

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

Current Post

Assistant Professor
School of Public Health
Texas A&M University
212 Adriance Lab Road
College Station, TX 77845
E-mail: benikad@tamu.edu

EDUCATION

- 2020 -2021 Postdoctoral Research Associate
Texas A&M University, School of Public Health
Mentor: Dr. Rebecca Fischer
- 2017- 2020 DrPH in Epidemiology and Environmental Health
Texas A&M University, School of Public Health, College Station, Texas
Dissertation: *Assessment of Health and Environmental Risk Perceptions in Somerville, TX*
Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Horney
Committee Members: Dr. Thomas McDonald, Dr. Xiaohui Xu, Dr. Garrett Sansom
- 2012-2017 DrPH (**transferred**)
Morgan State University, School of Community Health and Policy, Baltimore, Maryland
Advisor: Dr. Randy Rowel
- 2008-2011 MPH
Southern Connecticut State University, Hamden, Connecticut
Thesis Topic: *Intimate Partner Violence among HIV Positive Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM)*
Advisor: Dr. Jean Breny
- 2005 B.S. Chemistry
Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia

PUBLICATIONS

1. **Dixon, B.**, Purdum, C. Goddard, T., Toon, J., Simmons, MM., Mims, T., Finau, P. (2024). The Compounding Effects of Disasters and Confinement on the Mental Health of Incarcerated Women. (Natural Hazards Center Public Health Disaster Research Report Series, Report 44). Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. <https://hazards.colorado.edu/public-health-disaster-research/the-compounding-effects-of-disasters-and-confinement-on-the-mental-health-of-incarcerated-women>
2. Purdum, C., **Dixon, B.**, Dominick, A. Punishment and survival – incarcerated persons' experiences with extreme heat in Texas prisons. *Disaster Prevention & Management*. 2024; 33(6), 30-42.
3. Gandara, E., Santana, E., Samman, E., **Dixon, B.**, & DeConge, M. (2024). Exploring first-generation student experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on their social isolation: a photovoice project. *Journal of American College Health*, 1-11.
4. Caldwell, J., Mims, T., Johnson, JN, **Dixon, BC**. A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Environmental Injustice in Fifth Ward, Houston TX. *Environmental Justice*. 2023.
5. Gandara E, Samman E, **Dixon B**, Santana E, DeConge M. Developing and implementing a photovoice project: Social isolation, COVID-19, and first-generation students. *Public Health Nursing* (Boston, Mass.). 2023 Mar. DOI: 10.1111/phn.13187. PMID: 36929652
6. O'Neal CS, **Dixon BC**, Fischer RSB. College Athletic Programs Thwart the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(2):e2147810

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

7. **Dixon B**, Fischer RS, Zhao H, O'Neal CS, Clugston, JR, & Gibbs SG. (2021). Contact and SARS-CoV-2 Infections Among College Football Athletes in the Southeastern Conference During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(10).
8. Purdum C, Henry F, Rucker S, Williams, DA, Thomas R, **Dixon B**, & Jacobs F. No Justice, No Resilience: Prison Abolition as Disaster Mitigation in an Era of Climate Change. *Environmental Justice*. 2021; 14(6), 418-425.
9. Hooks, SK, Hyrsko M, Strickland C, **Dixon B**, Karaye I, Kirsch K, Horney JA. Can global policy impact local environmental justice? Using CASPER to assess perceived health effects of an incinerator. *Human Ecology*. 2020; 48:119-125
10. Hyrsko M, Hooks, Karaye IM, **Dixon B**, Kirsch KR, SK Strickland C, Horney JA. (2019). Applying Disaster Epidemiology Methods to Investigate Potential Health Impacts of Industry in Environmental Justice Neighborhoods. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 40, 39.
11. Semien J, Blanks J, Richards A, **Dixon B**, Daniels L. (2019)
Legacy: A William Averette Anderson Magazine. *William Averette Anderson Fund*. Volume 1 Issue 1.
12. Sansom G, Cizmas L, Aarvig K, **Dixon B**, Kirsch KR, Katara A, Sansom L. Vulnerable populations exposed to lead-contaminated drinking water within Houston Ship Channel Communities. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2019; 16, 2745.
13. **Dixon B**, Louis-Charles H. A blueprint for change: An emerging initiative paves the way for increased diversity in hazards mitigation. *Natural Hazards Observer*. 2015; 39(6)
14. Council KD, Wilson CW, Harris BM, O'Keefe AM, Henderson C, **Dixon B**, Merengwa E, Nwazue E, Weak F. Improving health services for residents through community-based participatory research: A public housing leadership perspective. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*. Spring 2013;7(1):89-93.

