

# MPH NEWSLETTER

Utah State University  
College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences



# Spring

## Table of Contents

Letter from the MPH Director	2
Faculty Spotlight	3
Welcome New Students	4
Zoonotic Disease Corner	5-6
Upcoming Events	7-9



College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences  
UtahStateUniversity

# LETTER FROM THE MPH DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

As the MPH Program Director, I am always eager for an opportunity to spread the word about the incredible accomplishments of our students, faculty, and the MPH program in general. Not only are we proud of the growth of this program over the past few years, but also the individual successes and experiences of our many students and graduates who are improving the health of their communities across the country. It is inspiring to see the unique and impactful projects students are completing. These projects give students the opportunity to advance their knowledge and skill set outside of the classroom, preparing them for a wide range of positions in the field of public health. These projects also benefit the partnering organizations, which aligns with our MPH program vision of establishing healthy communities through innovation, collaboration, education, research, and community involvement. While many of our graduates are working as public health professionals, others are pursuing additional education to receive doctorates in Veterinary Medicine (DVM) and Nutrition Sciences (PhD), for example. These professional and academic successes speak to our impressive students, past and present. It is quite the honor to help educate and train such extraordinary individuals.

Speaking of incredible students, we are currently accepting applications for fall of 2022. We are excited to host a virtual open house for the MPH in Public Health Nutrition on February 23rd for anyone who may be interested in the program next year or in the future! If you know of anyone who might be interested in pursuing a MPH in Public Health Nutrition or Veterinary Public Health, please have them reach out to myself or a faculty member for more information.



In this newsletter you will find Dr. Jane Kelly's Zoonotic Disease Corner article, program highlights, and upcoming events in public health. We also want to take this opportunity to welcome three new students, who you can learn more about below. Thank you for taking the time to read our quarterly newsletter!

Take care,

**Mateja R. Savoie-Roskos, PhD,  
MPH, RD,  
CAAS MPH Program Director  
Associate Professor**

# Faculty Spotlight

## Rebecca Charlton MPH, RD

Rebecca is the director of the Coordinated Program in Dietetics for Utah State University. She received her bachelors at USU and her MPH at UCLA. She teaches a variety of classes for the Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences Department, including NDFS 6810 Social Determinants of Health, a required course for MPH students.

Rebecca appreciates that public health has so many facets. She loves that she could change her focus a dozen times and still have more to discover within the discipline. As an added bonus, public health has direct impact on the world around her. It's important to her to know that her work makes the world a better place. From the study of epidemiology to the development of nutrition programs, public health efforts work to make positive change in our world.

Rebecca's current position doesn't leave much time for research. Most of her past research has been on education or quality improvement activities. She is currently a part of a research project looking at diet quality changes during the dietetic internship. Rebecca is also writing a literature review on education techniques for neurodivergent persons in dietetics in preparation for future research into that topic.

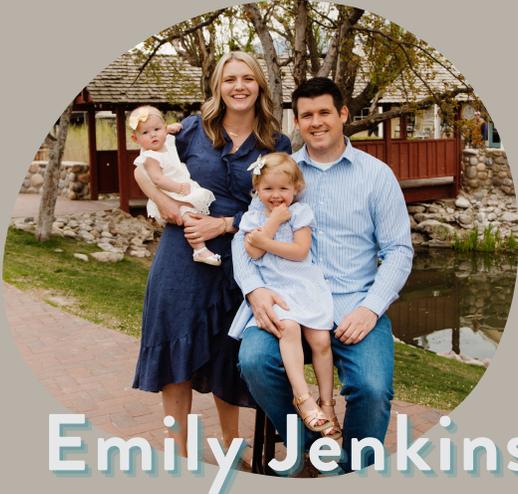
Her advice to students:

Never forget the people impacted by the programs. The master's degree journey can quickly become a deep dive into data-driven decisions and impact statements that reduce people to points on a graph, but every bit of a data comes from a real human whose life can be impacted by a well-crafted public health program.



