Greetings TSOPHE Members!

I am excited and honored to serve in the role of your TSOPHE 2019 president. I am grateful to work with board members who are so dedicated and passionate towards the promotion of health education in the state of Texas. Together we will continue to fulfill TSOPHE’s mission by advocating for the profession and providing stewardship for the discipline of public health education. In 2018, TSOPHE continued its strides towards the advancement of health education through our “2018 Webinar Series: Understanding and Addressing Health Equity in Texas”, which featured eight webinars, including the SOPHE National President Dr. Angela Mickalide. TSOPHE also hosted a virtual National Health Education Week (NHEW) featuring webinars on advocacy, CHES/MCHES testing and community health campaigning. TSOPHE also partnered with Texas Southern University and Prairie View A&M University to deliver CHES seminars to undergraduate students majoring in health education.

In 2019, we will continue to provide such webinar opportunities to our membership to encourage involvement with in TSOPHE. Our goal is to utilize membership to increase health education networking, increase the number of partnerships with in the community to provide CHES/MCHES continuing education and foster relationships with health agencies and academic institutions across the state. TSOPHE will also host our conference in October 2019, in partnership with MD Anderson Health Disparities Department in Houston. This year’s conference will cater to students and professionals, focusing on key public health disparities and health education issues in the state of Texas, and increasing opportunities for growth within the profession. On behalf of the TSOPHE Board, we encourage you to be involved with TSOPHE through its chapter committees. Keep an eye out for all committee related corresponences and let us know if you are interested in serving in any committee. We are excited about the upcoming year and look forward to working with you to advance and advocate for health education throughout Texas!

Best,

Brittny Bratcher - Rasmus, MS, CHES®
TSOPHE President
Meet the 2019 TSOPHE Executive Board

**President - Brittny Bratcher-Rasmus, MS, CHES**

Brittny Bratcher-Rasmus, a native of Missouri City Texas, is a passionate health educator with more than six years’ experience in the health education and wellness field. She has dedicated herself to improving population health with an emphasis on minority populations and corporate wellness operations. As a proud Lamar University Alumni, she holds a Bachelor’s degree in Community Health and a Master’s Degree in Heath Promotion. She is also an active Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). Currently, Brittny is an Outreach Specialist at Kepro covering the state of Texas working under a five-year contract awarded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services specializing in healthcare services for Medicare Beneficiaries. Mrs. Bratcher-Rasmus is also an Adjunct Faculty member at Texas Southern University where she teaches courses in the Health and Kinesiology Department. Brittny is also a doctoral candidate in the School of Health Promotion Health Studies program at Texas Woman’s University, where she is currently working on her dissertation proposal.

**Past-President - Marym Lakhani, MPH**

Marym Lakhani has finished her Masters of Public Health degree in 2016 from Des Moines University - College of Osteopathic Medicine and her Bachelors of Science degree in 2012 from Stephen F. Austin State University in Cellular and Molecular Biology. Marym is currently employed by Stephen F. Austin State University as a “Visiting Lecturer”. In the past, Marym has worked in the field of program/project evaluation, communicable diseases health education, disease surveillance and program management. Marym is a member of Texas Public Health Association (TPHA), American Public Health Association (APHA) and Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE). Marym’s interest in public health lies in the field of health promotion and community outreach. As part of the TOPHE, Marym wants to connect with people who are interested in creating public health learning, service and networking opportunities for other fellow Texans. Marym Lives her life by the saying “The greatest medicine of all is to teach people how not to need it”.

**President-Elect - Alma G. Ochoa-Del Toro, MPH, CHES®**

Alma Ochoa-Del Toro obtained a B.S. in Public Health from Rutgers University in 2012 and an MPH in Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences from the UTHealth School of Public Health - Austin in 2015. Alma recently returned to her home of the Rio Grande Valley to bring her experience to the community where she grew up. She currently works as a Research Coordinator for the UTHealth School of Public Health in Brownsville as part of the Community - Wide Campaign known as Tu Salud ¡Si Cuenta!. Alma is an active Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) and is in her first year of the Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences DrPH program at the UTHealth School of Public Health in Brownsville. She looks forward to continue serving with the TSOPHE board in 2019 and beyond!