REPORTS

1. Purdum J Carlee, Dominick, A, Dixon B. Extreme Temperatures and COVID-19 in Texas Prisons. 2022
2. Dixon B., Hernandez-Ayala, F., Martinez, M., Zane, D., Haywood, T., Taylor, J. Zika Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) June 17-18, 2016. Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division, Epidemiology and Health Statistics Unit

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2025	January – Greek Life Advisor of the Month
2022-2023	SEC Faculty Travel Award
2021-2023	Accountability, Climate, Equity, and Scholarship Faculty Fellow, Texas A&M University
2021	Honored along with the Texas A&M School of Public Health COVID-19 Pandemic Response. The State of Texas House of Representative, H.R. No.720. https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/pdf/HR00720I.PDF
2020-Present	Faculty Fellow, Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center at Texas A&M College of Architecture
2020	Texas A&M University School of Public Health Public Health Gold Scholar
2019- Present	Graduate Teaching Consultant Fellow, Texas A&M University Center for Teaching Excellence
2014- Present	William Averette Anderson Fund, Founding Fellow
2015	Founding Fellows Award, William Averette Anderson Fund

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS

1. **Dixon, B.**, Purdum, C. Research to Policy: Knowledge, Climate and Incarceration. Climate and Incarceration Symposium, University of Colorado Boulder, September 2023.
2. **Dixon, B.**, Purdum, C., Luna, M., Simmons, M.M., Toon, J. Centering the Needs of Incarcerated People in Disaster Risk Reduction. Natural Hazards Workshop, July 2023.

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

3. Alvarez, Z., **Dixon, B.**, Dominic, A., Purdum C. Sentenced to Swelter: Extreme Heat in Texas Prisons. Natural Hazards Workshop, July 2022.
4. Winfield, AS, **Dixon, B.**, Hill, A. A Case for Interdisciplinary Collaborations to Improve Social Determinants of Health: Documenting the Impact of COVID-19 on Black Communities. International Communications Association Conference, May 2022.
5. Taylor, L., Mims, T., Yusuf, A., **Dixon, B.**, & Fischer, R. S. (2021, November). AGGRESSIVE COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE SPREAD OF SARS-COV-2 B. 1.1. 7 AND SEVERE ILLNESS ON A LARGE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. In AMERICAN JOURNAL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE (Vol. 105, No. 5, pp. 334-334). 8000 WESTPARK DR, STE 130, MCLEAN, VA 22101 USA: AMER SOC TROP MED & HYGIENE.
6. Purdum JC, Rucker S, Thomas R, Williams DA, **Dixon B**, Jacobs F. No Justice No Resilience: Abolition of Police and Prisons as Hazard Mitigation. Natural Hazards and Applications Workshop, July 2020
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xBxOdVzdu8&t=1253s>
7. Hrysko M, Hooks SK, Karaye IM, **Dixon B**, Kirsch KR, Strickland C, Horney JA. Applying disaster epidemiology methods to investigate potential health impacts of industry in environmental justice neighborhoods. American College of Epidemiology Annual Meeting September 2019
8. **Dixon B.**, Hatton, T., Hawes, H. "Hurricane Harvey Syndromic Surveillance: Perspective of a Health and Medical Coalition," NACCHO Preparedness Summit, April 17, 2018
9. Hawes, A., Buotte, B., Caudle, M., Crockham, C., Dixon, B., Litaker, J., Mansolo, L., Pichette, J. "Workforce Development and Public Health Preparedness: Developing Depth within Austin Public Health, " NACCHO Preparedness Summit, April 17, 2018
10. Hernandez-Ayala, F., Zane D., **Dixon, B.**, Taylor, J., Haywood, T., Pichett, J. Zika and the Importance of Social Communication and Engagement – A Neighborhood Approach Using Community Assessment in Travis County, Texas, June 2016. Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist Conference 2017, Orlando, Florida.
<https://cste.confex.com/cste/2017/webprogram/Paper7923.html>
11. **Dixon B.**, "Community Engagement: Assessing Zika Virus Communications and Mosquito Prevention Behaviors in Travis County, Texas, June 2016," The James Steele Conference on Diseases in Nature Transmissible to Man (DIN), Friday, May 26, 2017
12. Hernandez-Ayala, F., **Dixon, B.**, Taylor, J., Haywood, T., Pichette, J., Zane D. "Neighborhood Engagement: Evaluating Zika Virus Health Communication and Mosquito Prevention Behaviors in Travis County, Texas, June 2016. Texas Public Health Association Conference March 2017, Fort Worth, TX.
13. **Dixon B.**, "Diversity in Hazard and Disaster Research and Practice," Natural Hazards and Applications Workshop, July 13, 2016
14. **Dixon B.**, "Community Engagement: Assessing Zika Communications, Mosquito Prevention Behaviors, and Emergency Preparedness Readiness Using Field Epidemiology Methods," Bill Anderson Fund PechaKucha, Natural Hazards and Applications Workshop, July 11, 2016
15. "Unrest in the City: The Maryland State Health Department's Role in the Response to the Baltimore City Demonstrations," NACCHO Preparedness Summit, April 21, 2016
16. "Emergency Management Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities," 17th Annual Emergency Management Higher Education Symposium, June 3, 2015

