



EDITORIAL

Eight Months and Counting

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Welcome to the latest issue of the *Ohio Journal of Public Health (OJPH)*. Two years ago, we published our first issue of the Journal and I am thrilled that we continue to receive high-quality submissions on research, education, and practice from scholars, students, and public health practitioners from all over Ohio. This issue features an Op-Ed that promotes inclusive community needs assessments, two research articles and a brief on important public health issues in Ohio, two public health education papers that describe practices for public health students and professionals, and a public health practice paper that describes a rapid volunteer-based response to meet a critical need in the community.

The Journal makes me proud to be a public health researcher and teacher in Ohio, but at the same time I continue to feel sadness and uncertainty because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I am writing this Editorial on October 24, we have experienced another record day for case reports in Ohio. Yesterday's count was the previous record, which surpassed the record that was set the day before. The trends are worrisome as we move into our ninth month since restrictions began to flatten the curve of coronavirus infections in Ohio. We have become accustomed to working, going to school, engaging with family and friends, and even exercising online. Unfortunately, given these recent trends in infections and the predictions that it will be months before we have a vaccine that is available for the public, we will continue to remain in this state of uncertainty.

While 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges to our field, we have seen many public health professionals rise to meet these challenges and work around the clock to keep us safe. In addition to public health workers, we have observed volunteers spring into action. As one example, I will highlight the public health practice paper in this issue by Snyder, Weisel and Chatfield that describes the organization called *People Protecting Each-other Sustainably (PPEs)*. The PPEs organization was launched in March 2020 to meet the increasing need for face masks for first responders during the initial weeks of the pandemic. Due to their quick action, they were able to mobilize a large group of volunteers who donated fabric and their skills at cutting fabric and sewing. In the article, Snyder et al describe the many benefits that this type of program can have at the community level.

The current issue of the Journal also features two research articles and one research brief. In one paper, Evans and colleagues explore how pregnant women perceive conversations with providers during prenatal care visits. Results from this study could be used to improve patient-provider communication during these visits. In the second research article, Moussa and colleagues present the results of a retrospective analysis of data on opioid administration in the emergency department, with a goal on examining changes after the Ohio Opioid Prescribing Guidelines were created in April 2012. They report that in their health care system, all opioid prescriptions decreased in the emergency department over time, but morphine and fentanyl prescriptions increased in some age groups. Further work is suggested in order to meet the goals of the Guidelines. The research brief in this issue, by Orellana and colleagues, presents a novel and efficient sampling strategy to test ambulances for MRSA, a bacterium which poses an occupational risk to first



responders and a risk to people who are being transported. Their work has implications for testing not only MRSA but other contaminants as well.

Two public health education papers are included in this issue of the Journal. In one, Chatfield describes the process and outcomes of her work to incorporate qualitative research methods into the MPH curriculum at Kent State University. Through this novel approach, students learn how qualitative methods are used in six core areas of public health. The second public health education piece, by Kingsbury, Stefanak, and Slenkovich, describes the process that Kent State University used to develop continuing education content for members of local boards of health. The paper details the assessment that was conducted to determine the educational needs of the board members, provides an overview of the modules and how they will be delivered, and presents the plan for evaluation.

I would like to acknowledge our two new cover designers: Whitley Baxter and Gad Owusu. Whitney and Gad are undergraduate students in the Department of Design at The Ohio State University. Working under the direction of Professor Paul Nini, they created the beautiful cover image that features themes contained in several papers in this issue. Our former cover designer, Kevin Murray, graduated from the program in Design a couple of years ago. I appreciate the hard work Kevin put into the cover designs for our first four issues.

Let me close with a note about the upcoming special issue on *Racism as a Public Health Crisis*. As you know from my last editorial, we put out a call for papers for this special issue. The issue will appear by the end of December and it will contain important work from scholars and public health practitioners from all over Ohio.