Careers in Public Health and Our Training Programs

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OHSU-PSU School of Public Health Initiative
Outline

• What is “public health”?

• What are the career opportunities?

• Who matches up with public health as a career?

• Overview of degree programs at OHSU & PSU
“Public Health” is characterized very narrowly in the media.
“Public Health” = “Epidemics”
True, the roots of epidemiology and public health are in infectious disease

But, public health is much more...
Environmental Health
Community Health Education
Needle Exchange Programs
Built Environment
Policy for Healthy Communities

10 Winnable Battles

- Unintended Pregnancy
- Injuries
- Obesity
- Clean Water
- Clean Air
- Tobacco
- Safe Food
- Oral Health
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Infectious Disease Prevention

Policy for Healthy Communities
School-Based Health Centers
Primary Health Care & Health Disparities
Health Care Reform

“Better Health and Better Care at Lower Cost”
So what is “public health”? 

[Images of health-related posters and advertisements]
First, what is meant by “health”?

• More than the simple absence of disease

• It is the ability to realize aspirations, to have the personal and social resources, and physical capacities, to meet potential.

• This definition can be applied to an individual, or a group of people.
What is meant by “public” health?

• Organized community efforts to protect, promote, and restore the people’s health.

• It is a combination of the sciences, skills, and beliefs to maintain and improve the health of all people through collective and social actions.

• Public health can refer to:
  – social institutions
  – a discipline
  – a practice

• Roots of the discipline are in social justice and equality
What is meant by health “disparities” and health “equity”?

It is a difference in which disadvantaged social groups systematically experience worse health or greater health risks than more advantaged social groups.

“Social advantage” refers to relative position in the social hierarchy determined by wealth, power, or prestige.
Who does public health?

• Governmental Organizations
  – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  – State & County Health Departments
  – Tribal health agencies

• Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
  – Red Cross, Mercy Corps, Doctors Without Borders
  – American Cancer Society, American Lung Association
  – Outside-In, Planned Parenthood, CareOregon

• Private Organizations
  – Northwest Health Foundation
  – Gates Foundation
  – Industry (worker wellness)
Who matches up with this career?

Someone who:
• likes to help people
• has a strong sense of social justice
• is interested in prevention
• enjoys community organizing
• is interested in policy and program delivery
Types of Public Health Degrees

• **BA/BS:** The undergraduate degree in community/public health prepares students for working in the health field
  ✓ Most students go on for graduate work

• **MPH:** Master in Public Health degree is the professional practice degree
  ✓ Most common degree in government organizations
  ✓ Allows you to lead disease prevention programs, grants management, community education programs & policy work

• **PhD/DrPH:** The academic degree offered by Schools of Public Health
  ✓ the doctoral degree gives you the ability to obtain grant funding and teach at the college level
The MPH Degree

Admission Requirements

• Bachelor’s Degree
• An Intro to Statistics course
• GPA > 3.0
• GRE Exam
• Personal statement
• Letters of reference
• Helpful: some health care experience and/or research experience

Coursework

• 2 years to complete
• 1st yr: Classroom training (lectures and labs/discussion)
• 2nd yr: Field internships & research (in agencies and communities)
• Immediately ready for employment/career
The Oregon MPH Program has **Six** MPH tracks

- **Epidemiology**
  - training in research skills for understanding disease and developing ways to prevent disease in the health care setting, community, and workplace

- **Biostatistics**
  - training in both applied statistical methods and public health concepts for analyzing and addressing health problems

- **Environmental Systems & Human Health**
  - training for students who would like to investigate and remediate environmental impacts on public health
The Oregon MPH Program has **Six** MPH tracks

- **Health Promotion**
  - prepares students to develop, implement, and evaluate culturally sensitive health promotion and behavior change programs

- **Health Management & Policy**
  - develops the knowledge and practice of the delivery and management of health services, for effective policy and administration leadership

- **Primary Health Care & Health Disparities**
  - training for clinical leadership roles in the population perspective of health care and disease prevention.
All students take a Core Curriculum

- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Health Systems Organization
- Environmental Health
- Principles of Health Behavior
Epidemiology Curriculum

**Required courses**
- Epidemiology 2-3-4
- Biostatistics 2-3
- Research Design
- Current Issues in Public Health
- Ethics
- Etiology of Disease

**Field Experience**

**Electives (partial list)**
- Infectious Disease Epi
- Environmental/Occupational Epi
- Global Health Epi
- HIV/AIDS Epi
- Nutritional Epi
- Chronic Disease Epi
- Qualitative Methods
- GIS/Spatial Analysis
- Longitudinal Data Analysis
- Maternal Child Health
- American Indian/Alaska Native Health
- Disability & Public Health
Health Promotion Curriculum

**Required courses**
- Community Organizing
- Mass Communications
- Program Evaluation
- Foundations of Public Health
- Health Promotion
- Qualitative Research
- Quantitative Research
- Values & Ethics
- Etiology of Disease

**Electives (partial list)**
- Media Advocacy
- Program Planning
- Mass Communication
- Physical Activity and Health
- Nutrition and Health
- Women’s Health

**Field Experience**
Other Public Health Degree Programs

- **Graduate Certificate of Public Health**
  - Online program

- **Dual Master’s Degrees**
  - The MPH can be combined with an MD, or Master’s in Urban Planning or Social Work

- **PhD Programs**
  - Epidemiology
  - Health Systems & Policy
  - Community Health
Employers who hire MPH degrees

• State and county health departments
• Health care agencies
• Federal agencies
• Private companies
• Nonprofits
• Foundations
• Consulting

PUBLIC HEALTH LAWYER
FOOD SCIENTIST
NUTRITIONIST
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS SPECIALIST
PUBLIC HEALTH PHYSICIAN
EPIDEMIOLOGIST
ENVIRONMENTALIST
CAREERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH
HEALTH ADVOCACY SPECIALIST
BIOSTATISTICIAN
EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR
HEALTH ECONOMIST
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