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Policy, Practices
and Partners"

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Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health to Assess Public Health Workforce Training

The School of Rural Public Health (SRPH) at Texas A&M Health Science Center, as a member of the Texas Public Health Training Center (TPHTC) collaborative and in partnership with the USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness at the SRPH, plans to conduct a training assessment for the public health workforce to update the previous assessment conducted in 2001. Assessing and prioritizing the training needs of the Texas public health workforce will ensure appropriate training activities are provided to enhance the knowledge and skills of the public health workforce.

The training assessment is scheduled to be available online beginning early spring 2008. If you are contacted, we encourage you to take a few minutes to complete this assessment. Your responses will help us improve our training programs to better meet your training needs.

Once the results are compiled, the SRPH will provide a summary of the results in the TPHTC Newsletter and continue to work with the TPHTC to develop and provide training activities that coordinate with the findings of the training assessment. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sherry Falgout, MPH

Manager, Public Health Practice Programs
Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health

Getting the Lard Out...

Carol Galeener, PhD

The University of Texas School of Public Health

Fat makes so many of our dietary "sinful pleasures" taste good – cookies, cakes, bread, pizza dough, snacks, fried food. We know that some dietary fat is necessary to facilitate absorption of vitamins and provide calories. Adequate fat is particularly important for infants and toddlers under two years of age who, pound for pound, need more calories and nutrients. Some fats, the omega-3 fatty acids found in certain fish, are even thought to be good for heart health. Other fats, saturated and *trans* fats, are downright deadly over time. In particular, *trans* fatty acids (TFA) have no redeeming dietary value – your body simply doesn't need them – and *trans* fat is considered a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

TFA is found naturally-occurring in ruminant meats and dairy products, as well as in a few plants. They are also found in foods that contain or are prepared in partially hydrogenated oils or fat (artificial TFA). Thus artificial TFA pop up in baked and fried goods, as well as in packaged precursors such as cake and hot chocolate mixes.

Hydrogenation was introduced into the food processing chain about a hundred years ago to extend product shelf life and stabilize frying oil. For a period of time in the second half of the last century TFA were even thought to be an answer to the health risks of saturated fat. In fact, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and other groups initially advocated TFA as a replacement for saturated fat.

Unfortunately, the evidence is now in and the case is far to the contrary. Like saturated fat, TFA raises LDL (bad cholesterol), but unlike saturated fat TFA also lowers HDL (good cholesterol). This double whammy to the cardiovascular system causes many experts to view TFA as particularly pernicious.

Saturated and trans fats, are downright deadly over time. In particular, trans fatty acids (TFA) have no redeeming dietary value.



How the individual can control trans fat intake...

While there is no expert consensus on whether there is an acceptable level of trans fat intake, some nutritionists raise the alarm bell at a daily total of just 2 grams for an adult -- far less than would be found in a typical donut, and by some estimates about a third of what the average American consumes in a day. Getting under the 2 gram level would require removing essentially all artificial TFA from the diet.

Consumers can avoid TFA by: limiting consumption of meats and dairy products with fat; selecting fish over meats; using tub and liquid margarine rather than butter or stick margarine; and by preparing foods using mono- and polyunsaturated oils. Carefully reading the FDA-required labels on packaged products can make a significant difference. However, under FDA regulations a product containing less than 0.5 grams TFA may be expressed as zero on the label. As a result, with a cursory review of the food

See *Lard Out*, page 3

National Center for Healthy Housing Names University of Texas School of Public Health as a Training Partner

Nancy Crider, MS, RN, CNAA

Program Manager, Texas Public Health Training Center,
University of Texas School of Public Health

The University of Texas School of Public Health, Texas Public Health Training Center (TPHTC) and the City of Houston Health and Human Services, Community & Children's Environmental Health Bureau (COH-CEH) were recently named a full training partner in the National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network. The National Center for Healthy Housing (Formerly the National Center for Lead-Safe Housing) was originally founded in 1992 to bring the public health, housing, and environmental communities together to combat the nation's epidemic of childhood lead poisoning. Today the National Center continues this important role and has expanded its mission to help to decrease children's exposure to other hazards in and around the home including biological, physical, and chemical contaminants. The Texas Center for Healthy Homes and Communities, under the leadership of Brenda Reyes, MD, MPH, Bureau Chief of COH-CEH and Nancy Crider, MS, RN, Program Manager TPHTC, is a partnership between the City of Houston and the University of Texas School of Public Health. The new Texas center provides training and technical assistance to promote practical and affordable methods to protect children and families from environ-

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Nancy Crider (TPHTC), left, and Brenda Reyes (COH-CEH), Co-directors of the Texas Center for Healthy Homes and Communities.

mental hazards in their homes that are known to cause asthma and allergies, lead poisoning, acute neuro-toxicity and cancer.

Training programs are based on the Seven Principles of a Healthy Home and include Essentials for Healthy Home Practitioners; Integrated Pest Management and Launching a Healthy Homes Initiative. Over 80 public health practitioners in the greater Houston area have been trained since July 2007. Programs scheduled for 2008 are designed for both professional public health workers and community health workers i.e. "Promotoras" who are essential to promoting and assuring a health community.

Texas Public Health Training Center at the University of North Texas Health Science Center awarded Community Health Worker Training Site Certification

The Texas Public Health Training Center at the University of North Texas Health Science Center recently pursued certification from the Texas Department of State Health Services to become a community health worker (CHW) training site. On November 9th, 2007, their certification was approved.

