

CURRICULUM VITAE

**KARLA SOFIA MÉNDEZ**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES

UTHEALTH HOUSTON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

5130 GATEWAY EAST BLVD

EL PASO, TEXAS, 79905

**Office Number:** 915-975-8533

**E-mail:** Karla.Mendez@uth.tmc.edu

**EDUCATION**

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- Ph.D.** University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston 2019 – 2022  
School of Public Health  
Major: Environmental Disease Prevention  
Minor: Epidemiology  
Dissertation: “Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment of Water Reuse”  
Advisor: Dr. Kristina Mena
- M.P.H.** University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston 2017 – 2019  
School of Public Health  
Customized: Epidemiology
- B.S.** University of Texas at El Paso 2013 – 2016  
Biological Sciences

**APPOINTMENTS**

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- Assistant Professor**, Non-Tenure Track 2022 – Present  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health
- Graduate Teaching Associate** 2020 – 2022  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health
- Graduate Teaching Assistant** 2018 – 2020  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health
- Research Assistant** 2019 – 2021  
Obstetrics and Gynecology Department  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, TX

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

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- Water Quality
- Quantitative Risk Assessment
- Water Resources Management
- Environmental Public Health

**PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

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1. Kahn, D., Chen, W., Linden, Y., Corbeil, K. A., Lowry, S., Higham, C. A., **Mendez, K. S.**, Burch, P., DiFondi, T., Verhougstraete, M., De Roos, A. J., Haas, C. N., Gerba, C., & Hamilton, K. A. (2024). A microbial risk assessor's guide to Valley Fever (*Coccidioides* spp.): Case study and review of risk factors. *The Science of the Total Environment*, 917, 170141–170141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2024.170141>.
2. Gitter, A., Mena, K.D., **Mendez, K.S.**, Wu, F., & Gerba, C.P. (2024). Eye Infection Risks from *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* via hand soap and eye drops. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*. 90(4), e02119- 23. doi: 10.1128/aem.02119-23.
3. Gitter, A., Boellstorff, D.E., Gholson, D. M., Pieper, K.J., Mena, K.D., **Mendez, K.S.** & Gentry, T.J. (2023). Texas well user stewardship practices three years after Hurricane Harvey. *Water*. 15(22), 3943. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w15223943>.
4. Radtke, S. J., Umeh, R., Chavez, M., Curiel, Z., & **Mendez, K.** (2020). Telemedicine for Delivery of Postoperative Care Following Minimally-Invasive Gynecologic Surgery: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynecology*, 27(7), S113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmig.2020.08.179>.
5. Knell, G., Robertson, M. C., Dooley, E. E., Burford, K., & **Mendez, K. S.** (2020). Health Behavior Changes During COVID-19 Pandemic and Subsequent "Stay-at-Home" Orders. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(17), 6268. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17176268>

**TEACHING**

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| • Co-Instructor (90%): PHM 2135L/PHD 2135L<br><i>Risk Analysis – Principles and Practice</i> | Spring 2023 |
| • Instructor (100%): PHM 2110L<br><i>Public Health Ecology &amp; the Human Environment</i>   | Spring 2023 |
| • Co-Instructor (90%): PHM 2110L   | Summer 2023 |

- *Public Health Ecology & the Human Environment*  
Co-Instructor (80%): PHM 2110L Summer 2023
- *Public Health Ecology & the Human Environment*  
Co-Instructor (50%): PHM 2496 Fall 2023
- *Capstone for EOHS Students*  
Instructor (100%): PHM 2110L Fall 2023
- *Public Health Ecology & the Human Environment*  
Co-Instructor (50%): PHD 2105L Fall 2023
- *EOHS Doctoral Seminar*  
Co-Instructor (33.30%): PHM 2996 Spring 2024
- *Capstone for EPID Students*  
Instructor (100%): PHM 2496 Spring 2024
- *Capstone for EOHS Students*  
Instructor (100%): PHM 2135L/PHD 2135L Spring 2024
- *Risk Analysis – Principles and Practice*  
Co-Instructor (50%): PHD 2105L Spring 2024
- *EOHS Doctoral Seminar*  
Instructor (100%): PH 2491 Summer 2024
- *Public Health Preparedness & Disaster Response*  
Instructor (100%): PHM 2496 Fall 2024
- *Capstone for EOHS Students*  
Co-Instructor (50%): PHD 2105L Fall 2024
- *EOHS Doctoral Seminar*

#### INVITED PRESENTATIONS/PANELS

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**Society, Community and the Individual (SCI) Invited Speaker** August 1, 2024  
 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, TX  
 Environmental Health Session – Presentation given to 1<sup>st</sup> year Medical and Dental Students  
 Presentation Title: Environmental Hazards

**QMRA Flash Talk Invited Speaker** June 11, 2024  
 The Microbial Risk Assessment Specialty Group  
 Presentation Title: Application of Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment in Water Reuse

**El Paso County Medical Society Invited Speaker** April 18, 2024  
 El Paso, TX  
 Presentation Title: Water and Public Health: Benefits and Risks to the Community (Trejo, G., Ocaranza, H., Mendez, K.)

