ETSU doctoral students publish book chapter on diabetes in Appalachia

JOHNSON CITY – Rachel Ward and Christian Williams, two recent doctoral graduates from East Tennessee State University’s College of Public Health, have co-written a chapter in the recently published book, “Public Health in Appalachia: Essays from the Clinic and the Field.”

Along with Dr. Carl J. Greever, Ward and Williams co-wrote the chapter titled, “The Growing Problem of Diabetes in Appalachia.” Greever is a family physician who practiced in Appalachia for more than 50 years.

The chapter explores some of the factors that cause diabetes to be worse in Appalachia than in other parts of the country. It focuses on changes in dietary habits, the impact of smoking and sedentary lifestyles, and the socio-economic realities of Appalachia as they impact the causes and consequences of diabetes in the region. The authors also propose some potential solutions to address the challenge.

The book, edited by Wendy Welch, and published by McFarland & Company, is the 35th publication of the “Contributions to Southern Appalachian Studies” series.

The chapter was written while Ward and Williams were completing their doctoral programs, each with a concentration in community and behavioral health.

Ward’s research interests have recently focused on the impact of local food/agriculture on public health. She received a masters of public health from East Carolina University and a bachelor’s degree in public policy analysis from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Williams has focused her research on issues related to quality improvement in local health departments. She received her masters of public health in health services administration and a bachelor’s degree in public health from ETSU.

After graduation, Ward and her husband, a family physician, will be going to work in Togo through World Medical Mission. Williams will be joining the Department of Public Health at Western Kentucky University as a visiting assistant professor.

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