CONFERENCE MODERATOR

1. Plenary-Unequal Effects-COVID-19, Natural Hazards, and Compound Disasters. Natural Hazards Researchers Meeting. July 2022

INVITED SPEAKING EVENTS

Dixon, B. Climate, Disasters and Incarceration: Voices of the Unheard, U.S. Kavli Frontiers of Science Symposium, March 2024.

Dixon, B. No Justice, No Resilience: Police, Prisons, and Disaster. University of Maryland Symposium on Environmental Justice and Health Disparities, August 2022.

Dixon, B., Purdum, J.C. "Incarceration and the Production of Vulnerability: Heat and COVID19 in Texas Prisons", Texas A&M University, Race Ethnic Studies Institute, April 12, 2022

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

Dixon, B., "A Community Engagement Approach to Environmental (In)Justice, University of Illinois, Chicago, Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, March 24, 2022.

Dixon, B., "Assessing Health and Environmental Risk Perceptions," Ethical Theory X Practice, University of Texas Stan Richards School of Advertising and Public Relations, November 11, 2021

Dixon, B., "COVID-19: Disproportionate Impacts on Black Communities," COVID-19 and environmental (in)justice - NIEHS Disaster Research Response (DR2)'s workgroup's COVID-19 seminar series, March 2, 2021

Dixon B., "From Physical Science to Applied Social Science Research and Practice," 2020-2021 Chemistry Professional Development Speaker Series, September 25, 2020

Dixon B., "COVID-19 and Black Communities," Bill Anderson Fund Summer Webinar, July 3, 2020

GUEST LECTURES

Qualitative Methods (MC 7104), Louisiana State University, Manship School of Communications, Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Spring 2022

Emergency Management Public Health (PLTH 415), TAMU SPH, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
Disaster Epidemiology, TAMU SPH, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020

Environmental Epidemiology (PHEB 634), TAMU SPH, Spring 2022

Introduction to Emergency Management (EMGT 1000). University of Nebraska Omaha, Fall 2018, Fall 2017

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2016-2018	Preparedness/Disaster Epidemiologist Austin Public Health, Austin, TX
2014-2016	Public Health Emergency Planner Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore, MD
2011-2014	Health Planner Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2024	PHEB 613: Field Epidemiology Methods PHEB 680: Public Health Capstone
Spring 2023	PHEB 613: Field Epidemiology Methods
Spring 2022	PHEB 613: Field Epidemiology Methods
2020	Teaching Assistant PHPM 624: Health Care Financial Management II
2019 -2020	Graduate Teaching Consultant, Texas A&M University Center for Teaching Excellence How Learning Works, Teaching Strategies, Classroom Management, Communication,
2018 - 2020	Lead Teaching Assistant MPH CORE (SOPH 601, 602, 603, 604)

