



Texas Association of City & County Health Officials

Annual Public Health Conference

April 8th – 10th, 2026

Austin, Texas

Downright Austin – Marriott Hotel

“Texas Public Health Sustainability = Infrastructure & Innovation”

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

11:30am	Foyer 3 rd Floor	Welcome Conference Attendees – <i>Registration Open</i>
1:00pm		<u>Public Health Development Sessions</u>
	Capitol View Terrace North 3 rd Floor	<u>Davonna Koebrick, LMSW, RS</u> - Food Safety Officer - Program Supervisor/DSHS Food-Related Illness, Outbreak and Hazard Response: Introduction to the Texas Rapid Response Team
	Bickler 4 th Floor	<u>Catherine Troisi, PhD, MS</u> – Professor/UTHealth Houston School of Public Health Best Practices for Public Health Workforce Development
	Capitol View Terrace South 3 rd Floor	<u>Ken Janda, BA, JD</u> – Principal/WildBlue Health Solutions, LLC Navigating the Health Plan Landscape in Texas: Medicaid Managed Care, Medicare, Employers, and the ACA Marketplace
	Tannehill 4 th Floor	<u>Ross Shergog, PhD</u> – Professor/UTHealth School of Public Health Online Decision Support to Implement Evidence-Based HPV Vaccination Strategies in Texas Safety-Net Pediatric Clinics: Impact on HPV, MCV, and Tdap Initiation
	Barton 4 th Floor	<u>Alex Reed LMSW, MPH, CPH</u> - Division Manager – Community Health /Denton County Public Health; <u>Chris Dunkin</u>- Director/FindHelp From Search to Support: Enhancing Access with Closed-Loop Referrals



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		<u>Public Health Development Sessions</u>
2:15pm	Capitol View Terrace South 3 rd floor	<p><u>Judy Branham</u> - Manager Medical and Dental Benefits Policy Medicaid - CHIP Services/Texas Health & Human Services Commission</p> <p>Introduction to Texas Medicaid and CHIP and Provider Enrollment</p>
	Bickler 4 th Floor	<p><u>Stephanie McCoy, MEd</u> – Grant Evaluator/City of El Paso Department of Public Health</p> <p>Employee Voice as Infrastructure: A Data-Driven Approach to Workforce Sustainability</p>
	Tannehill 4 th Floor	<p><u>Aaron Davis, MPA MBA</u> – Director, Center for Public Health Initiatives/Wichita State University</p> <p>Smarter, Faster, Better: Using Generative AI to Streamline Your Daily Work</p>
	Capitol View Terrace North 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Shelby Flores-Thorpe, PhD, MEd</u> - Postdoctoral Fellow/ UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin, NCI Cancer Control Research Training Program</p> <p>Developing and Using Resource Reports to Support Public Health Infrastructure and Support Evidence-Informed Policymaking</p>
	Barton 4 th Floor	<p><u>Adrian Escajeda, BA</u> - Public Information & Marketing Manager/Austin Public Health</p> <p>With Great Power, Comes the Power to Empower Fighting Media Fatigue</p>
	Bonnell 4 th Floor	<p><u>Jessica Hyde, MS, CHES</u> – Director - Public Health Partner Advancement/DSHS</p> <p>Strengthening the Public Health Workforce Through Academic Public Health Partnerships</p>
		<u>Public Health Development Sessions</u>
3:30pm	Bonnell 4 th Floor	<p><u>Leah Whigham, PhD</u> – Professor/UT Health School of Public Health</p> <p>Primary Care Obesity Management Training-to-Practice (T2P) Program</p>



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	Barton 4 th Floor	<p>Panel: <u>Jennifer Deegan</u> <i>Vice President - Health Policy and Systems Strategy/UT Health School of Public Health, <u>Rosalia Guerrero</u>, UTH and <u>Amy McGuire</u>, BCM</i></p> <p>Building Trust in Wastewater Data: Governance, Access, and Public Health Practice</p>
	Bickler 4 th Floor	<p><u>Sara Mendez, DrPH, MPH</u> – <i>Assistant Director - Public Health Practice/Texas A&M School of Public Health</i></p> <p>Building the Pipeline: Cultivating the Future Public Health Workforce Through Youth Engagement</p>
	Tannehill 4 th Floor	<p><u>Deanna M. Hoelscher, PhD, RDN</u> - <i>Regional Dean and John P. McGovern Professor of Health Promotion/ UTHealth School of Public Health</i></p> <p>Assessing Diet and Physical Activity in Texas Children: Use of Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (Texas SPAN) Resources and Data</p>
	Capitol View Terrace North 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Stephen Kelder, PhD, MPH</u> – <i>Professor of Epidemiology/UTHealth Houston School of Public Health</i></p> <p>CATCH: Pre-K to High School Preventive Health Programs – Early roots in Texas to International Dissemination</p>
	Capitol View Terrace South 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Kara Hill, DHCA, MHA, BSSW</u> - <i>Consultant/Wild Blue Health Solutions, LLC.</i></p> <p>Public Health and Payment: How Medicare, Medicaid, and Quality Metrics Can Support Local Health Departments</p>
Have A Wonderful Evening – <i>Dinner On Your Own</i>		



