**Middle Tennessee Grand Division Meeting**

April 16, 2025

Student Union Building, Room 224,

1768 MTSU Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37132

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Topic | Presenter |
| 8:00 am – 9:00 am | Registration |  |
| 8:45 am – 9:00 am | Welcome | Shatonia Kenion  TPHA Middle TN Vice-President  Kaysi Paul  Middle TN Vice President-elect |
| 9:00 am – 10:00 am | Trauma-Informed Workplace | Dr. Elizabeth Q. Wright  MTSU Department of Criminal Justice Administration |
| 10:00 am – 11:00 am | College Food Insecurity: A Call to Action | Dr. Sarah Harris,  Registered Dietitian  MTSU Nutrition and Food Science Department |
| 11:00 am – 12:00 pm | Tennessee's Public Health in 2025: Rebuilding Trust through Local Engagement | Dr. Ralph Alvarado,  Commissioner  Tennessee Department of Health |
| 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm | Lunch |  |
| 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm | Healthy Aging & Frailty | Dr. Brandon Grubbs  Associate Professor of Exercise Science at Middle Tennessee State University |
| 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm | Incorporating Blue Zone Concepts in Community Health Practice | Vickie Harden, Ph.D.  Interim Chair, MSW Program Coordinator  Associate Professor  MTSU Department of Social Work |
| 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm | Closing Remarks and Adjourn |  |

**Presenter Bios/ Information**

**Dr. Elizabeth Q. Wright – Professor, MTSU Department of Criminal Justice Administration**

* **Bio:** Dr. Elizabeth Q. Wright is a Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice Administration at Middle Tennessee State University. She received both an M.A. (2000) and Ph.D. (2004) in Criminal Justice from Sam Houston State University and has been teaching criminal justice students in North Carolina and Tennessee for approximately 20 years. Prior to graduate school, she received Bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Social Welfare, with a certificate in Criminal Justice, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1994) and started her professional life working as a Juvenile Corrections Liaison in Wisconsin. She served two years as a sexual assault volunteer victim advocate while attending UW-Madison and continued her volunteer work with sexual assault victims in North Carolina. She was a board member, including Secretary/Treasurer of the Board, for the Rape Crisis Volunteers of Cumberland County and currently serves as the Chair of the Board for the Doors of Hope program in Murfreesboro, TN – an organization that works with justice-involved women to both reduce recidivism and improve their quality of life through the treatment of substance abuse and mental health conditions. Her research and service are in the areas of violence against women, trauma and the justice involved, implementing trauma-informed care, and stress and resiliency building. In Spring 2025, the text “Resiliency and the Justice Professional: Preparing for the Job” – a comprehensive textbook for criminal justice students will be published, co-authored by Dr. Elizabeth Wright and Dr. Bethany Wrye. This text introduces students to stress, trauma, the realities of criminal justice professions and multiple chapters devoted to teaching students about wellness, along with step-by-step guidance on how to develop and maintain wellness practices. It is the intent of the authors that students may develop strategies to assist them in identifying, recovering from, and preventing stressors in the multiple facets of their lives – personal, academic, and professional.
* **Learning Objectives: Trauma-Informed Workplaces**
  1. Describe the core principles of trauma-informed care.
  2. Develop 1-2 strategies to incorporate trauma-informed care into one’s practice.
  3. Identify 1-2 reasonable and attainable strategies to develop a workplace into a trauma-informed workplace.

**Dr. Sarah Harris, Registered Dietitian – MTSU Nutrition and Food Science Department**

* **Bio**: Sarah is a Registered Dietitian and faculty member at MTSU in the Nutrition and Food Science Department. She is set to graduate with her Ph.D. next month, and her dissertation research focused on food insecurity on the MTSU campus, specifically examining the impact of SNAP on students' food security levels. Sarah’s presentation highlights research conducted during the Fall semester at MTSU, focusing on the prevalence of food insecurity on campus. It explores the demographics of students most affected, SNAP enrollment statistics, and the impact of SNAP participation on students' food security levels. Additionally, the presentation will discuss strategies to increase SNAP enrollment among eligible students and include a call to action for everyone—students, faculty and staff, administration, alumni, and the broader community—to address food insecurity and support positive change.
* **Learning Objectives: College Food Insecurity: A Call to Action**
  1. Compare prevalence of food insecurity between college students and average Tennesseans.
  2. Examine barriers to SNAP participation for college students and the potential benefits of enrollment in the program.
  3. Apply knowledge of college food insecurity throughout one's personal and professional sphere of influence