# WELCOME AGGIES!

**We have three new students joining us this Spring and we are excited to get to know them!**



## Emily Jenkins

Emily did her undergrad here at Utah State in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science. After graduation, unsure what she wanted to pursue she took a job as a school dietitian. She has decided to further her education with our program with hopes to advance her career in the school system. Her husband and their two kids are working on traveling to all 50 states and Emily has also been to several countries, even Russia. She says her true passion as a dietitian is eating, not cooking and loves dessert.

Carina is originally from Florida, but is currently residing in a farmhouse built in 1918 in a small town in Wyoming with her husband Talon. She is joining our program in hopes of fighting food insecurity and helping people build healthy relationships with eating and food. Carina is already considering getting her doctorate and hasn't quite decided what career path she will follow, just that she wants to work with those wanting to better themselves. Her spare time is currently filled renovating her old home with her husband and they have found all sorts of surprises and history along the way.



## Carina Stephens

RG has joined us after tackling 7 other colleges/universities across Korea, Alabama, and Texas to get his bachelors in biology and then a MBA from Westminster College in Utah. He has worked as a pharmacy technician for 25 years and is using our program to expand and diversify his healthcare knowledge in order to help rural communities and healthcare providers in West Texas. His hope is to manage a rural hospital or clinic with his MPH. RG is also a veteran of the U.S. Army.



## RG Perez

## Zoonotic Disease Corner

by E. Jane Kelly, DVM, MS, MPH, DACVPM, DACVM

With Easter coming up in April, my thoughts turned to the Easter bunny and what diseases he may be carrying that may be harmful to human beings. Of particular concern is diseases that may cause problems in the young children because it is young children that are most often collecting Easter eggs.

The most significant pathogen that rabbits (most commonly wild rabbits) may spread to humans is a bacterium called *Francisella tularensis*, the causative agent of tularemia. Wild rabbits are highly susceptible to the infection. According to the [CDC](#) tularemia has been reported in all states except Hawaii. It can be transmitted to people from rabbits by aerosols from dead rabbits, contacting dead rabbits, and ticks and flies that have been sucking blood from affected rabbits. Many cases reported in humans are traced back to exposure to wild rabbits and hares. Luckily for us, we have effective antibiotics to treat infection. Wild rabbits are not so lucky and are often found dead if they have tularemia.

Many of you will have heard about the rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus type-2 that swept through many states, including Utah in the past few years. It is a devastating disease that affects wild and domestic rabbits causing hemorrhages in the lung, necrosis of the liver and a high fatality rate in affected rabbits. There is also a rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus type-1 that we had in Utah in 2001 that affected domestic rabbits but not wild cottontails or jack rabbits. Despite the highly contagious nature of these viruses to rabbits and the high mortality, there is no known risk to healthy humans.

One of the more common diseases of domestic rabbits is commonly known as “snuffles” due to the upper respiratory symptoms (sneezing, coughing) often seen with this disease. The cause of the infection is a bacterium called *Pasteurella multocida*. Pasteurellosis of rabbits may also present as head tilt (“wry neck”) due to infection of the middle or inner ear, abscesses under the skin or internally, and, in severe cases, pneumonia and septicemia causing sudden death. Though this can be a devastating disease of rabbits, it is unlikely to pose a threat to human owners of the rabbits unless the rabbit bites or scratches its owner: occasionally, skin infections and abscesses in people have been associated with *Pasteurella multocida* infections in rabbits (note that dog and cat bites can also cause *Pasteurella* spp. infections in people).