**Secretary - Haley Delgado**

Haley Delgado is a grad student in the Public Health Department at Baylor University. She serves as a graduate assistant for Dr. Renee Umstattd-Meyer who’s research focuses on the Salud Para Usted y Su Familia intervention, a family - focused health intervention specifically designed for Texas - Mexico Latino/a border populations. Haley is originally from Washington state and has a B.S. in Biological Sciences with a minor in psychology from Washington State University where she was also part of the Ronald E McNair Achievement Program. Her past research experiences include genetics and obesity, and affective and cognitive influences in decision making. Her passions and research interests include culturally relevant health interventions, underserved and rural populations, public health policy, and advocating for STEM representation and dissemination of information.
Meet the 2019 TSOPHE Executive Board

Treasurer - Lisa T. Wigfall, PhD, MCHES®

Dr. Lisa T. Wigfall received her Ph.D. in Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior from the University of South Carolina (USC) in 2009. Dr. Wigfall joined the Health and Kinesiology Department at Texas A&M University (TAMU) as an Assistant Professor in 2016. Dr. Wigfall teaches undergraduate courses in community and environmental health. She is developing a graduate community and public health course and made significant curriculum changes to a graduate health disparities course at USC. Dr. Wigfall has two funded lines of research - one that focuses on reducing HPV-related cancer health disparities among women living with HIV, and another that focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention among vulnerable populations. She has received almost $1.0 million dollars in external research funding from the National Institute of Health (NIH). Dr. Wigfall was a grant reviewer on two NIH study sections. She is the first or senior author on 57% of 21 peer-reviewed journal articles. Dr. Wigfall co-chaired an edoc toral committee at USC and one undergraduate thesis committee at TAMU. She has served on five doctoral (two at TAMU), one masters thesis, and three masters non-thesis committees. Dr. Wigfall received an NIH Health Disparities Extramural Loan Repayment Award from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities in 2011.

National Delegate - Yanneth Rivera, MPH, MCHES®

Yanneth Rivera is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist with the Patient Education Office at MD Anderson Cancer Center. In this role, she provides health education services to patients and caregivers as a staff member of The Learning Center. Previously, she led MD Anderson’s community skin cancer screening and education program for underserved, uninsured Harris County residents. Yanneth has extensive experience working with community groups in the U.S. and in Latin America, primarily in the design, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion programs. Prior to joining MD Anderson, she coordinated multiple adolescent health projects for the UT Prevention Research Center. Ms. Rivera is TSOPHE’s National Delegate and is in her third year as a TSOPHE board member. Yanneth has a Bachelor of Arts degree from The University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Public Health degree from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. When not at work, Yanneth is most likely playing with her three-month old son and daydreaming about naps and/or coffee.

Board Member-at-Large - Julia Davies, MPH, CHES®

Julia Davies is a community education specialist with the Mature Driver Program at Baylor Scott & White – Hillcrest Medical Center in Waco. Julia has 5 years experience providing education to older adults and their caregivers throughout Texas. Prior to joining the Mature Driver Program, she worked for AGE of Central Texas, a regional non-profit in Austin, coordinating their educational program, CaregiverU. Julia holds a Bachelors degree from Texas A&M University and a Masters of Public Health degree from Tulane University. She is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). In her spare time Julia enjoys running to keep her body fit, reading to keep her mind sharp, and crocheting to keep her creative juices flowing.

