I love the promise and excitement that comes with ringing in a new year, and as I pen this first President’s message, I am especially excited to have the opportunity to serve TPHA in 2019. Pausing briefly to offer sincere thanks to Rendi Murphree, the Program Committee and dozens of volunteers for a marvelous annual conference and 75th anniversary celebration, I know the future is even brighter for TPHA’s next 75 years!

The TPHA vision charges us to be “trusted public health professionals creating a healthier Tennessee,” and rare opportunities are before us, as a host of new decision makers take office in January at the local, regional and state levels. Recognizing this, we spent a good deal of time dreaming about the future at a recent Board meeting, and our discussion was largely framed by your responses to the recent strategic planning survey. Thanks to all who took the time to complete this and to reflect about what the organization is doing well or could do to serve you better. You’ll hear more about these results and have additional opportunities to provide input, but for starters we talked about our consistently high membership totals and increasing student involvement as good things while acknowledging the need to better define TPHA member benefits and reach out to colleagues who are not TPHA members. We talked about the need to seek non-traditional partners, to explore new financial sustainability models and to be recognized as stronger public health advocates. These “imagining the future” talks will continue even as exciting plans for next year’s conference and so much more are underway. As we head into the New Year, I invite you to “imagine” a stronger TPHA, a growing membership and a brighter, healthier Tennessee. But for now, I thank you for all you do and wish you and your families all the joy and happiness of the holidays.

Warmest regards,
Cathy

South Central Helps Promote Breastfeeding
Submitted by Brook Mitchell, South Central Assessment and Planning Coordinator

Several counties in the South Central Region celebrated World Breastfeeding Week and the Big Latch On by hosting multiple events focused on gathering women together who breastfeed. Efforts to raise awareness of breastfeeding resources and to help communities positively support breastfeeding in public places took place throughout the region. On August 3rd, the Maury County Health Department and South Central Regional Health Office partnered with Maury Regional Medical Center and La Leche League of Columbia, along with other local vendors, at the Mommy & Baby Expo which was hosted by MuleTown Recreation Center.

Continued on Page 2, see South Central

Maury Big Latch On
Continued from Page 1; South Central

Over 90 people attended the expo, with 18 moms and 19 infants participating in the latch event. A healthy lunch, breastfeeding support bags, and educational classes were offered on such topics as chiropractic care, food safety, baby wearing, infant massage and cloth diapering. Staff from the Lawrence County Health Department helped assist the Breastfeeding Support Group of Lawrence County with "The Big Latch On" event held at Providence Hall. Twenty-seven breastfeeding mothers participated in the latch event with over 100 people attending the expo.

On Saturday, August 4th, the Bedford County Health Department celebrated with a community baby shower for pregnant moms and families with young children. Over 30 community members attended. Pregnant women and/or guardians with babies under one year old were entered to win baby-friendy prizes. Two mothers also participated in latch event.

The Marshall County Health Department, in partnership with the Marshall County Health Council, hosted the 3rd Annual Community Baby Expo on August 11th at the Lewisburg Recreation Center. The event reached 307 community members including 66 moms who were either pregnant or had a child under one year of age. Health department representatives shared information about the regional dental program, CSS/HUGS, WIC, breast & cervical program, TennCare Kids and Baby & Me: Tobacco-Free. Guests also enjoyed refreshments and baby-friendly door prizes were given away throughout the event.

In Hickman County, over 50 people attended the first annual Community Baby Shower held at the Centerville United Methodist Church. This free event was co-sponsored by the Hickman County Health Department and the local health council. Attendees received health and safety information from over 15 partnering agencies.

Interested in getting more involved in TPHA?

JOIN A COMMITTEE!

Recruitment is underway! For a complete list of committees, go to TPHA’s website.

To join, email khharrell@tnpublichealth.org
Bledsoe County School Awarded $100,000 for Fitness Equipment
Submitted by Amanda Goodhard, Southeast Assessment and Planning Coordinator

Bledsoe County Middle School was one of three schools in the state to be awarded a $100,000 Don't Quit! Fitness Center through the National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils. The fitness center includes strength training equipment, cardio fitness equipment and a circuit training system. Michelle Rains, Bledsoe County Coordinated School, and Beth Blevins, Healthy Development Coordinator, Southeast Region, worked with Bledsoe County journalism students to submit a video application to encourage physical activity in schools. The fitness center was installed during the fall of this school year.

