

This was my first time attending the APHA conference. What a great experience!

I attended the Disability Section Chair's forum on health and access to healthcare on Sunday night. After hearing the panel's discussion about their research and advocacy work in the healthcare arena, I left this meeting pretty pumped up and excited about what other sessions over the next few days had in store. I was not disappointed. There was really great information in both the sessions and the posters presented. One of the most advantageous aspects of attending the conference was the opportunity to meet so many influential people (professors, researchers, etc.) in the disability section. Everyone was incredibly friendly and helpful. The student mentoring session was a great opportunity to pick the brains of professionals who have been in the field for sometime- learning from them specific information about research, but also more personal situations about balancing work and family. Further, being able to work with other students in the disability section during this session was a great way to network and exchange ideas.

The overall message I took home was that no matter what aspect of disability, or type of disability you are interested in researching, we all need to work together to promote a public health perspective- we need to do solid research that builds off of previous research. We need good data from our research in order to change policy, and we need to change policy to make sure rights of people with disabilities are not violated. I look forward to sharing the information learned at the conference with my peers at Oregon State.

(The Aaron Neville concert was great, too!)

I am truly grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to attend APHA. It would not have been possible without the scholarship! I look forward to attending APHA next year! Thank you!