Public Health Practice

Stories from the Field
The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Summer 2014 – Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences
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: 15

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Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ID)

Special Olympics International is a Vital Organization for Individuals with ID

By: Benedicta Anikputa

This summer I had the opportunity to work in Washington D.C. for Special Olympics International (SOI) in the Research and Evaluation Department. SOI is not just an organization focused on sporting events; they provide much-needed health resources for those with ID. During this internship I was tasked with three projects.

1) Creating and analyzing a Health Policy Survey that was distributed to SOI Programs around the world
2) Research the health statistics of individuals with ID and comparing these statistics to those of the general population and the athletes involved in Special Olympics.
3) Designing a Personal Hygiene flyer and lesson plan for Special Olympics athletes.

Public Health Significance

The Public Health Essential Services that most relate to my practicum experience are number 3-inform, educate and empower and number 10-research.

The Personal Hygiene flyer and lesson plan will allow SOI to inform, educate, and empower athletes on the proper methods of maintaining good hygiene. If Special Olympics athletes are able to master these skills, their likelihood of ill health associated with improper personal hygiene will be greatly reduced.

The other two projects relate to research. With the information gathered from the health policy survey, SOI will be better able to assist Special Olympics Programs in different health areas. They will also gain insight about the different policy changes Programs have made that are advancing the health of those with ID.

The data gathered for the comparison between those with ID and the general population will help determine if there are any striking health disparities. This information might bring awareness to issues that should be addressed.

Highlights

- Seeing the Health Policy Survey being utilized after becoming so invested in its production.
- I was able to attend many different conferences around D.C. During these events I got to listen to Former President Bill Clinton and meet the current Surgeon General Boris D. Lushniak.

Advice

- As an MPH student, networking is necessary for success. You never know who will be able to help you advance in your future career. There is no room for shyness when looking for work, so talk to people.
- Don’t be afraid to conduct informational interviews.
- Apply to academic and professional programs; that is how I got to D.C!
Employee Health and Wellness

Practicum Highlights

- Assisting with the 2014 Let’s Move Activity Challenge. It was fun using my public health knowledge and creativity to create a fun program for employees!
- Creating content for the employee wellness webpage.
- Assisting with the planning of the 2014 Activities Expo (similar to a health fair) that will be held this Fall.
- Assisting with the development of the 2014-2015 wellness program recommendations.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Create your own path. I knew I had a passion for corporate wellness, but I didn’t see any opportunities listed that fit my interests. I contacted TPRI a semester prior to my practicum and I was able to create my own practicum experience. By searching out a practicum site based on my interests, I found the site that fit me best. There are many ‘hidden gem’ practicum sites in Houston and beyond, so don’t limit yourself!

Improving Employee Health through Wellness Programs

By: Kinsey Cave

This summer, I worked as an intern at Total Petrochemicals & Refining USA, Inc. (TPRI) with the Win from Within Wellness program. The Win from Within Wellness program aims to inspire employees and provide practical tools and tips to assist employees in leading healthy lifestyles.

During my time as an intern, I got to help with many of the wellness initiatives that the company sponsors. The main project I helped with was the 2014 Let’s Move Activity Challenge, which encourages employees to walk at least 8,000 steps a day and earn additional activity points for other types of physical activity. The employees formed teams and were given a pedometer to help track their steps and keep them accountable. It was great to see employees get excited about the competition!

During the summer, I worked with the wellness team to plan and implement the challenge. I got to help employees stay motivated by creating weekly emails with challenge updates and health and wellness information.

Public Health Significance

The Win from Within Wellness program at TPRI utilizes several of the Public Health Essential Services (PHES) to improve employee health and well-being.

Yearly, TPRI monitors employee health status through reports from their health insurance company. The Win from Within Wellness team creates programs to inform, educate and empower employees based on the health needs of the employees. These efforts aid in the development of policies and plans that support employee and company overall health. The Let’s Move Activity Challenge is an example of a plan to increase physical activity among employees to improve their health status.

Each year, it is crucial to review past programs and to make changes as necessary. In doing so, research is required to find the most effective and innovative corporate health programs. I had the opportunity to review the employee health status report and conduct research to create a proposal for a new program in 2015.
Learning the “Recipe for Success”

Practicum Highlights

- Identified potential partnerships for expansion of programming in schools.
- Created RFS instructor newsletters.
- Revised and evaluated exiting nutrition education curriculum.

Advice for Future Students

Make every effort to become fully immersed in your practicum work and the organization you are working with. Although we are only involved for a short time, make sure you are fully invested just as you would if this was your full-time job. Challenge yourself to learn as much as you can about the organization as well as current events that are related to your organization or public health topic. Moreover, ask your preceptor for their favorite news sources, blogs and even suggestions for meetings that you could attend during your time there. This not only keeps you informed but also helps you connect and network.

Combating Childhood Obesity with Nutrition Education

By: LAURA CEGLIO

Recipe for Success (RFS) is a Houston-based non-profit that strives to reduce childhood obesity by providing nutrition education to students in elementary schools.

My work with RFS was primarily centered on their “Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education” program. From revising existing lesson plans to creating communication pieces for RFS instructors, I was able to get a broad view of what was required to create a successful obesity prevention program.