During his visit to Bledsoe County on November 6, Dr. Dreyzehner stopped by Bledsoe County Middle School to meet with students and staff and check out the new fitness equipment. The students demonstrated how to use the new equipment (Dr. Dreyzehner even tested some of the equipment himself!) and shared with Dr. Dreyzehner how much they enjoyed having this equipment available at their school.

Upper Cumberland Brings Home the Platinum, Gold and Silver Awards!
Submitted by Kayla French, Putnam Health Educator

 Cookeville, Tennessee- The Upper Cumberland Region was recently awarded Platinum, Gold and Silver Bright Spot Awards for their commitment to creating a healthier generation.

A Platinum Bright Spot award was presented to the Putnam County Health Department for their Morning Movement Program. The health department partnered with three schools to provide students with 30 minutes of physical activity before the school day begins. Each school was offered the program two days per week. A total of 3,240 minutes of physical activity was provided to students across the county!

The Gold Level award went to the Fentress County Health Department for their work with Allardt and South Fentress Elementary Schools. Since 2016, the schools and health department have partnered to offer After-School Walk-Run Clubs. The clubs meet bi-weekly for 8 weeks during the fall and spring semesters. With the dedication of over 400 students, along with tremendous support from school staff, the clubs have logged over 5,000 miles to date!

The Upper Cumberland Regional Office received the Silver Bright Spot Award for the ABC’s of Safe Sleep initiative. Department staff trained over 850 individuals on infant safe sleep practices. The team provided over nine informational sessions at three high schools reaching approximately 250 high school students. In 2016, infant mortalities decreased by 22.2% in the Upper Cumberland Region.
Community Organizations throughout Northeast Prepare for an Opioid Overdose Outbreak
Submitted by Jayne Harper, Northeast Assessment and Planning Coordinator

On October 30th, the Northeast Tennessee Healthcare Coalition, Northeast Tennessee Regional Health Office and Sullivan County Regional Health Department hosted an Opioid Overdose Table Top Exercise at First Christian Church in Johnson City. Over 110 people attended the event and those in attendance included hospitals, health departments, EMA/EMS, urgent care facilities, local colleges and universities, K-12 school systems, pharmacies, American Red Cross, home health care providers, forensics center, drug recovery centers, law enforcement, fire, anti-drug coalitions and Frontier Health.

Northeast Regional Medical Director Dr. David Kirschke said, “We’re doing a table-top exercise to help us plan for the possibility of an opioid overdose outbreak. That would be a large number of overdoses in a short period of time.” Situations such as this have already taken place. In Middle Tennessee there was a cluster of six overdose cases from a batch of synthetic fentanyl as well as the recent outbreak in a Connecticut city park of 90 people overdosed on synthetic marijuana.

The recent table-top exercise was designed to forge connections among all of the participating organizations as they completed the exercise of responding to 45 reported overdoses, including 13 deaths throughout Greene, Sullivan and Washington Counties. Through the discussion participants learned about available resources and opportunities for improvement in communication when the need arises for mobilization to address an outbreak.

The group learned about the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics, also known as the ESSENCE database, that hospitals use to enter real-time data. This helps public health professionals monitor for outbreaks.

Local anti-drug coalitions shared their capacity for getting naloxone, the opioid overdose antidote, into the hands of first responders and community members. The local coalitions also have peer recovery specialists that can work with people with substance dependence and their loved ones. Law enforcement, social service agencies and hospitals discussed communicating about overdose cases as well as the benefits and limitations of such communication. A decision was made to form a task force to continue meeting to refine how the region will address the opioid epidemic.
Talk With Me Baby Initiative Piloting in Mid-Cumberland Region

Submitted by Tabatha Vassey, Mid-Cumberland Assessment and Planning Coordinator, and Patti Scott, DNP, RN, PNP, NCSN, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Nurse Leader

Talk With Me Baby is a population-based initiative, started in Georgia, and designed to ensure that every child, starting from birth, receives the essential “language nutrition.” Just as healthy food nourishes a growing baby’s body, language nutrition nourishes a baby’s brain. Both the quantity and quality of nourishing language are critical to healthy brain development. Providing children with abundant language nutrition, starting at birth, ensures a strong foundation for social-emotional and cognitive development and language and literacy ability and places babies on a pathway toward third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation and lifelong success.

