Doctoral students in the East Tennessee State University College of Public Health recently facilitated workshops on project planning and logic model development for Tennessee Department of Health staff as part of the Evaluation in Public Health course taught by Dr. Deborah Slawson, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Community and Behavioral Health.

Working with Bruce Behringer, Deputy Commissioner for Continuous Improvement and Planning with the Tennessee Department of Health, and Adam Jarvis, Customer Engagement Coordinator of the Tennessee Department of Health, the students carried out sessions targeting key strategies related to tobacco control initiatives under way as a part of the Tobacco Settlement funding initiative.

Governor Bill Haslam and the Tennessee State Legislature provided $15 million over three years - $5 million each year - to be distributed to all health departments across the state to focus on prevention of tobacco use among the state’s population. Staff representing every health department in the state were in attendance, with over 130 attendees taking part in lively discussions about evidence-based strategies for program implementation and evaluation. Doctor of Public Health Program students L. Carter Florence, Janice Greene, Paula Masters, Beth O’Connell, and Daniel Owusu led Strategy Sessions for program participants, with an assist by student Megan Housenick.

Mr. Behringer notes: “This course is now the third time the College has been very helpful in helping us steer the direction and depth of evaluation for the State’s Tobacco Settlement Program. Tennessee ranks #47 in adult tobacco use in the US. We need to focus our attention on the use of best practices all across the state, and help our county health departments to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of community selected projects. I really appreciated Dr. Slawson’s willingness and the doctoral students’ efforts to help us along.”