



CENTER *for* CARDIOVASCULAR RISKS RESEARCH

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

HEART HEALTH IN APPALACHIA

A Quarterly Newsletter



Welcome to the first edition of "Heart Health in Appalachia", a quarterly newsletter exploring the **latest research and community health topics in South-Central Appalachia** published by the Center for Cardiovascular Risks Research at East Tennessee State University and our community partners.

In this first newsletter, we'll start by telling you [who we are](#), [what we do](#) and [how you can get involved](#).

We hope you enjoy the updates and look forward to hearing your input on topics, themes and issues we should explore. Please send your comments, suggestions and ideas to CCRR@etsu.edu or by mail to:

CCRR

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Johnson City, TN 37604

<https://www.etsu.edu/cph/cardiovascular-risks-research/>

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Spotlight: People at CCRR



KariLynn Dowling-McClay, PharmD, MPH, BCACP

Dr. KariLynn Dowling-McClay always knew she wanted to work in healthcare. Growing up in small-town Montana, her father modeled what a caring pharmacist could do for a community, so it was only logical for her to get her PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) at the University of Montana. Before a Fellowship and a Master of Public Health program brought her to East Tennessee State University, she completed her residency in Bangor, Maine. Her work there focused on safe prescribing of pain medicine and naloxone availability during the opioid crisis that was ravaging the local community. As someone who values both a strong community culture and the outdoors (walking, biking), she appreciates the many similarities between Montana and the Tri-Cities region.

Her current role as an Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice at ETSU's Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy allows her to combine her interests in community-based research, education and improving patient care.

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SUCCESS STORY

Bill SB 2219/HB2705: A win for smoke-free Tennessee



In an impressive example of how research and persistent advocacy can make a difference in people's everyday quality of life, an interprofessional group of several CCRR members representing ETSU's College of Public Health and the College of Business and Technology published a white paper titled "An Economic Assessment of Smokefree Policies in Tennessee". This white paper informed the discussion and recent passage of the bill SB 2219/HB 2705 in the Tennessee legislature.

In fact, the bill essentially adopts the policies listed in the white paper and removes "preemption" – state law taking precedence over local regulations – for certain tobacco regulations. This is a major victory for the health of Tennesseans. Before the new bill took effect on July 1, smoking was prohibited in restaurants, but permitted in "age-restricted venues" such as bars. With this legislative change, local governments now have the power to regulate and prohibit smoking and vaping in these venues, protecting not only the health of patrons, but also of workers such as servers, cooks, musicians and others working in these settings.

CCRR Director Dr. Hadii Mamudu has long advocated for this change. "This is a major policy change in tobacco control because until this law, Tennessee was one of the few remaining states with explicit preemption of tobacco regulation under a law enacted in 1994-95," Mamudu said. He also noted that removing preemption is a key objective in the "Healthy People 2030" program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

"Because this is a Healthy People 2030 objective, this policy change has national implications, and it is an honor for our Public Health and Business and Technology faculty to have been part of the story," he said.

"This is an exciting moment, as it shows the reward of staying persistent."

- Hadii M. Mamudu, PhD, Professor of Public Health, CCRR Director

Dr. Jon Smith and Dr. Prasun Bhattacharjee of the College of Business and Technology state, "It is a major achievement when economic theory can pave the path for policy changes that have important implications for community health."

"Our college is proud of Dr. Mamudu and his team for their continual efforts to improve the health of the people of Tennessee and the nation in the realm of tobacco policy," said Dr. Randy Wykoff, dean of the ETSU College of Public Health.

Article and links:

<https://www.etsu.edu/etsu-news/2022/07-july/tobacco-policy.php>

Dr. Dowling-McClay, cont'd.

She is especially interested in the social science aspect of pharmacy, including how pharmacists take care of people, the decisions they make in their jobs, how people in the general population view pharmacists (e.g. as healthcare providers).

KariLynn describes her initial experience at CCRR during the final stages of a grant application as invaluable for a researcher, noting that "grant writing is an art form". One of the things she values most about CCRR is its unique focus on interprofessional collaboration. "I've been on many teams with other healthcare providers, but to be able to get on a call and have a computer scientist, an economist or someone who specializes in Appalachian studies, and not just learning from them, but actually collaborating with them is really powerful. It helps you to get outside of your own thought bubble that you get into when you're mostly interacting with people in your own department or group." As an affiliate faculty member of CCRR, she aims to ensure the pharmacy-based aspects of the work (e.g. the importance of immunizations for those with chronic conditions).