The TWMB initiative was designed to assist families in developing the ability to practice language nutrition with their babies from the moment they are born. The initiative is utilized to help families understand the crucial role they play in the development of their baby and the baby’s future school achievements. Trainers and providers model language nutrition practices with families by engaging babies in direct conversation during each encounter while also engaging families in these practices and emphasizing how important it is that they talk with their babies. They model the “serve and return” communication exchange between infants and caregivers while pointing out the forms of communication infants use (eye contact, facial expressions, laughing, crying, touch, etc.) during the interaction.

TWMB is not a program, but a scalable, sustainable approach designed to “reach the people who reach the people.” TWMB integrates language nutrition coaching into the scope of work of large-scale workforces, like health department nurses and WIC staff, and groups that interact with new and expectant parents. TWMB has developed a set of tools and training programs to engage those workforces in this work.

The Tennessee Department of Health recently partnered with the Georgia Department of Public Health to expand the TWMB initiative into Tennessee. The initiative was piloted in Dickson County, where all health department staff were trained as Talk With Me Baby Coaches. Their approach to families is for every staff member to model and coach “language nutrition” during the course of a visit. All other Mid-Cumberland Region county staff are currently being trained as TWMB coaches, and by 2020, all county and health department staff will be trained. Tennessee home visitation programs have also adopted the initiative, and 400 home visitor staff have been trained as coaches.

In Tennessee, only about 35% of third graders were reading at an on-track or mastered level. By bringing the TWMB initiative to Tennessee we will be able to educate families on how important language nutrition is on early brain development, and teach them how to engage in language-rich interactions with their babies that will assist in their children meeting critical milestones of educational and lifelong success.

We are ecstatic to be piloting this initiative and are looking forward to the benefits it brings to the families we serve.

Commissioner Dreyzehner holds and talks to newborn, Ewen, son of Primary Prevention Director, Leslie Meehan.

Explore more about TWMB - including this adorable video of a daddy and baby communication “dance” - talkwithmebaby.org

For more information on TWMB, contact Patti Scott at Patricia.Scott@tn.gov.
Dr. Dreyzehner Visits Haywood County’s Built Environment Project

Submitted by Veronica Calvin, West and Jackson Assessment and Planning Coordinator

West Tennessee Regional Director Marilyn Barnes, Haywood County Director Elise Gillespie and other governmental officials had the honor to host TDH Commissioner John Dreyzehner on August 21 and for the viewing of the Kaboom/Farmers’ Market Park located in Brownsville, Tennessee. The park offers a playground for children, adult exercise equipment, and a space where local farmers can sell fresh produce throughout the year within a part of the county where the health disparity of physical inactivity was documented.

However, Kaboom/Farmers’ Market Park not only denotes residents’ access to a built environment which supports physical activity, but also testifies to Haywood’s ability to utilize community partnerships to further the health and well-being of its residents. Though funding of this park comes primarily from a grant obtained by the Haywood Chamber of Commerce and City of Brownsville, funding also includes fiscal contributions other community stakeholders such as TDH’s $10,000 Rural Access to Health and Healthy Active Built Environments (RAHHABE) grant.

On the actual day the park was built, over 100 volunteers participated to install the first phase of the park in a few hours. Dr. Dreyzehner’s visit was spurred to view the park and to learn of its next phase for community connectivity, a plan where officials will add a walking trail next to the playground.

Get a Christmas gift you can’t return? Have a gift card you won’t use?

DONATE IT TO THE TPHA SILENT AUCTION!

Contact Tatum Johnson at tatum.h.johnson@tn.gov to donate or join the Silent Auction Committee.

All money raised from the Annual Silent Auction goes to the scholarship fund.
Updates to the TPHA Bylaws

Hal Hendrick, Constitution and Bylaws Committee

The General Membership approved the following changes to TPHA’s Bylaws at the business meeting on September 12, 2018. For the full and official language of TPHA’s Bylaws and Constitution, visit tnpublichealth.org.