**Women in STEM Conference Invited Panel Participant** April 12, 2024  
 She Creates, El Paso, TX

**Society, Community and the Individual (SCI) Invited Speaker** August 3, 2023  
 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, TX

Environmental Health Session – Presentation given to 1<sup>st</sup> year Medical and Dental Students  
Presentation Title: Environmental Hazards

**Young Women’s Empowerment Conference Invited Panel Participant** May 18, 2023  
The Southwest Women’s Leadership Institute, El Paso, TX

**Pediatric Environmental Health Elective Course Webcast Speaker** Sept 13, 2022  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, TX  
Presentation Title: Water Reuse – What Are the Risks?

**2022 Virtual Bioscience Poster Session** Feb 22, 2022  
Medical Center of the Americas Foundation, El Paso, TX  
Poster Title: *Reusing Water for Drinking Water: What Are the Risks?*

**Pediatric Environmental Health Grand Rounds** July 15, 2021  
**Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health Region 6 Webcast Speaker**  
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, TX  
Presentation Title: Water Reuse – What Are the Risks? (Mena, K., **Mendez, K.S.**)

**Water Reuse Webcast – Communicating about Potable Reuse and Public Health: Tools for Success; Webcast Speaker** Feb 17, 2021  
WaterReuse Association  
Presentation Title: What Are the Risks to Resiliency? (Mena, K., **Mendez, K.S.**)

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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**WaterReuse 2024 Symposium** March 2024  
Title: *Engaging the Medical & Public Health Community in Water Reuse*  
Presenters: **Mendez, K.**, Montoya, C., Trejo, G., Ocaranza, H., Perkison, B.

**WaterReuse 2022 Symposium** March 2022  
Title: *Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment of Water Reuse*  
Presenters: **Mendez, K.**

## ROUNDTABLES

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**Executive Roundtable on El Paso’s Water Future** September 2023  
El Paso Water

## PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE

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**Board Member** 2024 – Current  
Rio Grande Citizens Forum Board of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)

**CEPH Accreditation Steering Committee Member** 2024 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Representative  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**MD/MPH Dual Degree Program Director** August 2024 – Current  
with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine  
El Paso, TX

**DMD/MPH Dual Degree Program Director** August 2024 – Current  
with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Woody L. Hunt School of Dental  
Medicine, El Paso, TX

**Preliminary Exam Chair** 2023 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**School-wide Course Review Committee** 2023 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Chair  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**Coordinator of Medical Community Engagement in Water Reuse Initiative** 2023 – Current  
with El Paso Water. El Paso, TX.

**Academic Council Member** 2023 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Representative  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**Admissions Committee Member** 2023 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**Curriculum Coordinator** August 2023 – Current  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**El Paso Campus Scholarship Committee** 2023 – Current  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**Southwest Center for Occupational & Environmental Health Member** 2023 – Current  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

**Curriculum Committee Member** Jan. – July 2023  
Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Department  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### Reviewer

May 2023 – Current

- *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*
- *Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education*

### Reviewer

May 2023

NIOSH Pilot Projects Research Training Program

### Participant

July – August 2022

Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment Interdisciplinary Vehicle (QMRA IV)

Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Mentors: Chuck Haas, Ph.D., NAE, BCEEM, LD Betz Professor of Environmental Engineering, Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering, Drexel University.

Kerry Hamilton, Ph.D., M.H.S., Associate Professor, School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment, Arizona State University

## STUDENT ADVISING

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Student Name	Degree	Role	Institution
Dina Fayed	MPH (2023-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Dionibe Some	Ph.D. (2023-ongoing)	Doctoral Committee Member	UTHealth Houston SPH
Olatunde A. Oladipupo	MPH (2024) *	Mentor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Andrea Aguirre Galeano	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Katherine M. Joseph	Ph.D. (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Ezequiel Acevedo	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Andrew Bao	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Ellie Cherryhomes	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Sangavai Senthil Kumar	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Meg Lawrence	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Karen Pineda	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Ananya Potu	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Brandon Ta	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Teresa Valenciahuerta	MPH (2024-ongoing)	Academic Advisor	UTHealth Houston SPH
Mahmoud K. Diallo	PhD (2024-ongoing)	Dissertation Chair	UTHealth Houston SPH

\*Graduated

