

PUBLIC HEALTH

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

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RANKED AS AMONG
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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Public Health newsletter. The newsletter will provide readers with a snapshot of the impact the Graduate School of Public Health is having on students, science, and our local community. As it has for nearly 40 years, the "GSPH" remains a nationally unique school



of public health because of its diverse student body, its outstanding research, and strong ties to community clinics, hospitals, voluntary health organizations, advocacy groups, and other community partners. Foremost among these is the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency with whom we have joined forces to improve the health of all San Diegans. The newsletter will also provide you with events that you can join us at. As you all know, this is an important time for the field of Public Health and our vision is continue to impact the field through training, research, and collaboration.

Hala Madanat, PhD
Director | SDSU Graduate School of Public Health

SDSU Awarded NSF Grant for Evaluation of Decentralized Water Reuse Systems

The National Science Foundation has awarded San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health and College of Engineering a \$300,000 grant to support research in Decentralized Waste Water Treatment Systems (DEWATS). The principal investigators are Drs. Nathan Dodder and Eunha Hoh of the Graduate School of Public Health and Dr. Natalie Mladenov of the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering. The project aims to evaluate the ability of these small-scale systems to remove chemical contaminants.

The wastewater infrastructure in the US and many other developed countries is largely centralized. Additionally, systems may fail as they reach the end of their design life. As an alternative to replacing failing sewer pipes, DEWATS can provide a level of treatment needed for non-potable water uses such as landscape irrigation, and, coupled to membrane or other advance treatment technologies, may ultimately be used for potable reuse. The optimization of treatment performance through contaminant monitoring during treatment will enable DEWATS to achieve competitive removals efficiencies and gain greater acceptability for potable and non-potable water reuse applications.

The research will provide an unprecedented evaluation of the transformation processes of contaminants. It will also investigate how photolysis, which is critical in pond or wetland treatment systems that tend to follow anaerobic treatment, contributes to contaminant removal and transformation. The impact of this work will be far reaching for the water reuse field because this comprehensive evaluation of contaminants in small-scale membrane treatment systems will inform the growing decentralized movement in the US and abroad. For outreach, the research team will develop a hands-on activity focused on water reuse for the “We are STEM” SDSU Enrichment Program.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY



Dr. Tianying Wu is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology. She is a molecular and nutritional epidemiologist and is interested in integrating biological and epidemiologic approaches to study etiological factors of prostate cancer and chronic diseases.



Dr. Humberto Parada is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology. He is an integrative cancer epidemiologist specializing in the epidemiology of breast cancer. His research aims to identify environmental, behavioral, and genetic factors that influence the development and progression of breast cancer.



Dr. Eyal Oren is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology interested in behavioral aspects of infectious disease. He focuses on multidisciplinary, community-engaged approaches to addressing population health disparities.



Dr. Brandy Lipton is an Assistant Professor of Health Management. Her research seeks to understand the connections between health care policies and both health and economic outcomes. Her research leverages policy variation at the state level, focusing on Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program policies.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



WHY SDSU GSPH?

I was a practicing dentist in India and working with many patients I started to gain interest in the public health field. Wanting to gain more knowledge to better help patients, I decided to pursue an MPH degree. SDSU seemed to be a diverse campus with students of different native origins, which was important to me. This and SDSU's MPH curriculum was a positive quality that led me to choose SDSU GSPH. Arriving to the U.S. I found San Diego and the SDSU campus very beautiful, plus it had all the resources a student might need.

— *Mounika Merugu, 1st Year*

MPH Program, Health Promotion and Behavioral Science



I entered the doctoral program uncertain of my specific area of interest. Over the last four years, with the guidance of my mentors, I have honed my research interests in the area of sexual cyber violence. I have taken a lead on conducting research in a relatively new topic area and have presented my findings in multiple venues, including international conferences and research organizations. My experience within the doctoral program and specifically work on sexual cyber violence has led me to pursue my own grant funding and brand myself as a sexual cyber violence researcher.

— *Marissa Salazar, 4th Year*

PHD Program, Global Health

STATISTICS

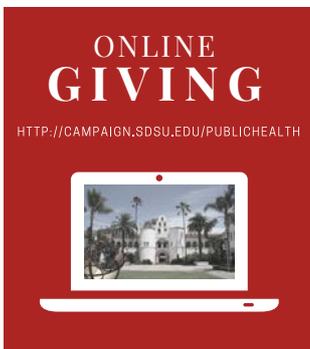
We are proud to announce that out of 178 nationally accredited MPH programs, our MPH program was ranked 33rd by College Choice. This ranking is an important recognition of our faculty members' dedication to providing an outstanding MPH experience to students.

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SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Alumni Spotlights

IRMA COTA
&
JUSTINE KOZO



Irma Cota-President and CEO of North County Health Services

Irma Cota graduated from SDSU GSPH program in 1976. While learning Cota found immediate opportunities to put her learning into practice at SDSU, working in the field and applying her knowledge and skills. She found her experience at SDSU extremely helpful in creating her foundation in the field of Public Health.

Since 1997 Cota has been the President and CEO of North County Health Services (NCHS), a non-profit community health care organization providing health care in the North Region of San Diego County. Cota currently oversees 13 health centers and a number of community outreach programs and services. She oversees a budget of \$72 million and a staff of more than 760. As a CEO visioning and strategic planning has been Cota's favorite parts at NCHS. "When you lead with a mission and vision you are able to articulate more clearly to your team and work with them to help draft a strategic plan to move NCHS's goals forward successfully." Seeing the improved health outcomes after implementation of strategies inspires her and the team.

After 21 years of being CEO and 40 years of a health career, Cota has announced her retirement from NCHS. Feeling fortunate to have the opportunity to lead in the public health field and to work with individuals who are committed and willing to making a difference in people's lives, Cota is now ready to unplug. After a rewarding career she looks forward to staying healthy, exercising, and enjoying nature. She will make time to give back to the community in a meaningful way.



Justine Koza-Chief Office of Border Health, Public Health Services County of San Diego



Justine Koza graduated from SDSU's MPH program in 2006. Before her start in the program, Koza was passionately working at SDSU Foundation in 2003 on research projects that examined the relationship between built environment and physical activity patterns. Dr. Jim Sallis at the time was the principal investigator of these projects and served as an inspiring mentor to Koza.

Since 2012 Koza has been acting as chief of the Office of Border Health for the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Koza's recent work has been to relay public health emergency and natural disaster information in San Diego—"a diverse region, with over 100 languages spoken across the County and a large refugee resettlement destination"—and furthermore developing a California border health collaborative strategy to improve the health of communities along the U.S.-México border.

Reflecting on her education at SDSU and her current position, Koza noted that one of the greatest aspects of the MPH program was establishing connections with professors, fellow students, and community partners. Practical experience was important in her career path, "like the VIIDAI program, [it] gave me the unique and invaluable opportunity to develop and implement an intervention with a community in Baja California. That experience, as well as a Health Communications class project completely shaped my career path." Her message to graduate students entering the public health field is to "never underestimate the importance of professionalism and relationship building...[and] written expression is an important skill and one that requires constant practice...take time to cultivate this skill."

EVENTS

Professional Career
Development Seminar
Part #2

Tuesday, December 5,
7pm-9pm
Hardy Tower-Room 140

Nick Macchione, the
Deputy Chief
Administrative Officer
and Director of the
Health and Human
Services Agency for the
County of San Diego
will conduct a
professional
development series.
This workshop will
focus on interview skills