Thursday, April 9, 2026

7:00am	Capitol View Terrace 3 rd Floor	<u>Breakfast</u>
7:30am	Foyer 3 rd Floor	Welcome Conference Attendees - Registration Open
		<u>Conference Opening Remarks</u>
8:30am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Adrienne Sturup, MPA</u> – Director/Austin Public Health - TACCHO President
		<u>National Public Health Perspective</u>
9:00am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Lori Freeman, MBA</u> - CEO/National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) <u>Damon Chaplin, MBA</u> – Director/Local Public Health Initiatives Massachusetts Dept of Public Health – NACCHO President
		<u>State Public Health Perspective</u>
	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Jennifer Shuford, MD, MPH</u> - Commissioner/Texas Department of State Health Services Texas Public Health: Working Today for a Stronger Tomorrow
10:15am	Foyer 3 rd Floor	<u>Break</u>
		<u>Local Health Department Sharing Session</u>
10:30am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	1) <u>Scott Jeansonne, MELP</u> – Director Environmental Public Health/Harris County Public Health New Texas Legislation in Food Safety/Environmental Public Health



		<p>2) <u>LaNiece Blue, BS</u> – <i>Bureau Chief Immunizations/ Houston Health Department</i></p> <p>Trust is the infrastructure: A Nurse-Led Model for Vaccination Access During Fiscal Austerity</p> <p>3) <u>Connie McCracken, BA</u> – <i>Marketing Representative & Language Access Lead/Austin Public Health</i></p> <p>The Messaging Enchilada – Recipe for a Sustainable Public Health Communications Infrastructure</p>
12:00pm	Capitol View Terrace 3 rd Floor	<u>Lunch</u>
		<u>TACCHO 2026 Public Health Awards</u>
<u>Plenary Session 1</u>		
1:30pm	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Aaron Davis, MPA MBA</u> – <i>Director - Center for Public Health Initiatives/Wichita State University</i></p> <p>AI in Public Health: From Policy to Practice in Texas and Beyond</p>
1:30pm		<u>Optional - Public Health Development Sessions</u>
	Tannehill 4 th Floor	<p>1) <u>Courtney Standlee, BS, MPH, PhD</u> – <i>Director of Mosquito and Vector Control Division/Harris County Public</i></p> <p>Sixty Years, One Mission: Protecting Harris County from Vector-Borne Disease</p>
	Bickler 4 th Floor	<p>2) <u>Christine Reyes, CHW, MBA, PhD-C</u> - <i>Special Project Manager/Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District</i></p> <p>Coordinating the Front Line: Public Health Leadership in Opioid Prevention and Response</p>
	Bonnell 4 th Floor	<p>3) <u>Rachel Herrera, BS</u> – <i>Mental Health Navigator/Denton County Public Health</i></p> <p>One Warm Handoff Away: A Replicable Model for Health Department-Led Mental Health Navigation</p>



2:45pm	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Local Health Department Sharing Session</u>
		<p>1) <u>Kelsey Espinoza, MSW</u> – <i>Case Manager/Dallas County Health and Human Services</i> A Community-Based EMS–Social Work Model</p> <p>2) <u>Jen Samp, BA</u> – <i>Public Information & Marketing Manager/Austin Public Health</i> Move Your Way: Sustaining Community Health Campaigns When Funding Isn't Fun</p> <p>3) <u>Becci Hannigan, RN, MSN, Ed</u> – <i>Chief Nurse of Immunizations/Houston Health Department</i> From Hesitancy to High Performance: The Case for Immunization Provider Certification</p>
		<u>Optional – Public Health Development Session</u>
3:00pm	Tannehill 4 th Floor	<p><u>AAron Davis, MPA, MBA</u> – <i>Director - Center for Public Health Initiatives/Wichita State University</i> Write Grants, Not Garbage: Using AI to Elevate Your Applications (Without Getting Disqualified)</p>
5:15pm – 7:15pm	Foyer 3 rd Floor	TACCHO Public Health Conference Exhibitor Review & Networking Event
<i>Join us for beverages and gourmet snacks in the Lobby</i>		



Friday, April 10, 2026

7:30am	Terrace 3 rd Floor	<u>Breakfast</u>
8:30am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Conference Recap and Poster Awards</u>
	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<u>Local Health Department Sharing Sessions</u>
9:15am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<p>1) <u>Terrence Ates, MEd</u> – <i>Public Information Officer - Director Community Wellness/ Northeast Texas Public Health District</i></p> <p>NET Health + TXPAN + THBB = Improved Early Childhood Health Outcomes</p> <p>2) <u>Natalie Goodnow, MFA</u> – <i>Senior Training Specialist/Austin Public Health</i></p> <p>The Public Health Academy: Innovative Approaches to Sustain Crucial Conversations</p> <p>3) <u>Makalya Emmons, BSN</u> – <i>Community Health Nurse/Chambers County Public Health</i></p> <p>Reality Check: Building Community by Addressing Social Determinants of Health in High School Seniors</p>
		<u>Plenary Session 2</u>
10:15am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Umair Shah, MD, MPH</u> - <i>Chief Medical Officer/Jaan Health; Founder/Rickshaw Health; former Washington State Secretary of Health</i></p> <p>Hope, Health, and Tech: Where We Are Today</p>
10:50am	Capitol Ballroom 3 rd Floor	<p><u>Meredith Suntich</u> - <i>Senior Vice President and Senior Partner - Texas Corporate Affairs/Fleishman Hilliard</i></p> <p>360° Readiness: Communications Strategies for Crisis-Ready Public Health Officials</p>
Noon		<u>Conference Ends</u>
Thank You For Your Dedicated Public Health Service!		