



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

**Texas Department of State  
Health Services**

## **Data Discovery Workshops Connect Students to Real-World Applications and Problem Solving**

By: Lauren Wheat

The Center for Health Statistics (CHS) at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) provides inclusive and comprehensive health data. It takes raw data and creates user-friendly, public-facing dashboards, public-use datasets, and research datasets to increase public knowledge and help Texans make informed decisions regarding their health.

CHS also supports several other functions of public health, one of which is the development of the workforce pipeline. As part of this effort, CHS conducts "Data Discovery Workshops," where employees travel to universities and local health departments to educate others on the extensive data sets it has available and how best to use the data.

Chris Aker and his team at CHS visited Texas A&M University in College Station to present the Data Discovery Workshop to a group of graduate public health students, faculty, and staff. When speaking of the impact this event had on students, Senior Associate Dean for Research at Texas A&M University Dr. Tiffany Radcliff shared, "Students in the Ph.D. Program in Health Services Research at Texas A&M University School of Public Health greatly appreciate the expertise and opportunities provided by the Center for Health Statistics team. The Center's enthusiastic presentations regarding their data sources, possible research collaborations, and support for doctoral research reinforced the essential partnership in education and training we have with the Center."

CHS also plans to create customized data sets geared towards students, to develop the future public health workforce by providing more manageable data sets as a starting point for learning and growth. Aker shared, "The partnerships that the Center for Health Statistics creates with universities allow the next generation of students to gain knowledge and experience with the very data that they will be working with in the public health workforce, either with us at DSHS, a local health department, university or the like."

CHS also supports innovative research by managing comprehensive hospital discharge data sets. Research, grant applications, and emergency response are based on the extensive and latest data provided through CHS.