Rabbits with diarrhea may have protozoan parasitic infections such as cryptosporidiosis or coccidiosis. Did you know that rabbits can have at least 11 species of *Eimeria* (coccidia) including one that affects the liver rather than the intestine? Most severe disease is seen in young rabbits, particularly if housed in large rabbitries. In general, coccidia (*Eimeria* spp. and *Isospora* spp.) tend to be host-specific. That means that *Eimeria* spp. that infect rabbits do not tend to affect humans, or dogs or cats or cattle for that matter. However, always remember that immunosuppressed people such as cancer patients and organ recipients may become infected with parasites or viruses or bacteria that most of us are resistant to. In contrast to coccidia, cryptosporidia quite happily jump from species to species by feco-oral transmission and can cause severe diarrhea in humans. It is much more common, however, for animals such as calves with diarrhea to be shedding cryptosporidia than for rabbits to shed it.

There are, of course, many other diseases that rabbits get including Salmonellosis, Campylobacteriosis, and Listeriosis that may pose a threat to human beings. However, you are more likely to acquire these pathogens by ingesting contaminated food.



In conclusion, unless you are immunosuppressed, the healthy-looking Easter bunny with no diarrhea should pose minimal risk to you. If children are handling the Easter bunny they should wash their hands thoroughly afterwards. And, if, heaven forbid, you find that the Easter bunny is too sick to carry his basket of eggs or you find that he has died, do not pick him up with your bare hands! If he is a wild rabbit, best to call the Division of Wildlife Services and if he is a domestic rabbit, contact your veterinarian or the State Veterinarian's office. And, if you do pick him up, please use gloves and put him in a bag that you can seal.

# Upcoming Events

## Utah Public Health Association Annual Conference

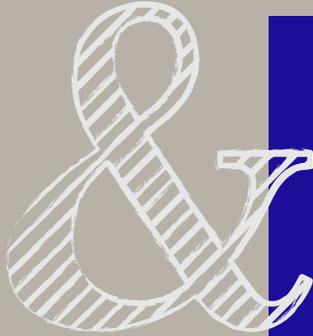
**Date: March 22-24, 2022**

**[Click Here to Register](#)**



## Utah Public Health Association

The Utah Public Health Association annual conference will be a virtual event that we encourage students, alumni, and faculty to be a part of.



### COMMUNITY CONVERSATION with Betty Sawyer

Executive Director of Project Success and  
President of Ogden NAACP

Please join the SAB for our first community conversation as we discuss the importance of public health efforts in black, indigenous, and people of color communities, and available opportunities for MPH students



**CLICK HERE**

Thursday February 24, 2022  
1:00 pm MDT

<https://usu-edu.zoom.us/j/81786182710?pwd=ZUxvcVIPMDNUSCtR5kE3bXJXbXB3QT09>

Meeting ID: 817 8618 2710

Passcode: 421767

# Upcoming Events



Academy of  
Nutrition and Dietetics

**eat right.** an affiliate of the  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

## Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Meeting

**Date: March 24-25, 2022**

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

Annual Meeting for the largest organization of nutrition professionals in the State of Utah. The Utah Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics dietitians and diet technicians are also professional and student members from the largest global nutrition organization, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

## Society for Public Health Education Annual Conference

**Date: March 22-25, 2022**

**[Click Here to Register](#)**

The SOPHE conference will be virtual this year but will have people attending from a wide variety of health related fields. This will be a great continuing education and networking opportunity.



# Upcoming Events



**MPH Nutrition Program Open House**

**Brightwater Foundation Internship**

**Date: February 23, 2022 6-7pm MST**  
**[Click Here to Register](#)**

**Date: April 28-May 8, 2022**  
**[Click Here to Register](#)**

USU will be holding a virtual open house about our nutrition program in hopes it will encourage more people to gain interest in public health. It will be recorded if you cannot watch it live.

An excellent opportunity to gain international experience in public health. You will have the opportunity to visit rural, underserved communities, teach safe water techniques, interact with individuals and families, learn about their culture, and observe the impact of clean water.

Brightwater can take 3-4 students on the expedition. Applications are due February 20th.



## Don't Forget to Follow Us!

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.

 [@usupublichealth](#)

 [USU Master's of Public Health](#)

 [Utah State University Master of Public Health Program](#)