

# Public Health Practice



## Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health  
*Student Practicum Experiences*  
Summer 2014 – DrPH Students

Prevention diabetes safe kids clean water policy disaster response  
cancer adolescent sexual health HIV/AIDS research obesity  
alcohol empowerment vaccinations maternal & child health

The practicum experience is an integral part of the MPH and DrPH curricula. Public health students are provided with the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to real world settings through which they make a meaningful contribution to a public health organization.

Under the guidance of a community preceptor and faculty sponsor, students from all divisions gain a deeper understanding of public health practice, interact with professionals in the field, and expand their repertoire of professional skills.

This fourteenth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Summer 2014 semester. (Prior semesters may be accessed through the e-book, a collection of student abstracts and e-magazines describing their experiences.)



# Practicum Topics

Serving Size: 1 Practicum per Student

Servings per e-Magazine: 4

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Hours per Week per Student	Approximately 12
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Divisions	2
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Student

## Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences

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Improving Child Health	Meredith Craft
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Preventing Rapid Repeat Pregnancy	Kimberly Geters
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Chronic Disease Self-Management Educational Programs	Barbara Kimmel
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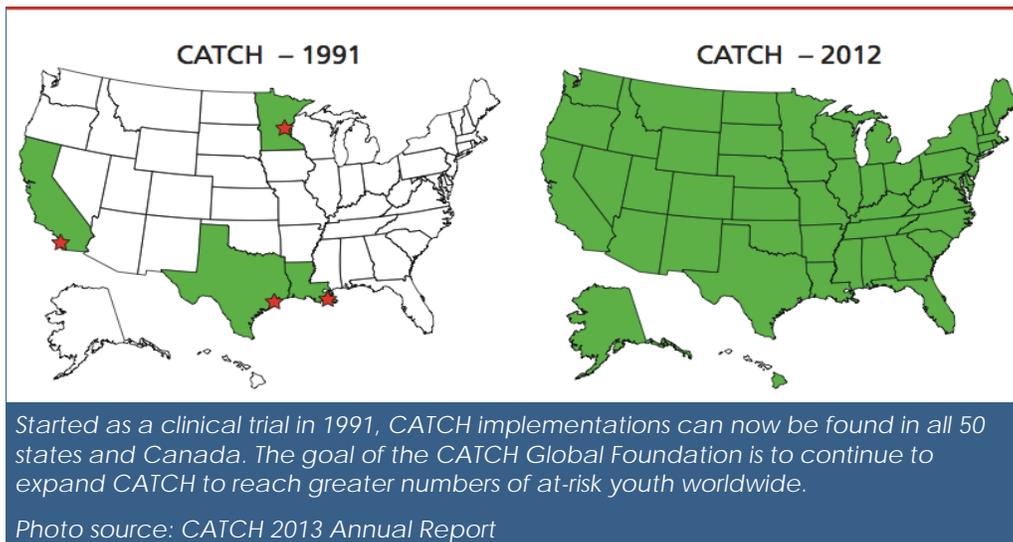
## Management, Policy & Community Health

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Leadership & Outcomes Assessment	De De Gardner
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# Improving Child Health



## Expanding the CATCH program to improve the health of at-risk youth

**Bv: Meredith Craft**

For my practicum, I worked as a development associate for the CATCH Global Foundation. CATCH is a physical activity and nutrition education program for children in pre-K through grade 8. It brings together parents, teachers, school staff, and child nutrition personnel to teach children and their families how to sustain health for a lifetime. The CATCH Global Foundation was formed earlier this year to continuously improve, market, and implement CATCH to bring

its benefits to a greater number of at-risk youth.

My responsibilities for this practicum included assisting with grant applications, developing speaker/breakout session proposals for national conferences, and participating in other communication opportunities to promote CATCH. In addition, I conducted a qualitative analysis of key informant data to better understand the perceived strengths and improvement needs for CATCH.

## Public Health Significance

The Essential Public Health Services most closely aligned with my practicum were *Inform, educate and empower people about health issues* and *Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems*.

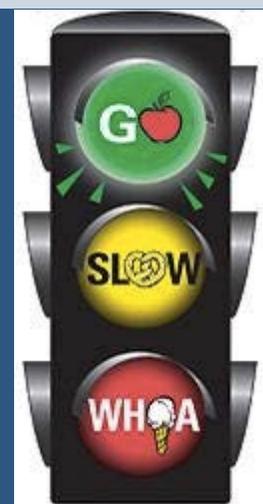
A key challenge to implementing physical activity and nutrition education programs in schools is the prioritizing of test scores over student health. During my practicum, I developed a breakout session proposal for the National School Boards Association with the goal of informing educators about the

association between student fitness and academic achievement.

