

## **GENERAL CAREER INFORMATION**

The mission of public health is to fulfill society's interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy. Public health carries out its mission through organized, interdisciplinary efforts that address the physical, mental and environmental health concerns of communities and populations at risk for disease and injury. Its mission is achieved through the application of health promotion and disease prevention technologies and interventions designed to improve and enhance quality of life. Health promotion and disease prevention technologies encompass a broad array of functions and expertise, including the three core public health functions:

- assessment and monitoring of the health of communities and populations at risk to identify health problems and priorities;
- formulating public policies, in collaboration with community and government leaders, designed to solve identified local and national health problems and priorities;
- assuring that all populations have access to appropriate and cost-effective care, including health promotion and disease prevention services, and evaluation of the effectiveness of that care

The Ten Essential Public Health Services:

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems
- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

Healthcare dynamics have changed rapidly and public health has necessarily emerged on a broader and more vital front. Today, professionals in the field take leadership roles in addressing national and international problems. Following the eradication of smallpox, public health professionals have implemented programs to eradicate polio and guinea worm disease. They work to contain the worldwide epidemic of HIV/AIDS, the re-emergence of TB in the U.S., and the Ebola virus epidemics in Africa. Community specialists conduct needs assessments of populations groups, as well as plan, implement, administer, and evaluate programs related to those needs. Public health professionals continue to be involved with food safety and food fortification programs that reduce the risk of nutrient deficiency diseases that have plagued us in the past, such as pellagra, rickets, and goiter.

Maternal and child health professionals design programs to improve pregnancy outcomes among African-American women who are at greater risk of delivering pre-term babies than are their Hispanic and Caucasian counterparts. Health Promotion professionals work closely with school age populations on issues relating to teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, violence, and substance abuse. Public health professionals use their expertise in economic and policy issues to solve problems of cost containment, insurance coverage for the uninsured and the underinsured, and access to care for various

populations. Specialists in the areas of occupational and environmental health deal with safety issues in workplace settings as varied as agriculture, computer manufacturing, and the petrochemical industry. Schools of public health address complex problems through education, research, and community outreach. They differ from other health-related schools in that they are oriented toward community and prevention rather than toward the individual and treatment. Students are made aware of the necessity for interdisciplinary cooperation, and they develop the skills necessary to address today's complex health problems. This emphasis on interdisciplinary activity and cooperation presents opportunities for students from a variety of academic backgrounds.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION**

Schools of public health offer a range of degree programs that generally include the Master of Public Health (MPH), the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), Master of Science (MS), and PhD. The areas of specialty in the degree programs vary from school to school, as do the GPA, GRE, and TOEFL requirements, work requirements for admission, the thesis or non-thesis status, minimum number of credit hours required for graduation, and the tuition and living costs. Many of the schools also offer joint degree programs such as MD/MPH, JD/MPH, MSW/MPH, MSN/MPH, etc, and many maintain degree programs on more than one campus.

Regardless of their choice of public health specialties, all students take introductory courses in biostatistics and epidemiology, sciences basic to public health. Most schools also require one or more courses in health administration, environmental health and behavioral sciences. These core areas are essential for a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree and recommended for all degree candidates. Once an area of concentration has been chosen, a student and his or her advisor will develop a course of study geared to the student's individual professional goals, encompassing classroom activity, a supervised field experience, and a significant research or laboratory project. Many schools either require or strongly recommend some type of work experience before enrollment and most encourage their students to seek summer employment which will further develop and enrich their public health background.

While there are dozens of specialties in public health, most career opportunities are found in the following fields.

### Health Services Administration

Persons seeking careers in administration or resource management in the public or private sectors of health service delivery can specialize in health planning, organization, policy formulation and analysis, finance, economics or marketing.

### Biostatistics

Career opportunities in this area involve the application of statistical procedures, techniques and methodology to characterize or investigate health problems and programs.

### Epidemiology

Due to a nationwide shortage, opportunities abound for specialists trained in the systematic study of the distribution and determinants of disease or disability in population groups.

### Behavioral Sciences/Health Education

These specialists use specific methods, skills and program strategies to help people choose

healthier lifestyles, to make more efficient use of health services, to adopt self-care practices and to participate actively in the design and implementation of programs that affect health.

Environmental Health Sciences

Environmental health includes in many diverse disciplines such as chemistry, toxicology and engineering, and are concerned with the identification, and control of factors in the natural and man-made environment (air, water, land, housing) which affect health

There are several good online sources for additional information about careers in public health.

Association of Schools of Public Health

<http://www.asph.org>

American Public Health Association

<http://www.apha.org>

What is Public Health?

<http://www.whatispublichealth.org>

**PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION IN TEXAS**

There are three public health schools in Texas: University of North Texas Health Sciences Center School of Public Health (Fort Worth), and Texas A&M University School of Rural Public Health (College Station) and The University of Texas School of Public Health (Houston). The UT School of Public Health also has regional campuses in Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, El Paso, and San Antonio. For information regarding admission requirements and program curriculum, students should refer to the individual school websites.

Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health

<http://www.srph.tamhsc.edu>

University of Texas School of Public Health

<http://www.sph.uth.tmc.edu>

University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health

<http://www.hsc.unt.edu/education/sph>

**ACCREDITED SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

The list and web address of accredited and affiliated schools of public health follows. Students should consult the website of each school for details about its program and admission requirements.

Boston University School of Public Health

<http://www.bumc.bu.edu/SPH/internet.htm>

Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

<http://www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu>

Emory University Rollins School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.emory.edu>

George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services  
<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs>

Harvard School of Public Health  
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu>

Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health  
<http://www.jhsph.edu>

Loma Linda University School of Public Health  
<http://www.llu.edu/llu/sph>

Ohio State University School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.osu.edu>

Saint Louis University School of Public Health  
<http://www.slu.edu/colleges/sph>

San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health  
<http://publichealth.sdsu.edu>

Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine  
<http://www.sph.tulane.edu>

University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health  
<http://www.uab.edu/PublicHealth>

University of Albany SUNY School of Public Health  
<http://www.albany.edu/sph>

University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health  
<http://sph.berkeley.edu>

University of California at Los Angeles School of Public Health  
<http://www.ph.ucla.edu>

University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health  
<http://www.uic.edu/sph>

University of Iowa College of Public Health  
<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu>

University of Massachusetts Schools of Public Health  
<http://www.umass.edu/soph>

University of Michigan School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.umich.edu>

University of Minnesota School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.umn.edu>

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.unc.edu>

University of Oklahoma College of Public Health  
<http://w3.ouhsc.edu/coph>

University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health  
<http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu>

University of Puerto Rico School of Public Health  
<http://www.rcm.upr.edu/PublicHealth>

University of South Carolina School of Public Health  
<http://www.sph.sc.edu>

University of South Florida School of Public Health  
<http://www.hsc.usf.edu/publichealth>

University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine  
<http://depts.washington.edu/sphcm>

Yale University School of Public Health  
<http://info.med.yale.edu/eph>

## **OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOLS**

Arizona College of Public Health  
<http://publichealth.arizona.edu>

Indiana University at Indianapolis Department of Public Health  
<http://www.pbhealth.iupui.edu>

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
<http://www.lshtm.ac.uk>

MCP Hahnemann University School of Public Health  
<http://publichealth.drexel.edu/1/>

University of Connecticut Health Center Graduate Program in Public Health  
<http://publichealth.uconn.edu>

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – School of Public Health  
<http://sph.umdj.edu>

University of Tennessee School of Public Health  
[http://hes.utk.edu/grad/public\\_health.html](http://hes.utk.edu/grad/public_health.html)