The Texas Public Health Training Center will provide training and continuing education for CHWs in collaboration with certified CHW trainers, the Texas Schools of Public Health (UNT Health Science Center, UT Houston, Texas A&M) and other partners, including: area hospitals (John Peter Smith Health Network, Baylor Health System), other academic institutions (Tarrant County College, Texas Women's University), the City of Fort Worth Public Health Department, and community and county organizations (Workforce Solutions for

Tarrant County, Dallas Concilio).

Community health workers are lay members of communities who work in association with local health care systems, academic institutions, health departments and community based organizations. They typically share the ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status and life experiences of the community members they serve. Their primary function is to serve as liaisons between the community and the health care system and/or resources within the community.

The TPHTC desires to provide relevant and innovative CHW training to adequately prepare CHWs to serve in diverse public health and clinical health care arenas in the community. Many have begun to recognize the value of CHWs both in cost effectiveness and cost benefit, as well as the potential benefit of the linkages created by CHWs between the health care

system and the community. We believe that CHWs are an integral part of our health care system and should be trained and compensated as such. In our fragmented system the role CHWs is becoming increasingly more valuable.

Zeida Rojas Kon, MPH

UNT-Health Science Center

The Texas Public Health Training Center (TPHTC) is a workforce development consortium of the University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston; the University of North Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health and the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center, School of Rural Public Health. TPHTC is a formal partner with the UT Center for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness. Principal funding for the Center provided through a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS).

www.txphtrainingcenter.org

The Librarian's Corner

Carolyn Medina

*Medical and Research Library
Texas Department of State Health Services*

If you are a Texas resident, did you know that you can sign up for a free weekly funding alert that will tell you about health-related grants from private, state and federal sources? Did you know that you can borrow DVDs or videos on hundreds of health-related topics and the only cost is return postage? Did you know that helpful librarians are waiting to help you find research articles you need or to answer that burning question that has been nagging at you all week? All these services are part of the Library and Information Services Program at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

The weekly funding alerts are part of the Funding Information Center, directed by Doug Jumper and assisted by Elaine Byrd. Visit their website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/fic/default.shtm to "subscribe to services" which is how you will get the weekly alerts. There is also a grants database where you can search to see the grants that were listed in past issues of the alerts. Books are available for loan on how to write grants or how to run a non-profit organization.

The DVDs or videos are part of the Audiovisual Library which contains DVDs, CD-ROMs, audiobooks and videocassettes on subjects ranging from Alzheimers to zoonosis; including topics

such as safety, food hygiene, infant and child care, breastfeeding, AIDS, aging and more. Kelli Kennedy, Elizabeth DeLeon and Frederick Troell send these materials throughout the state of Texas. You can even reserve an item up to a year in advance. See their website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/avlib/default.shtm for more details.

The Audiovisual Library now includes books, due to an expansion in 2004. The Early Childhood Intervention and Rehabilitation Library was moved to DSHS and is managed through an inter-agency contract with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. This collection includes print and audiovisual materials on children with special health care needs, assistive technology, vocational counseling, rehabilitation topics, etc. These items are also shipped throughout the state.

Last but not least is the Medical and Research Library which provides infor-

mation, books, journals, online databases and an archive of materials prepared by DSHS authors. The main strength of the collection is in public health. See the website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/library/default.shtm to see a description of the library and find a link to the catalog. You will also find bibliographies on topics of interest to the public health community such as health ministry nursing, GIS, community health workers, Hurricanes Rita and Katrina and more. Librarians Carolyn Medina and David McLellan will be happy to assist any of you in the public health community find the information you need to carry out the important mission of promoting the public's health in Texas.

You think of DSHS for immunizations and regulations; now hopefully you will also think of DSHS for these forms of library assistance: funding information, audiovisual materials and public health information.

Pandemic Flu Toolkit

A new report from Trust for America's Health finds that over half a million Americans could die and more than 2.3 million could be hospitalized if a moderately severe strain of a pandemic flu virus hits the United States. Pandemic flu will spread rapidly from person to person, and unlike natural disasters that restrict response and recovery

to a geographical area and time frame, the spread of infectious disease requires that different assumptions and time lines be considered.

The USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness, located in the Texas A&M Health Science Center – School of Rural Public Health, has

created a Pandemic Flu Toolkit that assembles the most up-to-date information and resources currently available about this topic. This interactive CD-ROM is divided into categories that address specific planning and response issues from a number of perspectives; but, it is particularly intended for the broader public health community that will be on the front-line of a Pandemic Flu response effort.

Preparing in advance through education, planning and exercising could save countless lives. We urge you to take a few minutes and familiarize yourself with some of the resources available on the CD. To request a copy of the Pandemic Flu Toolkit, contact Sherry Falgout at USACenter@srph.tamhsc.edu. And please continue to check The USA Center website at www.rural-preparedness.org for the most current information on this topic.

Kay Carpender

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www.rural-preparedness.org

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Centers for Public Health Preparedness

By reaching and teaching the public health workforce, the CPHP ensure a strong public health system when and where it is needed most.

The CDC-funded Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) are a national network of academic institutions working in collaboration with state and local public health departments and other community partners to provide life-long learning opportunities to the public health workforce, in order to handle the next public health crisis.

CPHP Education & Training Information Center

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