



DELAWARE  
ACADEMY of  
MEDICINE

DPHA  
DELAWARE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

February 2022

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## The *Khan*versation

### Milestones

"To know where you're going, you have to know where you've been." Truer words were never spoken in the world of measuring progress. Everything from developmental milestones in children to tracking progress of a vaccinated public relies on the science of measurement. This science is officially called *metrology*, not be confused with *meteorology* (the science of never knowing what weather it is!).

We have always been obsessed with knowing our place in the world. Philosophically speaking, this meant an ongoing search for the meaning of life ([it's 42, in case you were wondering](#)). With regards to measurement, it started with wanting to know ourselves in time and space i.e., by knowing what time it is (using a watch adjusted for time zones), and where in the world we are (using a compass and map).



Accurate development of both time and space was critical to the development of modern civilization (and thus, the first things we try to escape on vacation?). This progressed to wanting to know where we were going (i.e. measuring progress against defined markers). Every project essentially had to become measurable, to know whether it had shown improvement. Every piece of our individual or community health similarly means having metrics, markers, indicators (cholesterol numbers, A1Cs for blood sugar, poverty indices in the community, % of Delawareans fully vaccinated against COVID (not enough), etc.)

Drivers have long relied on mile markers for a variety of the same reasons. Distance roughly equals time, unless you're on a fun road like the [Tail of the Dragon](#), or meandering down Route 9 to the Delaware beaches. When I was younger, there was a sign at the beginning of that road which said "Route 9 saves time" (it doesn't now that we have Route 1, but drive it anyway).

Given Delaware's place in history, both literal and figurative, we aren't far from what was probably the first mile marker in the country, on the first major road. The National Road was 1000 km (620 miles) long, and starting in 1811, connected Cumberland, MD (see below) to Wheeling, WV. It was later extended west to Vandalia, IL. The intent was commerce and development, to connect the Potomac and Ohio Rivers, and led to several innovations, not the least of which was the process of surfacing roads (the term "macadam" comes from the process invented by John Loudon McAdam). And, this probably led to the first burnout, though not until the late 1800s when we had cars capable of such feats.



Mile Marker at the start of  
National Road, 1811

Incidentally, modern milestones (now mile markers) in the US mark distance from where an interstate enters a given state, and always begins at the state line in the west (for even-numbered routes, like I-90) or south (for odd-numbered routes, like I-95). Mile markers thus get larger as one travels east or north.

While most drivers prefer the open road, sometimes urban settings offer their own unexpected directional joys. Driving down to Washington, D.C., one sees a peculiar system of streets, seemingly named at random, before figuring out they go reverse-alphabetically, from 3-syllables to 2- and then 1-syllable names. In many ways, I may never figure out what happens in D.C., but at least the ultra-complex naming scheme gives me something to ponder when driving there.

Two books on metrology greatly influenced how I see the world of clinical medicine and public health: the first edition of Clinical Epidemiology by David Sackett, which Academy member (and my uncle) Dr. Gilani checked out for me from the 'Medical Center of Delaware Library' at Wilmington Hospital, around 1989; and Visual Explanations, by Edward Tufte, which I devoured in college. Both changed how I saw the world of medicine and health: providing measurements in space and time. By orienting us to where we were, they provided guideposts to the present and mile markers for progress. They drew upon the rich traditions of mapping and chronography established by the ancient Greeks, Arabs and others (notably, Ptolemy and al-Khwarizmi).

These traditions guide us today as we measure progress towards improved health, a more just society, and a better standard of living for all. Delaware's size and scope means we can have conversations about health workforce metrics and community engagement strategies, and put them in action the following day. Measuring thus lights the way towards our destination, but only purposefulness, intention and morality can set the direction.

As Yogi Berra put it, "If you don't know where you're going, you might wind up someplace else." May your destinations be lofty, your journeys adventurous, and your purpose true. *Drive on.*

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## In Memoriam



We remember today a person who was a major influence in so many ways, though of a different kind of measurement. Decades ago, I read 'Infections and Inequalities' by the person who--as of this morning, unbelievably and heartbreakingly--I have to refer to as the *late* Dr. Paul Farmer.

