outbreaks and compares the timelines for both pandemics. The exhibit allows you to see the similarities and differences between the two timelines, including Utah's responses to both.



Other topics similar to both pandemics the exhibit has include: 'drugless' cures and herbal remedies that became popular, politicizing public health, mask wearing, headline comparisons, and differing opinions.

Check out the website [here](#) to learn more!

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Nutrition Policy Institute Fellowship Opportunity.

The Nutrition Policy Institute at the University of California is looking for a graduate student for a 7-month fellowship. The fellow must have epidemiology and/or biostats training and be a first generation college student. You will start in early 2021 and receive a \$5000 stipend. Applications are due December 31st. The link to program information and application can be found [here](#).

## RXOne Health Field Experience

The RxOne Health Field Institute, put on by the University of California Davis, is putting on a Sierra to Sea course summer of 2021. Participants will explore California's diverse landscape through practical learning experiences, case studies, and field discussions. This course develops skills in the complex interrelationships of One Health. Click [here](#) to find out more about the program and the application process.



## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Be the first to hear about MPH program updates by following our social media handles! This is a great way to stay up to date on program changes, class highlights, public health events, and potential job opportunities. It also provides you with the opportunity to network with other public health professionals and programs.

Instagram: @usu.mph

Linkedin: USU Master's of Public Health