**Dr. Ralph Alvarado, Commissioner of Health – Tennessee Department of Health**

* **Bio:** Ralph Alvarado, MD, FACP, joined Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee’s cabinet in January 2023 as the 15th commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health. Dr. Alvarado has spent a decade in public service and in 2014 was the first Hispanic member elected to the Kentucky General Assembly where he represented Kentucky’s 28th Senate district. During his service in the Kentucky Senate, Dr. Alvarado was Chairman of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee, led the Substance Abuse Recovery Task Force, and was a member of several committees, including the Medicaid Oversight Subcommittee, Banking & Insurance committee, and State & Local Government committee. Dr. Alvarado has been a practicing physician for the past 29 years, working in a variety of clinical settings, as a small town primary care physician, a hospitalist and continues to see patients at skilled nursing facilities. Dr. Alvarado has served as medical director for Medicare health plan operators Stableview Health and Signature Advantage, in Lexington, Ky.; as medical director and finance chairman for Kentucky One Health Medical Group, in Louisville, Ky.; and, as vicechairman of the board of an accountable care organization, Quality Independent Physicians, also in Louisville. From 2009 to 2011, Dr. Alvarado was chief and medical staff president at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Lexington, Ky., and was elected as the physician representative to the hospital’s board in 2010, serving until 2012. Dr. Alvarado earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, Calif., in 1990, where he went on to receive his Doctorate in Medicine in 1994. Dr. Alvarado completed his medical residency in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Kentucky in 1998. Dr. Alvarado and his wife of 30 years, Dawn, have two adult children.
* **Learning Objectives: Tennessee's Public Health in 2025: Rebuilding Trust through Local Engagement**
  1. Participants should understand the governing structure of the Tennessee Department of Health, as well as the
  2. mission, vision, and values
  3. Participants should better understand the state of public health in the UNited States and Tennessee, as well as basic foundations for why TDH is working to advance prevention and improving access for low-income, minority, under-served, and rural populations across the state
  4. Participants should better understand the greatest threats and opportunities to public health in Tennessee, including poor health at baseline, Vaccine Hesitancy, and the negative impacts of isolation.
  5. Participants should better understand how to plug into their County Health Council, their faith community, and other local networks while feeling empowered to engage policy-makers in decisions impacting public health**.**

**Brandon Grubbs, PhD, ACSM-EP, BCMAS — Associate Professor, MTSU Department of Health and Human Performance**

* **Bio:** Dr. Brandon Grubbs is an Associate Professor of Exercise Science at Middle Tennessee State University. He is a certified exercise physiologist from the American College of Sports Medicine and board certified in medical affairs from the Accreditation Council for Medical Affairs. He earned his doctoral degree from Florida State University with training in exercise physiology, focusing on aging and physical function. His research centers on improving physical function and overall health in older adults and clinical populations through targeted exercise interventions, particularly in frail populations. He is also the co-founder and co-leader of the Positive Aging Consortium, a multidisciplinary initiative dedicated to advancing research, education, and community engagement to support healthy aging.
* **Presentation summary:** This presentation will explore healthy aging, the growing investment in healthy aging research by organizations, local programs and initiatives that support healthy aging, and emerging aging therapies and trends, offering insights for public health initiatives.
* **Learning Objectives: Healthy Aging** 
  1. Define healthy aging and discuss its significance in public health and research.
  2. Identify key organizations investing in aging research
  3. Explore emerging trends and interventions in healthy aging, including pharmacological and exercise-based approaches, and their implications for public health practice.

**Vickie Harden, Ph.D. – MTSU Interim Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work**

* **Bio:** Dr. Vickie Harden is Interim Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at Middle Tennessee State University. She is the coordinator of the MSW program. She holds a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee and a Ph.D. in Health and Human Performance from MTSU. She has over 30 years of experience in social work practice, primarily working with children and families who have experienced trauma and abuse. Her community-based research encompasses addressing health disparities and improving access to health care in rural communities.
* **Presentation Summary:** This session explores ways in which practitioners in health-related fields can include blue zones concepts into their interventions with clients, particularly older adults. The blue zones research provides a culturally relevant framework by which to incorporate interventions. Coupled with a strength-based perspective, the model provides a multi-faceted, culturally responsive orientation from which to view the lives of older adults and the ageing process.
* **Learning Objectives:** **Incorporating Blue Zone Concepts in Community Health Practice**
  1. Explore the common threads of healthy living found in blue zone regions.
  2. Connect the nine primary areas leading to longer and healthier lives to practice settings.
  3. Incorporate the blue zones concepts into interventions using your community’s resources.