Paul wrote eloquently, and with the intellectual density of the MD-PhD physician-anthropologist that he was. His commitment was to the poor, especially to the people of Haiti, and to educating us all that disease was not the cause of death: *poverty* as its determinant was. This poverty was unjust, he

believed, and in so doing educated a generation of physicians to be a different kind of scientist: one seeking to address the causes of the causes while also treating the sick.

Along with individuals like Sir Michael Marmot and so many others, Paul changed the metrics of global health to be about serving the poor and healing the sick in ways deeply individual, yet deeply impactful at the population level. He co-founded Partners in Health in 1987 with Dr. Jim Kim, Ophelia Dahl, Todd McCormack and the late Tom White, an organization which serves globally, yet has a keen focus on Haiti.

Dr. Farmer passed away earlier today, February 21, 2022 in Rwanda; he was visiting to teach at the novel university of health equity that he co-founded there with Dr. Agnes Binagwaho. May he rest in peace. We extend our heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association to his family, his friends, and his global extended family of supporters, friends, colleagues and all those whom he helped, who mourn his immeasurable loss to our world.

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## Academy Updates

### Mini Medical School

Have you signed up for Mini Medical School yet? There are no tests or grades, and no previous medical training is required. Students attending all six sessions receive a Certificate of Achievement.

This six-week series of lectures is designed for individuals who want to gain a deeper understanding of the world of medicine. This free program is offered to all adults from high school students

to adult learners. Attendees learn about important trends in diagnosing and treating illness, as well as general health topics. Faculty provide in-depth lectures, and a question and answer session enhances each presentation.

These virtual classes will be held from **7:00 - 9:00 pm** on Thursdays, from **February 24 - March 31**.

### 2022 Syllabus

2/24: Trauma-Informed Care  
3/03: Breast Reconstruction/Plastic Surgery  
3/10: Sports Medicine  
3/17: The Growth of Telehealth and the Virtual Experience  
3/24: Anesthesiology – the Silent Force Behind the Scenes  
3/31: Childhood Development

[Click here for registration and more information](#)



### Delaware Public Health Institute Chronic Disease Conference



We invite you to join us for the 2022 Delaware Public Health Institute Annual Conference: "Chronic Disease: From Prevention to Management."

The event will take place virtually on **March 7, 2022** from **8:30AM to 3:30PM**. Join students, professionals and partners across Delaware in the opportunity to learn about and engage in discussions on chronic disease detection, treatment and management.

[Learn more and register here](#)



### Call for Abstracts

All undergraduate, graduate students, and medical residents in Delaware completing research projects or internships are invited to present a poster on the status of their projects in the first Student Poster Presentation for National Public Health Week. Posters may be research or practice based, and will be presented online during National Public Health Week.

Abstracts must be submitted by **March 7**.

[Learn More](#)  
[Submit an Abstract](#)

### Hoopes Dental Lecture

The 2022 Frank M. and Robert R. Hoopes Medical Dental Lecture will be held on

Monday, March 21, 2022 from 6:30 - 8:00 pm.

### Dentistry in Special Needs Populations

Our speaker will be Dr. Andrew Swiatowicz, a general family dentist known for his work with special needs patients, including patients with intellectual disabilities, the medically compromised, and the severely dental phobic.



[Learn More](#)

## Center for Special Health Care Needs

### Center for Special Health Care Needs



The Center for Special Health Care Needs is the only center in the greater Delaware area dedicated to providing primary care for adults ages 18 and older with complex medical and social conditions that originated in childhood. The Center brings together a team of medical experts in one convenient location to provide a flexible, innovative and individualized approach to each patient's care.

They provide resources for support, services, and advocacy for people with special health care needs and their caregivers.

[Center Website](#)

[Resource Packet](#)

[Checklist for Ages 21 and Older](#)

## National Updates

### APHA 2022 Annual Meeting: Call for Abstracts

The American Public Health Association is now accepting abstracts for oral and poster presentations for the 150th Annual Meeting and Expo in Boston, Nov. 6-9, 2022. Authors are encouraged to submit abstracts on the meeting theme — "150 Years of Creating the Healthiest Nation: Leading the Path Toward Equity" — and current and emerging public health issues.



[See Submission Guidelines](#)

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### Additional Resources

Delaware Division of Public Health - [The DPH Bulletin](#)

Trust for America's Health: Wellness and Prevention Digest - [Subscribe](#)

Johns Hopkins Infectious Diseases COVID-19 Grand Rounds - [View Schedule](#)

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