

# 2013 Kansas Public Health Association Annual Awards Ceremony

Welcome  
Dessert served

Ellen Averett, President

KPHA Annual Awards  
Samuel J. Crumbine Medal  
Special Service Award  
Dorothy Woodin Award  
Virginia Lockhart Health Education Award  
Corporate Public Health Service Award  
President's Award

Becky Tuttle, Committee Chair  
Timothy Norton  
Greg Crawford  
Ruth Wetta and Yvonne Gibbons  
Dr. Deborah Ballard-Reisch  
Kansas Association of Counties  
Shirley Orr

Closing Remarks Ellen Averett, President

---

---

**KANSAS  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

---

---

# Samuel J. Crumbine Medal

*The highest award given by the Kansas Public Health Association is awarded for meritorious service and state, regional, or national recognition related to the improvement of the health of Kansans and/or the environment of the state.*

## **Tim Norton, Sedgwick County Commissioner**

Since 2001, Tim has served as a Sedgwick County Commissioner, in which capacity he is a member of the county Board of Health. Through this role, he became interested in public health, and over the past decade has dedicated himself to community health improvement and education not only within Kansas, but through national outreach. He has deeply devoted himself to serve and promote public health as his primary platform as an elected official. Few in the state have seen such complete dedication, in this role, to better serve the needs of citizens through better health.

Prior to his election to the commission, Tim served as Mayor of Haysville for three and half years and as a Haysville City Council member for nine years. In 1999, Tim retired from a position as a Target store Team Leader in order to aid the city of Haysville with response and recovery to a major tornado. His work in public health preparedness and recovery was remarkable and began his career in public health. Since that time, he has demonstrated exemplary work and service as Mayor of Haysville and as Sedgwick County Commissioner. The work of an elected official is many, Tim has been steadfast in holding to his passion, and moving forward the agenda of public health in his meaningful work and leadership.

For example, when Sedgwick County began a process of intentional community assessment in 2007, Tim sponsored an "Access to Health" summit that convened nearly 100 stakeholders to define a medical home for the county's 55,000 uninsured. With health policy speakers and breakout sessions, the summit gave rise to three ongoing workgroups on health care coverage, coordination, and navigation. Through the county's process of setting community health priorities, Tim attended every community engagement forum, educating himself on public health and community health needs, and passing on his observations through a public column, "A Word in Edgewise."

In 2008, he was accepted to the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute, and in 2009 he became the first elected official in Kansas to graduate from that program. His capstone project for the KPHLI, entitled "Public Health Training for Elected Officials in Kansas: Translating an Assessment into Practice," identified and assessed training resources to prepare elected officials for service as their community's board of health, and also assessed commissioners' orientation to public health issues that may affect the populace within their jurisdiction. This is now available to support all elected officials to better serve in their role across the state! In 2009-10, Tim was the only Kansans accepted to the National Public Health Leadership Institute, a selective competency-based program bringing together leaders with the potential to impact public health on a national level. Through his work with NPHLI, national leadership faculty gave him special commendation as one of the most engaged and stimulating participants in his entire cohort, resulting in a deeper dialogue for many across the country about public health challenged.

A dedicated participant in National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), Tim has worked with the Sedgwick County Health Department since 2010 to educate the Board of Health on topics related to public health accreditation. He continues to invest himself in furthering Kansas' capacity for public health. Respected and admired as a humanitarian, Tim's other community contributions include the Child Advocacy Center Campaign Leadership Committee, Visioneering Wichita, Eastside Rotary Club, Wichita Wagonmasters, Haysville Optimist Club, United Way, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club of South Central Kansas, Exploration Place, and Wichita Downtown Development Corporation. Time is married to Dr. Susan Parkinson Norton, and they have five children and six grandchildren.

# Special Service Awards

*Outstanding service to Kansas in the interest of public health and/or environmental improvement.*

## Greg Crawford

During his 23 year tenure in public health, Greg's work has focused on ways to make health information available in state and federal health data systems to the public for use in public health program management and policy making for informed decision-making. Mr. Crawford's education is in communications and he served as KDHE's director of public information for 10 years before joining the Public Health Informatics group with the Division of Public Health. His experience in communications gave him the capacity to understand the needs of the public and individuals and organizations that need information in a simple, easy to use format. His passion for the field of public health and using information to develop sound policy and action has served public health well in Kansas.