#1. BYLAWS: ARTICLE V  Standing and Special Committees
   **Approved:** That the Public Policy Committee and Legislative Committee be combined into one committee to be called the Policy and Legislative Committee.

#2. BYLAWS: ARTICLE VI  Sections
   **Approved:** Members can join more than one section.

Annual Membership Update

Paula Masters, Membership Committee

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Member Recognition

- **Maria Hurt**, Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, was the winner of TPHA’s new member drawing.
- **Marian Levy** was recognized as the member who recruited the most new members this past year.

Service Awards Achievements

- **Eloise Waters** received a plaque in recognition of 50 years of service.
- **Janet Ridley** received a plaque in recognition of 40 years of service.
- **Donna Patterson, Jan BeVille, Melissa Davis, and Susan Porter** received certificates in recognition of 30 years of service.
- **Glenn Czarnecki, Marsha Jennette, Rebekah English, Sandy Moore, Sheila Moon, and Shellesa Taylor** received certificates in recognition of 20 years of service.
- **Susan Porter** and **Gail Harmon** achieved lifetime membership status (30 years as a TPHA member).

Other TPHA Announcements

**Richard Savoy**, OD, Optometrist, Southern College of Optometry and **Melony Sesti**, Dental Hygienist, Gibson County Health Department were recently elected to a two-year term as TPHA Board Representatives for West Tennessee.
Infectious Disease Simulation Success in East Region

Submitted by Wanda Roberts, Hospital Coordinator

On November 8th, the East Tennessee Regional Health Office hosted a “Simulation Cell,” or Simcell, in the Regional Health Operations Center (RHOC) for the Knoxville/East Tennessee Healthcare Coalition’s annual exercise. This large, full-scale exercise spanned 16 counties with 146 participating organizations and 3,100 individual players. To help facilitate the logistics needed, the Simcell was activated and assisted with simulated support and information sharing. An additional site at the Regional Forensic Center also participated in the event.

A Simcell functions as a call-in center where representatives field calls from exercise players. It allows players to interact with subject matter experts so that local agencies are not overwhelmed. For this exercise, the Simcell acted as EMS, Public Health and EMA. Staffing the Simcell were public health representatives (from CEDS, Emergency Preparedness, and Administration) as well as the Regional PIO, Director of Nursing, and Regional Medical Director. EMA and EMS was also represented. During the four hour exercise, the sim cell fielded 117 calls. The Regional Forensic Center took an additional 77 calls.

The 2018 Knox/East Tennessee Healthcare Coalition 2018 Full Scale Exercise focused on an emerging infectious disease outbreak, so the role of public health was critical to provide accurate information to the players. They provided information, messaging, recommendations and fielded questions from the callers. Objectives for the exercise included communications, organizational plans, resource needs, multi-agency coordination and recovery.

Each year the Knox County Health Department and the East Tennessee Regional Health Office Regional Hospital Coordinators lead the Coalition in a full scale exercise, addressing relevant issues. Community involvement is key to providing the most realistic responses and outcomes so that plans can be tested, staff can practice situational preparedness and response, and changes can be made based on lessons learned. This exercise forced facilities to think through their processes as the infectious disease scenario escalated and tested the regions surge capability as well as forensic resource allocation.

This exercise allowed public health to work with many community partners, including: hospitals, long term care centers, home health/hospice, outpatient clinics, dialysis centers, EMS and EMA. It was a collaborative effort that allowed public health an opportunity to provide education to key community partners and network outside our usual scope. Post-exercise evaluations indicate that this undertaking was well worth the effort and that the role public health played was instrumental in successfully surviving a catastrophic infectious disease outbreak scenario.
Submitted by Marian Levy, DrPH, RD, TPHA Representative to APHA

Policy Update
The American Public Health Association held it 2018 Annual Meeting in San Diego on November 10-14. More than 12,000 people attended. The Governing Council adopted 12 new policy statements at the annual meeting:

- Reducing global child mortality rates
- Addressing potential health impacts of fracking
- Ensuring a healthy energy future
- Reducing gun-related suicides
- Understanding, treating gun-violence as a public health issue
- Regulating electronic nicotine delivery products
- Preventing tuberculosis among health workers
- Advancing the health of refugees
- Achieving health equity in the U.S.
- Supporting global food security
- Addressing police violence as a public health issue
- Opposing family-child separations at the U.S. border

Elected Officers
The following newly elected officers were installed at the 2018 Annual Meeting. Anyone interested in exploring leadership opportunities within APHA is encouraged to contact Marian Levy at mlevy@memphis.edu

- President: Pamela Aaltonen, PhD, RN
- President-elect: Lisa M. Carlson, MPH, MCHES (Emory University)
- Chair of Nominations Committee: Marian Levy, DrPH, RD, FAND

Save these Dates!

