



## **Candidate Nomination**

To nominate a colleague for a Governing Council position, please ask them to fill out the information below. Please also fill this out if this is a self-nomination.

**Nominee's name:** Ellen Denzen, MS  
**Title and organization:** Health Services Research Analyst, National Marrow Donor Program  
**Address:** 3001 Broadway St NE Minneapolis, MN 55413  
**Phone number:** 612-884-8652  
**Email address:** edenzen@nmdp.org  
**Nomination for:**

X Member-at-large (2-year term)

### **1. Describe your primary public health interests.**

My primary public health interests include health disparities, the impact of chronic illness on quality of life and patient self-advocacy.

As a researcher, I work to eliminate health disparities in access to quality health care and services for underserved cord blood and marrow transplantation (transplant) populations. These populations include racial and ethnic minority groups, individuals living in rural areas, those aged 50 years or older and individuals with low health literacy.

Through research conducted at the National Marrow Donor Program, I collaborate with other investigators and program specialists to address barriers to transplant by 1) evaluating outreach programs focused on increasing access to cancer patient education materials; 2) identifying the psychosocial needs of cancer patients, their families and caregivers; 3) assessing utilization of transplant health services and 4) conducting policy analysis on financial barriers related to insurance coverage of transplant. I am also interested in the impact of chronic illnesses, such as cancer, on quality of life for patients, families and caregivers. For example, I am collaborating on an initiative to develop a tool for creating survivorship care plans for cancer patients and their families. Survivorship care plans identify not only necessary long-term follow-up care but also resources to address psychosocial needs unique to transplant patients, caregivers and their families.

As a health advocate, I am passionate about developing ways to improve patient self-advocacy skills. Specifically, I co-authored an abstract on the program evaluation of transplant case management including the impact on patient self-advocacy. Currently, we are in the process of submitting a manuscript to the American Journal of Evaluation.

### **2. What do you feel is a key issue which should be addressed by MPHA during the next two years?**

First, I would like to highlight a few of the recent successes of the MPHA. In the past two years, MPHA has successfully implemented a member-based action alert network for timely advocacy; identified strategies for outreach to other public health organizations (e.g. MN Cancer Alliance, American heart Association, MN for Health Kids Coalition); and improved outreach to MPHA

members through a needs assessment survey and an updated website. In the future, MPHA should continue to meet members' needs; increase visibility among public health organizations, professionals and legislators; and further strengthen partnerships with allied public health agencies. Strengthening these partnerships will have a lasting impact on public health in Minnesota by concentrating efforts to achieve change in legislation; increasing awareness among constituents; and promoting healthy behaviors such as exercising, smoking cessation, and healthy choices about alcohol use. Working cooperatively with organizations such as MN Department of Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN, and the University of MN, School of Public Health can assist the MPHA with identifying potential sources of funding, providing access to networks of individuals that may become new MPHA members, and offering learning and leadership opportunities to MPHA members. In addition to the council responsibilities, I will apply my program evaluation skills, coach and mentor new MPHA members, lend my experience to developing strategic processes, as well as cultivate and assess organizational partnerships.

**3. Please describe your past involvement in MPHA.**

I have been a member of the MPHA since June 2009 and an active member of the MPHA Policy and Advocacy Committee. As a member of this committee, I had the opportunity to collaborate on the development of the MPHA Legislative Survey. The goal of this survey was to determine which public health topics should receive greatest focus during the next few years and how MPHA can provide better information to members and other audiences. Specifically, I was able to provide expert recommendations on the overall organization of the survey and the format of survey questions. In partnership with other committee members, I have drafted a resolution on the "The Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act" in support of the American Heart Association and the MN Healthy Communities Act. I have also joined the 2010 MPHA Annual Meeting Planning Committee as a volunteer. Our goal will be to provide a forum in which to discuss health reform from the MN perspective and an opportunity for public health professionals from all over the state to meet and share thoughts/ideas on MN public health issues. I hope to increase my capacity to serve the MPHA by taking a leadership role on the MPHA Governing Council as member-at-large.

**4. Describe why you would be a good candidate to serve on the MPHA Governing Council.**

I am an excellent fit given my integrity and dependability, willingness to assume responsibility, and ability to share leadership and recognition. I have strong planning, administration, resource management, and research expertise.

I have been a Health Services Research Analyst within the Patient Services division at the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) since receiving a Masters of Science (M.S.) in Health Services Research from the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota in 2009. Prior to that, I held an internship position as a health services research assistant at the NMDP for two years. As a graduate student, I was also a Teaching Assistant and student mentor.

I bring to MPHA a strong commitment to eliminating health disparities and improving the health of all Minnesotans through program evaluation, coaching and mentoring, developing strategic processes, and cultivating and assessing partnerships.

Research dissemination informs the general population about advances in public health. I recently co-authored two articles:

- 1) Access to Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation in the United States. (2010). *Biology of Blood and Marrow Transplant* (in press)
- 2) Educating Blood and Marrow Transplant Nurses on the National Marrow Donor Programs Materials and Resources. (2009). *The Oncology Nursing Forum*, 36 (3), 28.

In my work as a public health professional I have developed strong collaborative skills which are essential to achieving MPHA goals. I had the opportunity to mentor and coach other researchers while working on a rural health initiative. I was able to share resources and reviewed their writing assignments to assist them in their first abstract submission.

The Health Services Research program at the NMDP is new and has given me valuable experience in program planning and process improvement. I contributed to the development of the Health Services Research Program 2010 strategic plan, risk assessment and mitigation. I value diversity and actively seek diverse perspectives. My past community leadership activities have included volunteering for Home Free, a domestic violence shelter, Fairview Hospital intensive care unit and College Nannies and Tutors as a math and science tutor. Although I have recently entered the professional realm, I have developed a strong public health network that I can access to assist MPHA in achieving its strategic goals. My network includes national level memberships to the Academy Health (national governing body for health services research) Disparities Interest Group, American Association for Public Opinion Research and American Evaluation Association. I understand the responsibilities of a Governing Council member and commit to fulfilling this role. I look forward to being part of the esteemed MPHA Governing Council to further the organization mission - to create a healthier Minnesota through effective public health practice and engaged citizens. This opportunity will enrich my professional experience; I hope to be accepted to the Minnesota Emerging Leaders Network in the future.