Several of his professional contributions to the use of health information for public health include:

### **Professional Accomplishments:**

- Founding member of the Kansas Partnership for Improving Community Health (KanPICH) whose work has led to the popular website **Kansas Health Matters** which is serving as a key resource for communities to acquire access to information on Kansas health indicators
- Facilitated processes initiating fetal and infant mortality review. This involved finding ways to relax Kansas restrictions on use of vital statistics data for maternal and child health mortality and morbidity investigations, resulting in permanent formation of one county-level FIMR project. With statute changes, 3 more FIMRs have emerged.
- Established new annual publication on selected statistics on fetal and infant death.
- Leading and participating in several internal and external workgroups to facilitate the adoption of community health assessment and the community health improvement process within the Kansas public health agencies.
- Designed and implemented the KDHE Division of Public Health, Health Information Portal, Kansas Information for Communities (KIC). Oversaw addition of birth, death, pregnancy, hospital discharge, population modules to the system.
- Developed KDHE pneumonia and influenza mortality weekly tabulation reports of and trend graphing, developed programming to report sentinel infectious disease deaths to agency epidemiologists.
- Initiated process to link birth data with outside data sources to compare outcomes among different Kansas population groups. Developed programming to assess missing out-of-state occurrence birth and death records using NCHS-supplied data.
- Initiated Kansas Health Statistics Report, a KDHE Division of Health statistics and public health data publication serving as editor. Publication reaches over 1,500 individuals.
- Promotes greater detail in race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry in KDHE data collection which resulted in agency policy being established. Implemented concept of combining race and Hispanic origin groups into ethnicity (population group) categories for public health reporting.
- Implemented and managed early development of the KDHE Web site, identifying resources, and hiring webmaster. Directed conversion of paper-based informational products to electronic distribution.
- Coordinated work with federal and state agencies to acquire detailed information on vital events for the Native American population in Kansas.

Mr. Crawford is a dedicated public servant whose goal is to assure that everyone who needs information gets it in an accurate and timely manner that preserves confidentiality of individuals. He has personally assisted numerous groups and individuals in acquiring information but he takes extra steps to help in "understanding" what the information means and its relevance to improving health.

## **Dorothy Woodin Award**

*The award is bestowed on a public health nurse for outstanding public health nursing services. This year, we have two professionals who will be recognized in this category.*

### **Ruth Wetta**

Dr. Wetta has developed a national reputation for practice-based service, applied research and is also a highly accomplished teacher and professor. She received her Bachelor and Master of Science nursing degrees and PhD in Community Psychology from Wichita State University, and her Master of Public Health degree from the University of Kansas. Currently, she is an associate professor at the KU Medical School-Wichita, teaching public health administration, program planning, program evaluation and quality improvement in the Master of Public Health program. She also teaches for the KU School of Nursing in the master and doctorate of Nursing Practice programs, supporting students interested in public health. She has served as the Interim Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health in Wichita and as the Wichita Site Director for the KU MPH program.

Ruth has been involved in public health for 18 years and began her career in public health as a MPH student, supporting data collection for the 1997 Sedgwick County Community Health Assessment. After graduation, she became the Coordinator for the Sedgwick County Community Health Improvement Plan. Since then, she has collaborated with local and state public health practitioners in program evaluation, quality improvement and community health assessment and improvement activities. She promotes the use of data to support decision-making, regardless of the setting. She is, in a word, a bit of a data geek. Ruth was a member of the Kansas Health Foundation Community Leadership Initiative, a member of the Leadership Kansas class of 2002, the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute (and the Kansas Leadership Center, Health Leadership Academy.

Ruth has provided several years of service to local and national organizations involved in improving public health. As a member of KPHA since 1997, Ruth has served as a board member, the association's secretary, and chair of the awards committee. In addition, she has served on several advisory boards. Within the American Public Health Association, she has moderated sessions and reviewed abstracts for the annual conference meetings. She has served as a reviewer for the Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, Public Health Nursing and Applied Nursing Research. To date, Ruth has more than 30 public health publications.