A primary function of the CATCH Global Foundation is to match school districts and other child care organizations with funders to facilitate new CATCH implementations. As a result, new partnerships are formed between program implementers, departments of health, private foundations, etc. The result is a sharing of resources that allows each partner to have a greater impact on improving children's health.

## Special events/ duties during your practicum

- Developed breakout session proposals for two national conferences focused on reducing childhood obesity.
- Learned first-hand from CATCH Champions about unique implementations taking place in early childhood, school, and afterschool settings.



Go-Slow-Whoa, a key feature of CATCH, teaches kids to be conscious of their food choices

Source: [www.Flaghouse.com](http://www.Flaghouse.com)

# Preventing Rapid Repeat Pregnancy

“Increasing Awareness of the Importance of Interconception Care”

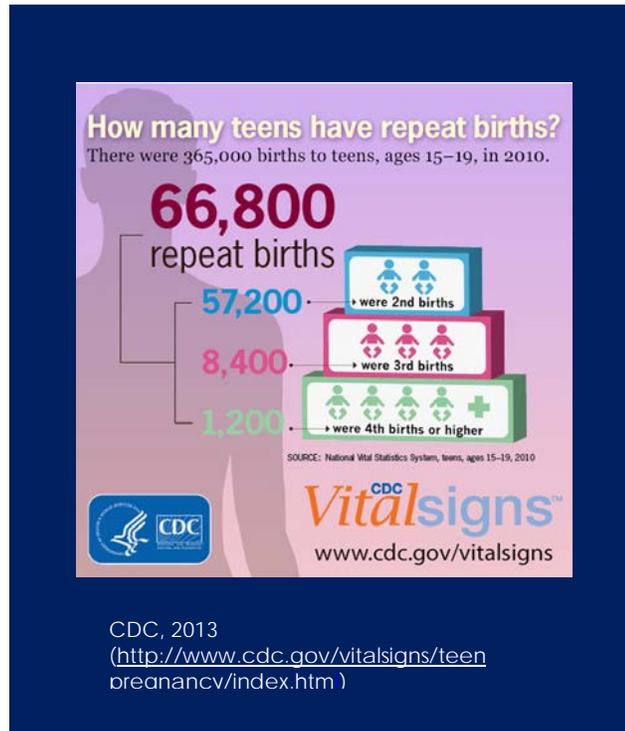
By: Kimberly Geters

I worked with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to complete a needs assessment and print media regarding the importance of preventing additional births to teen mothers.

Our goal is to provide teen mothers with the tools necessary to delay additional births until after graduation.

Interconception care is a new concept that has shown promising results using the life course perspective as a foundation in preventing additional births to teens.

Once completed, we plan to create a brochure to disseminate across Texas to programs that serve teen parents addressing the importance of interconception health.



## Highlights during your practicum

- Able to gain real world experience
- Able to network and create lasting connections that may help me in the future

## Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Don't settle for practical opportunities on the website that do not interest you, create your own project that will be meaningful to you.

## Public Health Significance

Preventing additional teen births will help to minimize health problems for a mother and her future children, reduce the disparities in adverse pregnancy outcomes, and improve outcomes for the teen mother, child, and society.

My practicum allowed me to gain experience in all 10 areas of the Essential Services of Public Health during the summer.

The Essential Services of Public Health that was most relevant to my experience was the service that includes informing, educating, and empowering. It is important that teen mothers understand the control they have over whether or not they have an additional pregnancy. The responsibility is solely up to them; and the hope is that the brochure will equip teen mothers with the tools necessary to be successful in delaying additional pregnancies until after graduation.

Even though the summer has ended, I will continue to work with DSHS on this project until evaluation of the brochure is completed.

**TEEN PREGNANCY**  
IMPROVING THE LIVES  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
STRENGTHENING  
COMMUNITIES  
BY REDUCING  
TEEN PREGNANCY

CDC, 2011  
(<http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdiseases/resources/publications/aag/teenpreg.htm>)

# CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Administration Medical Center, Houston, Texas (MEDVAMC)



Photo: courtesy of MEDVAMC website

## Collaborative Goal-Setting Intervention with Primary Care Nurses and Community of Veterans at the MEDVAMC

By: Barbara Kimmel

### OVERVIEW:

During the summer of 2014, I worked with the Primary Care Nurses from the MEDVAMC to implement a collaborative, evidence-based goal setting intervention in the community of Veterans. Applying principles of the Chronic Care Model and self-management programs, the nurses are charged with calling Veterans to follow up on their behavioral risk factors. I worked with the nurses to engage them in adopting the "goal-setting" and "action planning" tool while making follow up phone calls with Veterans. As a specific part of action planning, nurses identify barriers to full goal attainment and help Veterans to

### **Public Health Significance**

This project addresses generating new knowledge and innovative solutions to self-management of behavioral risk factors in two essential public health services. It also educates and empowers Veterans concerning their health issues. Self-management is an essential element of any health-promoting activity and intervention programs aimed on healthy behaviors. Therefore, incorporation of concept of patient-professional partnership involving collaborative care, education and problem solving may fill the gap between the patients and providers in the often fragmented care.

solve problems. During the focus group session, I seek feedback from nurses on the tool structure and context and their input concerning barriers and facilitators to use the tool.

