Public Health Doctoral Student, Beth O’Connell was selected to present a poster of her research "Ensuring safe water in developing communities: establishing a field use indicator for biosand water filters" at the Graduate Education Day on Capitol Hill, as a part of the meeting of the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools. Ms. O’Connell was joined by one of her faculty mentor Dr. Megan Quinn, of the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

Ms. O’Connell, who is pursuing a Doctor of Public Health Degree in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health, was selected by ETSU’s School of Graduate Studies to help to represent the unique and relevant research being conducted at ETSU. Her research, being carried out at ETSU’s Valleybrook campus, and in the Environmental Health Sciences Lab, is looking at whether it might be possible to develop a mechanism that would identify when a biosand water filter is no longer working. Biosand water filters were developed in the 1990s, as a way that families, communities and small business, could produce clean water. According to Manz Water Information, over one million filters have been distributed in over 100 countries. They are typically “used by individual families, often shared with extended family members, friends and neighbours.”

Ms. O’Connell used biosand water filters during her work in Rwanda. One of her trips to Rwanda was part of her official internship program as an undergraduate student. That travel was supported, in part, by the Hope Through Healing Hands Foundation and the Niswonger Foundation.

Ms. O’Connell’s current research is supported by a Research Development Committee Major Grant, that was awarded to Dr. Quinn (as Principal Investigator), Dr. Phil Scheuerman, of the Department of Environmental Health, as Co-investigator, and Ms. O’Connell as the research assistant.

Ms. O’Connell completed both the Bachelor of Public Health and the Master of Public Health degrees at ETSU.