In closing, you might consider Ruth to be a "pracademic", someone who is both an academic and an active practitioner in their subject area. She believes in the power of collaboration and the use of data to drive decision-making to improve public health practice, processes and outcomes. She has been a true role model to me personally and I know for many more of my colleagues, health practitioners, and students. For all the reasons mentioned in this statement, I therefore nominate Dr. Wetta for this prestigious award.

## **Dorothy Woodin Award**

*The award is bestowed on a public health nurse for outstanding public health nursing services. This year, we have two professionals who will be recognized in this category.*

### **Yvonne Gibbons**

Yvonne Gibbons has worked for the Salina-Saline County Health Department since 1973. She is a registered nurse, with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and also holds a Masters in Public Health Degree. She has served in a number of leadership roles at the Health Department, most recently as the Director and Public Health Officer. She has dedicated her life to public health and serving others. Yvonne originated and fostered the Leadership Team Model for mentoring and joint decision-making by health department supervisors. She initiated orientation sessions and monthly updates at Board of Health meetings, for a more informed and engaged Board of Health. She is truly a model of excellence!

Yvonne has been active in the community in a variety of areas too numerous to count. She was a member of the first Leadership Salina Class. She was one of the originators of the Salina Cares Clinic, a volunteer-staffed indigent care clinic that has evolved into Salina Family Health Care, now a free-standing FQHC affiliated with the University of Kansas Family Practice Medical Residency Program. She started Salina Community Services Council, an organization that is still active today as an information-sharing and collaboration incubator organization for our community. She has served on multiple boards and coalitions. More recently, Yvonne was one of the founders of "Women Helping Women: A Fairy Godmother Fund". She is one of the recipients of the "Woman of Achievement Award", for outstanding Salina Women who have accomplished amazing things for the community.

Yvonne has been active in KPHA and KALHD, serving in a number of capacities in those professional organizations, including leadership roles. She has helped shape many state & local policies over the years. She has always been a champion for public health.

Yvonne led staff through an unexpected move to other facilities after the Health Department building was condemned due to a dangerous roof with the possibility of collapse. We are now in two temporary buildings. Yvonne has worked tirelessly with board of health members, city commissioners, county commissioners, and others to make the transition as smooth as possible; without interruption of services. She has spent hours and hours trying to get us back under one roof, and continues to fight for public health, our staff, and most of all, our clients.

In addition to all of these qualities, most treasured of all; Yvonne is a people person. She is dedicated to serving our community, and she truly cares about her staff as people, as family really. She has a gift of bringing out the best in others. She has left her mark on our lives. Even though she is retiring, and we will miss her dearly; Yvonne Gibbons has mentored so many people, and has been such an incredible role model, that a piece of her will always be guiding the Salina-Saline County Health Department, and public health in Kansas!

# Virginia Lockhart Health Education Award

*Awarded for outstanding service in public promotion of health and/or environmental issues.*

## **Dr. Deborah Ballard-Reisch**

Since coming to WSU in 2007, Dr. Deborah Ballard-Reisch, the Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Chair in Strategic Communication, has had an enormous impact on the community, the campus and the students. In her first class she taught at WSU, a strategic communication seminar in health, students designed and presented health initiatives to the Kansas Health Foundation that helped inform future directions for the organization. This class led many students to find a passion for health communication and was the foundation for several students who are currently pursuing their doctorate and one student to obtain her master's in public health. Deborah has since advised eight master's theses, two professional projects and been a mentor to countless students.

Dr. Ballard-Reisch also includes students in her research and community-based projects, building their skills in these areas both within and outside the classroom. Her desire to empower others is constantly seen in the work she does and the students she teaches. Her well-established record of excellence in teaching is recognized by both peers and students. In the spring of 2011 she received the community research award for her work at WSU and in the community. In 2012, she was awarded the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender Feminist Teacher-Mentor Award.

As an extension of her Gridley-Hoover pilot research project in 2008 studying health promotion for older adults in rural & frontier Kansas, she joined an interdisciplinary team of WSU researchers and community organizations to develop a falls prevention toolkit for older adults in Harvey County, KS. The Falling LinKS (Less In Kansas) toolkit is aimed at people who want to maintain their active lives and prevent falls. It is designed for people who live in rural areas where health care resources are often scarce. This project fully funded one graduate student his second year, and helped fund three other graduate students. One student also wrote her master's thesis from data collected during this project.