Board Member-at-Large - Mary Hawkins, PhD, Med, CHES®

Mary I. Hawkins is an Associate Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator in Kinesiology and Health Science at Stephen F. Austin State University and has worked in academia for over 20 years. She has a passion for educating folks of all ages and has been a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) for 14 years. Mary has a PhD in Health Science from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and is actively involved in university, community, and public health interests in East Texas. She is the faculty advisor for HugerJacks, the student led food pantry on SFASU’s campus. Her current research interests are minority health, STI prevention, obesity prevention, healthy eating and active living, community health, chronic disease prevention, professional preparation, program planning, and program evaluation. Mary is currently coauthoring a consumer health textbook. Mary has presented at SOPHE and APHA national conferences and been published in The American Journal of Health Promotion.
Meet the 2019 TSOPHE Executive Board

**Board Member-at-Large - Rhea P. Olegario, MPH, CHES®**

Rhea P. Olegario, MPH, CHES, is a Management Analyst at the City of Houston Health Department Bureau of Oral Health. She previously worked as a Senior Public Health Educator where she oversaw the oral health education for the bureau including Project Saving Smiles, a primary preventive dental public health intervention targeting 2nd graders from more than 10 school districts in the Houston and surrounding county areas. Previously, Rhea served as a health facilitator for Program Reach, a federally-funded, randomized controlled community trial targeting at-risk adolescents in Yonkers, NY. Rhea earned her MPH and Health Education Certificate at New York Medical College, School of Health Sciences and Practice. Currently, Rhea is an active member of the Texas Oral Health Coalition and represents health educators in the movement to advance oral health for Texas (ATOHMIT).

**Board Member-at-Large - Amaka Agbor, CHES®**

This is Amaka’s first year as a member of TSOPHE in which she will be serving on the chapters’ Executive board as Member-at-Large. She became an official member of the “cougar family” (GO COOGS!!) after she obtained her BS in Health Education from the University of Houston with a minor in Nutrition. She has obtained her CHES® and certificates as a Worksite Wellness Specialist and Program Manager. Currently, she is in the MBA program at the University of Houston Downtown where she has received her concentration certificate in Human Resources. Amaka began her career in public health working as a health educator in which she provided local community health awareness education and programs in the areas of disease prevention, nutrition, diabetes, and metabolic syndromes. Afterwards, she moved into the area of worksite health and wellness and worked as a wellness coordinator creating worksite wellness programs that provided health education, coaching and health screenings for employees. Currently, she is doing her part at Making Cancer History®, by serving as a health education specialist at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. There she works in the Patient Education departments Learning Center, which is a patient education library that provides current and reliable information on cancer prevention, treatment, coping and general health. Amaka enjoys getting to know the stories of individuals and has a passion for health empowerment, health disparities, cancer across the continuum of care, and mental health. She one day plans to expand her reach globally, by providing health education initiatives in Africa, specifically Nigeria. Amaka’s educational and professional motto is to always “do what you like, but like what you do.”

**Graduate Board Member - Flor De La Garza**

Flor is an MPH candidate at Baylor University and is passionate about promoting and advocating for health among minority populations. She is a graduate assistant at the Waco McLennan County Public Health District where she assists with management of the Community Health Worker Initiative funded by the Episcopal Health Foundation grant. While at the Health District, she have the opportunity to support and empower the community health workers to act as the liaisons between health-related resources and Waco community members. She also promotes health education and the public health profession by assisting in leading the Agrilife Chronic Disease Diabetes Prevention curriculum to Hispanic, Spanish-speaking community members who have Type 2 Diabetes.

**Undergraduate Board Member - Shiva Dhiman**

Shiva Dhiman is currently a junior at Baylor University majoring in Public Health. He is interested in pursuing his masters degree and potentially working with the CDC or WHO in the future. Shiva is excited to contribute his skills and personality to the board and looks forward to learning from some accomplished individuals!
Meet the 2019 TSOPHE Interns

Maria Tomas is a graduating senior at Prairie View A&M University majoring in health. She joined TSOPHE in 2017 as an undergraduate board member in order to gain experience that would advance her professional development in the health field. After completing her bachelor's degree in health, Maria plans to pursue an Associate Degree in Diagnostic Sonography to work with pregnant women during a critical time in their life and ensure that babies develop well and are healthy prior to delivery. Maria's overall passion is helping to improve maternal and child health. Focusing on her continued success as a student, she participates in the College Community Center in Houston in order to ensure that she receives support to maintain academic progress plus engage in various volunteer opportunities through this program, which has helped her make the Dean's list for the past two years. She believes in working together to make a difference and that small changes lead to greater results. Maria's goal is to contribute to TSOPHE's efforts in a way that will consider the undergraduate perspective and recruit other students to participate in TSOPHE and gain valuable experience towards their transition into the field.

