



## On the Front Lines: UMB Champions of Excellence: Center for Health and Homeland Security Team

October 14, 2020 | Laura Lee

Working on-site and staying on-task, an eight-member team tirelessly provides COVID-19 crisis consulting at emergency operations centers across the state of Maryland.

The **Champions of Excellence** campaign is a multiyear branding campaign at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) in which we highlight individuals and teams that exemplify extraordinary accomplishment and represent excellence at the University. This year, UMB is highlighting the employees who've done exemplary work since the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in March. During the next few months, The Elm will be featuring these UMB Champions, who are making Baltimore, our region, and in some cases the world a better place.



Today: Center for Health and Homeland Security Team

When many Marylanders retreated to their homes in mid-March after Gov. Larry Hogan announced a statewide lockdown to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, eight employees from the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security (CHHS) did the exact opposite. They began working 12-hour shifts, seven days a week at emergency operations centers across the state and became a vital component of Maryland's pandemic response and recovery.

Michael Greenberger, JD, has seen this type of dedication since the 2002 founding of CHHS, a University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) center that partners closely with the Francis King Carey School of Law to provide governmental and institutional organizations with tailored and comprehensive consulting services on emergency management and homeland security. He says the eight-person team went "above and beyond" the call of duty, leaving the safety of their homes to work grueling hours during an unprecedented health crisis.

(See video below.)

"These people shifted into these responsibilities and never said a word about the fact that this was not what they signed up for," said Greenberger, founder and director of CHHS. "They just went and did it — and did so without complaint. Our partners have offered nothing but the highest of praise for their work."

For these efforts, the team members were named UMB Champions of Excellence: Hassan Sheikh, PharmD, JD; Jihane Ambrose, MPH, CPH; Joseph Corona, CEM; Samantha Durbin, MS; Patrick Fleming, MPA, MSL; Ian Hamilton, MS; Netta Squires, JD, MSL, CEM; and Kimberly Stinchcomb, MPH, CPH. Their work — which involves everything from finding ventilators to developing policies — provides direct support to emergency management agencies and health departments coping with COVID-19 throughout Maryland.

Each team member can recount stories about how they responded to the emergency health needs of Maryland's citizens, and Sheikh's work hits home in Baltimore. A former pharmacist and 2018 Carey School of Law graduate, he's using his expertise in pharmacy and law to help the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) procure and distribute personal protective equipment to health care facilities. He's also developing mass vaccination guidance and trainings to help ensure a smooth rollout once a COVID-19 vaccine becomes widely available.

Sheikh, who quickly pivoted his role at BCHD from planning to response, said the work is extremely gratifying.

"I've had health care providers call me sometimes crying and upset," he said. "We've been able to come up with a game plan about how we're going to tackle these challenges. I feel like every day is an exercise in how I can give back to our community."

Greenberger said the exhaustive efforts of Sheikh and his seven colleagues are "remarkable."

"They do it seven days a week, 12 hours a day, and they manage their family life on top of that," said Greenberger, who added that he's confident any of CHHS' 40 staff members could skillfully manage this type of COVID-19 front-line work. "This group reflects all of the great attributes of the center's staff, and for that reason we are very proud."

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