FUNDING RECORD: ACTIVE

Title: Resiliency: Empowering Gulf Coast Youth in the Face of Disasters

Dates: 12/01/2023 – 11/30/2026

Agency: National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Award: \$119,937

PI: Michelle Meyer

Role: Co-PI

Aim: Enhance the state's evaluation capacity by conducting an assessment of public health approaches and primary prevention principles as applied to sexual violence prevention. Assist the state in preparing application to the CDC. Provide trainings in capacity building and positive youth development approaches to state stakeholders

Title: A Right to Be Counted: Enhancing Syndromic Surveillance Capabilities for Vulnerable Gulf Communities

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

Dates: 10/01/2023 – 09/30/2024

Agency: National Academy of Sciences

Award: \$786,829

PI: William Sage

Role: Co-I

Aim: This proposal will enhance National Syndromic Surveillance Program policies to better account for SDoH, health disparities, and environmental and climate-exacerbated health outcomes while supporting and empowering vulnerable Gulf communities. This project's impact could be substantial. National public health surveillance policies are undergoing revision in the ongoing Data Modernization Initiative (DMI).

Title: Rural Community Capacity: Evacuation Experiences and Health Outcomes of Incarcerated Women

Dates: 11/05/2023 – 08/05/2024

Agency: Natural Hazards Center

Award: \$50,000

PI: Benika Dixon

Role: PI

Aim: Contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by rural communities and incarcerated women related to evacuations. For this research project we focus on the following questions in collaboration with our community partners: 1) How does rural location and lower capacity affect the safe and effective evacuation of women's prisons? 2) How do prison disaster evacuation-related experiences impact the mental health of incarcerated women?

FUNDING RECORD: CLOSED

- 2022 Texas A&M University Innovation X Grant – Co-PI **(\$20,000)**
- 2021 Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts (AVPA) Pandemic Innovative Arts Grant – “COVID-19 Experiences among Texas A&M First Generation Students, A Photovoice Project” Co-Investigator **(\$7,500)**
- 2021 Texas A&M University School of Public Health
Start-Up Research Funds
- 2020 Working Group Lead, “COVID-19 and Black Communities”. COVID-19
Working Group for Public Health and Social Sciences Research. Supported by the National Science
Foundation-funded Social Science Extreme Events Research (SSEER) network and the
CONVERGE facility at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder. **(\$1,000)**

SERVICE TO TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

- 2024 Disaster Day, Faculty Advisory Committee
- 2022-Present Omicron Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Advisor
- 2021- 2022 CDEI Pathways to the Doctorate Collaboration Grants Review Committee
- 2021- 2022 CDEI Pathways to the Doctorate Advisory Committee Member,
Texas A&M University Graduate and Professional School
- 2020 Hagler Institute Gala Student Ambassador
- 2018-2019 Disaster Day 2019, Public Health case development lead
Texas A&M University Health Science Center
- 2018 Texas A&M University Vision 2030
Impact on the State, Nation and the World Committee, Member

SERVICE TO TEXAS A&M SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH & DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIostatISTICS

- 2023-2024 Doctor of Public Health Admissions, Recruiting, Advising Committee, Member
- 2020- 2022 Epidemiology Student Organization (ESO) – Co-Advisor
- 2019 Dean Search Committee, Student Representative
Texas A&M University School of Public Health
- 2018-2019 Research Committee, Student Representative
Texas A&M University School of Public Health

Curriculum Vitae

Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

2018 MPH CORE Curriculum Committee, Member
Texas A&M University School of Public Health

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

2019-2021 Emergency Response Team Lead
Brazos Area Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated.,
2017,2018 Judge, Austin Regional Science Festival
2016-2017 Mentor, Brian L. Fontenot (BLF) Foundation
2014-2016 Maryland Defense Force, 10th Medical Regiment

CENTER AND RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

Texas A&M University Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center, Faculty Fellow
Texas A&M University USA Center for Rural Public Health Preparedness, Faculty Fellow
Climate & Incarceration Research Collective
Abolitionist Public Health Network