### FINAL PRODUCT:

The revised tool will serve as a "blueprint" to develop electronic templates of the tool in the CPRS to facilitate collaborative "goal-setting" and "action-planning" with Veterans. The MEDVAMC patients and providers may use the final product in their everyday practice. In addition, we may generate valuable preliminary data to help us plan more comprehensive quality improvement projects in the area of self-management.

Collaborative goal setting allows Veterans to become more involved as decision makers in their care. Veterans are taught skills to overcome barriers to their goal attainment and problem solving. As more and more Veterans suffer from preventable cardiovascular diseases, health care providers have important responsibility to assist Veterans to improve their health-related behavior. The proposed implementation project may provide valuable knowledge about barriers and facilitators of using the tool and about its refinements for future use.

### **Project Highlights**

- Presented the project to Primary Care Nurses and discussed project goals and feasibility in Primary Care at the MEDVAMC
- Organized "Lunch and Learn" meeting with the nurses and presented the plan for testing self-management patients tool
- Had the opportunity to learn about the MEDVAMC mission and leadership while providing care for the community of Veterans

### **Lessons Learned**

- MEDVAMC supports and reinforces health behavior and promotes primary care prevention through self-management educational programs
- Care coordination is an essential part of disease management
- Unique aspect of self-management is its patient-centered approach to behavioral change
- Quality improvement project helps providers practicing evidence-based patients' care
- VA is constantly striving for system and patients' care improvements
- Nurses are essential part of implementing health prevention interventions
- Medical research conducted at the MEDVAMC is governed by strict rules and regulations and rigorous code of human research ethics



Photo: courtesy of MEDVAMC website

# Leadership & Outcomes Assessment



The Patient Institute improves navigating the healthcare system through education and communication.

Photo courtesy of the [www.patientinstitute.org](http://www.patientinstitute.org)

## The Patient Institute: Improving Navigation and Effectiveness of the Healthcare System & Developing Health Professional Leaders for Tomorrow

By: De De Gardner

During the summer of 2014, I interned at The Patient Institute in San Antonio, Texas. The Patient Institute provided me with the opportunity to learn first-hand how to lead a nonprofit organization focused on empowering patients and their caregivers to navigate the complex health care system and to prepare future health professionals to care for these patients and caregivers.

### Public Health Significance

The Patient Institute mission and vision focus on empowering and educating patients and their caregivers to navigate the complex healthcare system. The Patient Institute has **diagnosed and investigated** issues associated with patients navigating the complexities of the healthcare system. In addition the Patient Institute has **informed, educated and empowered** people about accessing the healthcare system through educational programs focused on Taking Control of Your Healthcare, How to talk to your doctor, Describing the differences

The focus during the internship was on Leadership and Program Evaluation. The educational programs satisfaction surveys and pre/post tests were developed and summarized to present to the Board of Directors during their strategic planning meeting. I also created a Competitive Analysis for the CEO/President and was invited to present it at the strategic planning meeting.

between Emergency Room and Urgent Care, and Caring for your aging parent.

The Patient Institute developed a program to **link** patients without physicians to physicians looking to expand their practices. This includes patients who are on Medicare and Medicaid programs.

**Assuring** a competent public health and personal health care work force through a six week educational program offered to future health professionals

### Special responsibilities during my practicum

- Assistant to the CEO/President of the Patient Institute – Developed the Competitive Analysis and Outcomes Assessment summary for all educational programs to the Board of Directors at the strategic planning meeting.
- Co-Director of the WE LEAP program – Introduces skills to future healthcare professionals – developed the pre/post tests, *summarized and presented* the outcomes for the six week summer program.

### Lessons Learned

- *This is a six week long interview and you should make the most of it as the organization may invite you to become a member of the Board of Directors.*
- *Leading a successful nonprofit on a small budget is possible.*
- *Remember to have FUN!*



For more information regarding  
The University of Texas School of Public Health,  
Office of Public Health Practice  
and the practicum program, please visit:  
<https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/practicum/>