As a community pharmacist, she envisages pharmacists as playing a key role in prevention, in fine-tuning the ideal combination of medications for a patient's needs and in ensuring that patients take their medication exactly as prescribed.

In addition to her affiliation with CCRR, KariLynn is also an active contributor to the Tennessee Heart Health Network, which provides strategies, ideas and tools for bringing pharmacists into primary care practices. In this setting, they can help improve health outcomes by providing services such as advising patients on how to take new medication, better manage their condition and correctly measure their blood pressure.

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HEART-HEALTHY RECIPE

A healthy heart begins with a healthy lifestyle. Here's a delicious, heart-healthy recipe - that's also budget-friendly! - to get you started!

This edition's recipe is brought to you courtesy of graduate students in the "Appalachian Foodways" class taught by CCRR'S beloved Professor Fletcher!

"Beans and Taters"



Ingredients

Green beans (2 lbs), washed and broken into thirds
New potatoes (5-6 lbs), cut into thirds
Unsalted chicken stock (2-3 boxes)
Pepper (1 tsp)

Preparation

Place beans in Dutch oven and cover with chicken stock.
Start at high heat, turn down to medium heat when boiling.
After 1 hour, add potatoes and pepper.
Add more stock as needed as it cooks down.
Cook until tender.
Serve with garden-fresh tomatoes.

Enjoy!

Benefits

tasty - low-calorie - inexpensive - filling - salt-free

Dr. Dowling-McClay, cont'd.

"Having a medication expert as part of the full team is really beneficial to helping people get healthy and stay healthy", she explains. Since pharmacists work in a product-driven field, she notes that most people don't know that they are actually extensively trained in prevention. "In the US, we are not so good at prevention, we're better at responding to disease", she notes. Ideally, she would like to see pharmacists play less of a transactional and more of a preventive role and be fully integrated into the patient care team. To that end, her research and advocacy work is focused on gaining recognition for pharmacists as healthcare providers.

Our latest research



Here at CCRR, one of our goals is to move the needle on heart health in Appalachia through research. Current projects include:

Research:

AHRQ: Tennessee Heart Health Network: Implementing Patient-Centered Practices in Primary Care to Improve Cardiovascular Health. Tennessee Heart Health Network

Grants: NIH: Prevention and Vaccine Uptake among Individuals with Chronic Diseases in a Rural Underserved Region

Publications: An Economic Assessment of Smoke-Free Policies in Tennessee: A White Paper

COMMUNITY MATTERS

In this section, we highlight some of our community partners and share ways you can get involved!

Join our Community Advisory Council (CAC)!



We rely on community volunteers willing to share their experience and knowledge of the area to identify issues affecting heart health in the area and provide oversight for our research activities.

Why you should join

Heart disease affects the lives of many people, but we may be able to reduce the risk of disease and premature deaths. Early identification and treatment of risk factors is shown to significantly improve patient outcomes. We need your help to identify the reasons people in our region are more likely to experience heart disease so that we can find solutions to improve our community's health

What you can do

1. Participate in monthly/quarterly meetings
2. Share your experience and knowledge of heart disease
3. Provide feedback about our research
4. Become a stronger advocate for heart health
5. Help improve heart health care for everyone in our region

How to participate

Email us with your name and your place of residence at CCRR@etsu.edu

Get in touch! Email us at CCRR@etsu.edu

Get involved!

COVID-19 Public Health Survey 2022 - your thoughts matter!

Would you like to participate in a current research project? We are studying COVID-19 prevention, testing and vaccines and want to hear from:

- those living with a chronic disease (heart disease, cancer, lung disease, diabetes and kidney disease)
- healthcare providers
- community members
- anyone else interested in this research

Click here to fill out our survey:

<https://etsuredcap.etsu.edu/surveys/?s=4RD97PTCWJXPDWK9>

Community Partner Spotlight:



The Tennessee Heart Health Network is a network of primary care providers, health systems, and academic centers committed to identifying, developing, and implementing patient-centered approaches to improve quality of care and outcomes for Tennesseans with heart disease. This network includes leading Tennessee health plans, health professional organizations, and advocacy organizations. It not only helps patients, but also studies how healthcare organizations can work together to improve cardiovascular outcomes.

Read more about them at thearthealth.org