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & ASSOCIATIONS

American Public Health Association
Bill Anderson Fund Alumni Association
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
International Society for Disease Surveillance
National Postdoctoral Association
Society for Epidemiologic Research
Texas A&M University Postdoctoral Association
Texas Public Health Association
The Society for the Analysis of African American Public Health Issues (SAAPHI)

OTHER WORKS COMMUNICATING SCIENCE AND RESEARCH TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

KGNU Boulder Colorado Radio, "This is government-sanctioned torture": Hear how thousands live in U.S. prisons without A/C", <https://kgnu.org/climate-incarceration-symposium/> October 6, 2023
Capital B News, "As Heat Scorches Texas, Lawmakers Loosen Worker Protections", <https://capitalbnews.org/texas-heat-workers-health/>, July 3, 2023,
Dallas Morning News, "New data shows Texas prisons top 100 degrees as lawmakers debate A/C in state lockups", <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2023/04/06/new-data-shows-texas-prisons-top-100-degrees-as-lawmakers-debate-ac-in-state-lockups/>, April 6, 2023
KVUE, Amid ongoing heat issues, one Texas prison recently reached 149 degrees, new study shows, July 22, 2022, <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/local/texas/texas-prisons-heat-issues-110-degrees-july-2022/287-9724faa7-9b6f-4661-9ca1-909c50b82b45>
Texas A&M Today, "Extreme Heat At Texas Prisons An 'Ongoing But Preventable Disaster,' Report Says, July 21, 2022, [Extreme Heat At Texas Prisons An 'Ongoing But Preventable Disaster,' Report Says - Texas A&M Today \(tamu.edu\)](https://today.tamu.edu/2022/02/21/non-athlete-college-students-may-be-less-likely-to-contract-covid-19-than-young-adults-in-the-general-population/)
Pharmacy Practice News, "Lack of ECMO Increased Deaths; Millions Orphaned; Getting CPR; and Other News", <https://www.pharmacypracticenews.com/Covid-19/Article/02-22/Lack-of-ECMO-Increased-Deaths-Millions-Orphaned-Getting-CPR-and-Other-News/66231> , February 27, 2022
Texas A&M Today, "Non-Athlete College Students May Be Less Likely To Contract COVID-19 Than Young Adults In The General Population", <https://today.tamu.edu/2022/02/21/non-athlete-college-students-may-be-less-likely-to-contract-covid-19-than-young-adults-in-the-general-population/> ,February 21, 2022
KBTX, "Student athletes less likely to contract COVID than young adults who are not in school", <https://www.kbtx.com/2022/02/12/student-athletes-less-likely-contract-covid-than-young-adults-who-are-not-school/> , February 11, 2022

Curriculum Vitae
Benika Charrise Dixon, DrPH, MPH

CIDRAP, College football didn't fuel COVID-19 spread among players, study suggests"

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/college-football-didnt-fuel-covid-19-spread-among-players-study-suggests>, November 3, 2021

CNN, "Playing college football games didn't spread coronavirus among athletes, study suggests"

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/29/health/college-football-players-covid-19-study/index.html>, October 29, 2021

Vital Records, "Researchers found no evidence of in-game covid-19 transmission in SEC 2020 football season"

<https://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/researchers-found-no-evidence-of-in-game-covid-19-transmission-in-sec-2020-football-season/>, October 29, 2021

Environmental Factor, "Disaster research response experts share insights for pandemic"

<https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/2021/4/community-impact/disaster-response> April 2021

Disasterology, Research of the Month, August 25, 2020, <https://disasterology.substack.com/p/disasterology-august-2020?s=r>

Texas A&M Today, "Global Policy Changes Can Have Local Environmental Impact",

<https://today.tamu.edu/2020/06/09/global-policy-changes-can-have-local-environmental-impact/>, June 9, 2020

Black COVID-19 Experiences Documentary with Asha Winfield

WEAA 89.9 Radio Interview with Beverly Burke, March 1, 2012. "First Responder" is a radio discussion to talk about everyday emergencies and preparedness in the community.