TPHA Grand Division Meetings

**East**
April 29, 2019
Jubilee Center, Knoxville (tentative)

**Middle**
April 26, 2019
Wilson County Expo Center, Lebanon

**West**
TBD
Registration opens in February.

TPHA Annual Conference
September 11-13, 2019
Marriott Cool Springs, Franklin

National Public Health Week
April 1-7, 2019

APHA Annual Conference
“Creating the Healthiest Nation: For Science. For Action. For Health.”
November 2-6, 2019
Philadelphia, PA
Time to Get a Jump Start on National Public Health Week!
Submitted by Shannon Railling, Chair of Public Health Week Committee

National Public Health Week will be celebrated April 1-7, 2019. The theme of this year’s celebration is “Creating the Healthiest Nation: For Science. For Action. For Health” and focuses on the idea that everyone deserves to live a long and healthy life in a safe environment. To make that happen we must focus on the causes of poor health and disease risk among individuals and within our communities. TPHA celebrates National Public Health Week in three important ways:

Lights, Camera, Action! It’s the 6th Annual Student Video Challenge
We will hold the 6th Annual Student Video Challenge in 2019. This is an opportunity to give our future public health professionals a chance to stand out and let their voice be heard. Students will create and submit videos based on the theme “Creating the Healthiest Nation: For Science. For Action. For Health.” The deadline for video submissions is 12:00 pm (Central), March 6, 2019. Videos will be reviewed and scored by the Public Health Week committee and a winner will be chosen to receive a cash prize and recognition at the TPHA Grand Division meetings closest to them. Any public health student attending college in the state of Tennessee and enrolled in at least one public health course is eligible to enter. More information will be provided in an email to members shortly after the first of the new year.

Honoring those who make our communities healthier with the TPHA Public Health Visionary Awards
Now is a great time to start working on your nominations for the 9th Annual TPHA Public Health Visionary Awards! The Visionary Awards honor local public health advocates who work to make their communities a healthier place to live, work, play, and grow. Winners receive a cash prize and are recognized at each of TPHA’s Grand Division meetings in the spring. We need your help in identifying qualified individuals – the possibilities are abundant across the state. Nomination forms will be sent to TPHA members via email shortly after the first of the new year. Deadline for nominations is 12:00 pm (Central) March 6, 2019.

Begin warming up for the 1 Billion Steps Challenge!
Looking for a way to take off those extra holiday pounds while showing your support for TPHA? Join Team TPHA and take part in the American Public Health Association’s 1 Billion Steps Challenge. This will be the third year for Team TPHA to participate alongside teams from across the country walking to improve their health with the goal of reaching 1 billion steps by the end of Public Health Week, April 7, 2019. Kick-off begins January 1, 2019. Join Team TPHA by following the link that will be emailed to you before the end of this year along with instructions on how to sign-up with a Stridekick account.

Upcoming Opportunities

East Tennessee State University’s College of Public Health has hosted internationally respected thought leaders speaking on key public health issues through its Leading Voices in Public Health Lecture Series since 2007. Lectures are free and open to the public. Most are available by livestream. To view past lectures and for more information on upcoming events, visit https://www.etsu.edu/cph/lvph.php

The University of Memphis School of Public Health is now offering an MS in Biostatistics. Students completing this program will be competitive for a wide number of positions in public health and corporate fields. Fortune Magazine ranked a Master’s in Biostatistics number one in its most recent list of best graduate degrees for jobs based on the long-term outlook for job growth, median salaries, and job satisfaction scores (2016). For more information go to https://www.memphis.edu/sph/programs/

Please send comments, corrections, submissions, and queries to savannah.morrow@tn.gov