Brianna Dawson is a graduating senior at Texas Southern University in Houston, TX, majoring in Health Studies. She has a background in the clinical aspect of health as she served as a Health Care Specialist with the US Army. However, she felt a deep passion for education and prevention in health, in which she sought out health education and plans on working as a health educator after graduation. As a member of the Dean's list, Brianna has contributed to the Health and Kinesiology Department & Student Health Services at Texas Southern by volunteering at numerous departmental events including blood drives, health & wellness fairs. She is has also one of the founding members of Peers Advocating for Wellness (PAWS) on campus, which caters to promoting positive health behaviors among students on campus. After graduation, Brianna plans to pursue a graduate degree in public health.

Exercising in the Cold

In the winter months care needs to be taken when exercising outdoors. The cold weather can discourage even those highly motivated, leading people to skip workouts all together. Don’t let the colder temperatures derail your fitness routine.

Be sure and check the forecast before headed outside. Factors such as temperature, wind, moisture and the duration of your workout are things that will require a bit of planning before heading outside.

One key to the cold weather exercise plan is dressing in layers. Dressing in layers that you can adjust during exercise will help regulate your temperature.

The American College of Sports Medicine put together the shareable on the right.

Download the full size here: [http://ow.ly/dTt930nuQZT](http://ow.ly/dTt930nuQZT)
The TAHPERD Foundation Board of Directors awards up to three scholarships annually in the amount of $1,000 each for undergraduate and graduate TAHPERD student members.

The applicant must be pursuing a degree within the disciplines of health education, physical education, recreation, and/or dance at a Texas college or university. To be eligible for consideration, the applicant must:

- Have at least a 2.5 overall GPA.
- Continue in the same program for fall and spring semesters as a full time student (full time as defined by your university) during the academic year the scholarship is awarded.
- The student must be enrolled in a major’s program within the disciplines of health education, physical education, recreation, and/or dance in a Texas college or university. A letter from the chair of the student’s department must accompany the application verifying the discipline in which the student is majoring and that she/he is a full time student.
- Be a full time student (full time as defined by your university) for both the fall and spring semesters of the academic year when the application is made.
- Be a student member of TAHPERD as of January 1 of the application year. Membership must be continued through the next year if a scholarship is awarded.
Why Certify as a Health Education Specialist and Master Health Education Specialist?

The next CHES and MCHES Exam is scheduled for April 11-20, 2019. Final Registration ends February 28, 2019.

The National Commission for Health Education Credentialing’s, Inc. (NCHEC) is a voluntary professional certification program for health education practitioners. The National certification benefits practitioners, employers and the public by:

- Establishing a national standard
- Attesting to individuals’ knowledge and skills
- Assisting employers in identifying qualified health education practitioners
- Promoting continued professional development

The CHES and MCHES exams are offered twice a year in the State of Texas. For testing locations, registration deadlines, and fees, visit www.nchec.org/exam/overview.

Get Connected. Share Information. Join a Committee.

Are you aware that TSOPHE has Six Committees for members like you to join depending on your areas of interest?

These Committees are a great benefit of TSOPHE membership because they allow members to receive information specific to their topics of interest and/or work settings. The Committees allow for an excellent place for members to connect with others who serve in a similar role or share a similar passion.

If you would like to join TSOPHE’s Committees, such as Advocacy, Communications, Continuing Education, Membership, Program Planning or Professional Preparation, please email us: TexasSOPHE@gmail.com.

Connect With TSOPHE!
DID YOU KNOW?

TSOPHE can offer CHES® Continuing Education Units for your organization's next health education event!

Partnership is easy!
Just contact us at least 45 days before the event and our Continuing Education Chairs will walk you through the process.

As a SOPHE affiliate chapter, TSOPHE is authorized to issue CHES® Continuing Education Units for health education events that have goals and objectives that meet specified NCHEC responsibilities.

For more details please email us at TexasSophe@gmail.com