An indication of her commitment to community based research & development is illustrated in the WSU Hunger Awareness Initiative she founded. This initiative has included community empowerment & multi-methods research. In the early months of 2010, Dr. Ballard-Reisch along with her daughter and five Elliott School of Communication graduate students designed and facilitated WSU Feeds Haiti. Together, with Numana Inc., she implemented a plan that empowered members of WSU and the Wichita community to feed starving people in Haiti. Utilizing over 3,000 volunteers, Deborah along with her six-member team, package more than 640,000 meals over Super Bowl weekend. Those meals reached earthquake stricken Haiti within a week, supporting the infrastructure devastated by the disaster. She was awarded the 2010 Champion of Hunger Award by Numana for her work.

Due to the success of WSU Feeds Haiti, the need to feed the hungry of the world and the rise of hunger in the United States, Dr. Ballard-Reisch designed and taught a class to raise hunger awareness in spring 2011. This class served as the cornerstone for WSU Hunger Awareness Initiative, resulting in two WSU Hunger Awareness Days. In 2011, the Hunger Awareness Day led 171 WSU students to package over 20,000 meals in two hours for Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa, while also raising awareness of the issue of campus hunger. Initiative efforts have also included three dinner and conversation events about hunger on campus, a website where community members shared their hunger stories and a campus-wide food drive that brought in more than 4,600 pounds of food for the Kansas Food Bank.

Grounded in the results of this qualitative research, members designed a quantitative campus-wide survey to investigate the nature and scope of hunger at WSU. Over 1,000 members of the community responded to this survey, the results of which will inform campus policy on addressing hunger. The survey was designed by her quantitative research class and the dinner and conversation events were facilitated by her qualitative research classes. Students were able to gain real life experiences such as writing press releases, giving media interviews for TV and radio, and using social media to mobilize involvement, education and responses. Students also did a SWOT analysis of Numana's infrastructure and gave written and oral presentations to Numana director, Rick McNary. Two graduate students also completed professional

culminating projects based on data collected from this initiative. Because of her efforts, the initiative was acknowledged by the Student Government Association as they passed a Senate Resolution in recognition and support of the initiative.

In addition to local impact, this initiative has had regional, national and global impact as well. Members of the initiative, including graduate students and junior faculty members, have presented a model for campuses to develop their own hunger awareness initiative at three campuses, two national conferences, two Kansas Hunger Dialogues and two Universities Fighting World Hunger Summits. Dr. Ballard-Reisch's teaching has represented a productive record of significant collaboration, grant funding, publication, and presentation, all of which include her students. Through her visionary work in communities and her diligent commitment to finding creative alternative solutions, to meet local, national and global needs, her teaching makes a difference. One of her students said, "Simply put, Deborah is the intangible "it". She has that rare quality in a "teacher of people" that I know would make her an outstanding nominee for this award. I guarantee that you will not find a more worth candidate. I give Deborah the highest recommendation possible."

# Corporate Service Award

*Presented annually to a company or organization which, through public policy activities, makes a significant contribution to the mission of public health and/or environmental improvement in Kansas.*

## Kansas Association of Counties

The Kansas Association of Counties is a quasi-public agency, which seeks to advance the public interest by promoting effective, responsive county government in Kansas. Founded in 1975 as an instrumentality of its member counties, the Association serves county governments through:

- Legislative representation
- Technical assistance
- Leadership
- Professional education

In 2012 and 2013 under Randall Allen's leadership the KAC has worked with partners at the Kansas Health Foundation, Kansas Association of Local Health Departments, KDHE and others to raise awareness amongst Board of County Commissioners regarding their role as Board of Health. This work is being accomplished through a series of meetings across the State. Meetings focus on quality improvement, the ten essential services of public health, process tools for establishing community health priorities and time together to identify action steps to move forward as Commissioners and Directors return to their communities.

Randall Allen is Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Counties, an organization of 103-member counties which provides legislative representation of county interests at the Kansas Legislature as well as various educational and member inquiry services to counties and county officials. Randall assumed the position at the KAC in April, 1996. Before that time, he served for seven years as the first City Administrator in Marshfield, Wisconsin and held various positions in Sedgwick County, Kansas government, including Budget Director and Assistant County Manager. He is a native of Dodge City (Ford County), Kansas and received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Political Science from Wichita State University. Randall enjoys reading, music, eating, and sleeping – in no particular order.