

# The Public Health Practice Team 2022: A Year in Review

## Who We Are:

The Public Health Practice Team (PHPT) is a unique partnership between the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health and community partners, such as the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). This team places graduate-level student workers with community partners to assist with response to existing and emergent public health needs as well as preparing for potential public health challenges. We collaborate on Public Health Practice to help advance Oregon toward a healthier and more equitable future.

## Novel Public Health Challenges: Mpox

In summer of 2022, an emerging infectious disease threat attracted the attention of public health leaders in Oregon and around the globe: Mpox. Our team members jumped into action to respond to this threat, along with officials at Oregon Health Authority, OHSU, and statewide. Current and new team members helped protect the public's health by addressing Mpox in numerous ways.

**New PHPT Faculty Team Member:** *Dr. Chris Evans, MD, MPH (Infectious disease physician, OHSU School of Medicine).* When Mpox re-emerged as a public health threat, OHA and PHPT immediately recognized the need to tap an infectious disease expert with deep knowledge and experience. To help guide the state's Mpox response and to ensure accurate communication of medical knowledge, Dr. Evans joined our team. In his role, he collaborates with experts at several levels of OHA, and at other medical/public health agencies to ensure that infectious disease outbreaks are responded to in a timely, evidence-based, and equity-centered way.

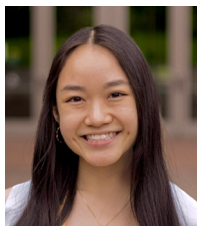
Two of our PHPT student workers assisted the HSPR program at OHA with the following Mpox-related tasks:

### Jenn Hollandsworth Reed, Health Systems and Policy, Current PhD Student



- Created standardized communication for Mpox vaccine and treatment ordering
- Processed orders for Mpox vaccine and treatment
- Generated maps showing Mpox vaccine distributed by county, identifying underserved areas
- Attended Mpox briefings hosted by CDC and APHA and reported back to OHA officials
- Collaborated with medical providers to troubleshoot ordering issues, connecting patients to care

### Jennifer Vuong, Health Promotion, Current MPH Student



- Served as the Resource Unit Lead in the Planning Section, helping to coordinate Mpox response
- Enabled Mpox team startup by developing onboarding materials and distributing to incoming staff
- Tracked the weekly developments in OHA's response to Mpox
- When emergency response had passed, helped evaluate the program and message demobilization

## Meet Dr. Eric Hall

*Dr. Eric Hall, PhD, an infectious disease epidemiologist, joined our leadership team in August of 2022. Dr. Hall is an Assistant Professor at OHSU-PSU SPH. He brings international public health practice experience from his time as a Peace Corps volunteer and has partnered with CDC and several state health departments to advance ongoing public health practice efforts. As a part of the Public Health Practice Team, Dr. Hall assists with supervising student workers in the field and liaises with external partners to ensure programmatic alignment in our PH practice work.*



## PHPT Team Member Accomplishments

Taurica Salmon (MPH Epi, 2021) was awarded an APHA/Kaiser Permanente Community Health Fellowship. During this fellowship, Taurica will be working with the Clackamas County Public Health Division. Her projects will be equity focused and include analyzing legislative bills, as well as creating trauma informed practices within the Public Health Division. Lauralee Fernandez (PhD Epi 2023) was awarded the SPH Dean's Commendation for Public Health Practice for her efforts on PHPT. She is now a Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Environmental Health (PHEP-EH) Epidemiologist on the Research, Analytics, Informatics and Data (RAID) Team. This work includes analysis that informs Climate Adaptation work and Public Health Modernization. Shabir Sarwary (PhD Epi, in progress) worked on an advanced research project with the Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System program at OHA. While there, he summarized existing trauma and NEMSQA performance measures and wrote code in R to operationalize each metric such as those to assess over and under-triage rates, hypoglycemia, seizure, and stroke quality measures.

## 2022 in Numbers:

- We hired **8** new SPH graduate students to support public health practice work, and had **15** team members overall throughout the year.
- Our student and faculty teams supported **6** overall teams at OHA, including **2** new ones.
- The Commonwealth Fund's definitive state health system scorecard ranked Oregon among the **Top 5** among all states for COVID-19 response.
- Our team's expertise was augmented by the addition of **2** new faculty team members.

## Team Member Highlight: Kate Hultberg

For 8 months, Kate worked as a Public Health Preparedness Planner with OHA's Health Security, Preparedness and Response (HSPR) program. This team helps plan the state's public health response to all manners of threats, from annual challenges (eg, heatwaves) to one-time catastrophic events such as earthquakes and pandemics. She assisted with a variety of tasks and projects including:

- *A health care coalition plan for catastrophic earthquake response.* This plan evaluates how various health care sectors will coordinate to deliver health care for the first 2 weeks following a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.
- *A post-earthquake 'Continuity of Care' project.* Identified resiliency efforts that could be undertaken to support organizations that serve the most medically fragile, in addition to recovery planning efforts to support getting patients back to their regular medical homes.



*"HSPR has allowed me to really hone in on my niche within public health and epidemiology. I had a very clear idea of what I wanted to do next because of this job, and am grateful that I was able to use my HSPR connections to expand my network and find my Practice Experience site that way versus reaching out blindly. The professional network I have created through HSPR has been invaluable and I expect it to take me far past graduation. Additionally, I've gotten really useful insight into how things work at the state and federal levels, which operate differently than I expected! Things are much more complicated than they appear and I have a newfound appreciation for government work."*

## Looking to the Future

With 2022 behind us, some public health threats appear to be contained (eg Mpox), while we are still monitoring others (eg congenital syphilis, extreme weather events). We on the Public Health Practice Team will continue coordinating with public health officials at OHA and across the state and region to track and respond to public health threats in 2023 and beyond.

Interested in partnering with us? Email us at [phpt@ohsu.edu](mailto:phpt@ohsu.edu) or contact Anne Arthur, PHPT Project Manager, at [arthura@ohsu.edu](mailto:arthura@ohsu.edu).