Public Health Significance

The most relevant public health services that applied to my practicum experience were: inform, educate, empower; mobilize community partnerships; and assure a competent public health workforce.

I have been working to revise nutrition education curriculum and lesson plans. These pieces will be used to educate students, inform them of key nutrition information, and empower them to make healthier choices.

Additionally, my research on potential partnerships will assist RFS in mobilizing new community partnerships, which will ultimately allow them to further their prevention intervention programs and reduce obesity.

Finally, I also was tasked with creating newsletters for RFS instructors that provide tips, suggestions and important information to assure that RFS instructors are competent and provide the highest quality education to their students.

Kids who are a part of Recipe for Success’ program learn the full spectrum of healthy eating, from seed to plate. (Source: Recipe for Success, website)
Health Promotion in Residence Halls

By: Sara Dube

The Health Promotion Resource Center (HPRC) at The University of Texas at Austin University Health Services (UHS) operates to promote the health and safety of university students so they may achieve academic and personal growth. In line with this goal, over the summer of 2014 I created a program plan to deliver health messages to students living in residence halls. I adapted existing HPRC resources covering topics like sexual health, alcohol, stress management, physical activity, and nutrition to be tailored for students in a residence hall setting. Messages are in an easy to use format for resident assistants to access online, download, and display on community bulletin boards in residence halls. In addition, I developed a program plan for the HPRC to engage and establish partnerships with off-campus residence halls to promote student health both on- and off-campus.

HPRC program plans aim to create and deliver initiatives that promote student health and academic success. Program plans document the implementation strategies for initiatives, and include plans to evaluate their effectiveness and acceptability to students. These particular initiatives that promote the health of students living in on- and off-campus residence halls, work to inform, educate, and empower those students to make healthy decisions for a range of health topics.

Public Health Significance

Many undergraduate students are making decisions about their health for the first time and may be more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors. Furthermore, programs for students have the potential to induce behavior change that persists to later adulthood. Targeting students for intervention is significant for public health programs to prevent unhealthy behaviors and promote persisting healthy behaviors in a young population that will make up the future general population.

Interesting Duties

- Held focus groups with RAs for needs assessment and concept testing of developed materials
- Met with on-campus and off-campus residence hall coordinators to establish partnership opportunities with the HPRC
- Developed health messages for display in residence halls

Lessons Learned

- Student health can address a wide-range of health topics
  - Elicit suggestions and feedback from the target audience as much as possible
- Both intra- and inter-organization partnerships can facilitate the development of initiatives that address the needs of both students and partners

Source: #UTloveyourbody
Source: UT Austin HPRC Health Promotion Posters
Source: UT Austin UHS
Logo Source: UT Austin UHS
Photo Source: Sara Dube
Texas Notifiable Disease Surveillance

Vaccine Preventable Disease Surveillance and Proper Vaccine Handling
By: FAEZAA FARUQ

The first part of my practicum involved working under Dr. Lin, the Regional Epidemiologist, to investigate vaccine-preventable diseases in the counties without a local health department (Austin County, Colorado County, Liberty County, Matagorda County, Walker County, Waller County and Wharton County). I contacted health providers and patients to collect patients' demographic information, clinical signs and symptoms, lab results and information about the prophylaxis to the close contacts. In the second part of my practicum, I helped gather educational materials regarding proper vaccine handling techniques in clinical settings. In the next few days, I will help distribute these materials to the health providers.

Public Health Significance

Epidemiological surveillance is the primary method of identifying disease clusters and implementing prevention measures.

The following Essential Public Health Services were at the forefront of my practicum:
1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues

Local health departments such as the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) are extremely important to the overall healthcare system. The state health department is especially responsible for being the first to identify potential outbreaks. My work in surveillance at my practicum showed the importance of interviewing patients with cases of foodborne illnesses. By asking questions about what the person ate before the symptoms arose, we can track the cause of illness. Many times, close contacts of the person also became sick. This is especially true for children who attended schools and daycares. By calling and interviewing the parents of these children, not only was I able to identify potential causes of outbreaks, I was able to educate them about the best practices for control of the illnesses.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Don’t be embarrassed to ask questions. The staff members are extremely knowledgeable and patient. They were once students themselves, so they are completely understanding of requests for clarification. Your practicum should foremost be a learning experience. Utilize every resource available to prepare you for your future as a public health official!
Public Health Significance

The Essential Services of Public Health my practicum experience related is “inform, educate and empower people about health issues.”

Essentially health educators in the program do this essential service by educating mothers about issues relating to pregnancy and motherhood. Because many of the mothers in the Texas Children’s Health Plan are low-income, minority, and high risk, the information presented in the classes can have a great impact.

Educating women in those populations can help reduce prevalent health disparities such as low infant birth weight and low breastfeeding rates.

My project addresses to essential service by educating new mothers about issues they may encounter after giving birth. Postpartum fitness and nutrition not only reduce the mom’s stress, but also can have a positive effect of breastfeeding, bonding, and many other areas.

The education class, both prenatal and postpartum, can giving the mother and infants the best start to this new journey.

Importance of Postpartum Education to New Moms

By: Cariña Garth

My practicum was with the STAR Babies program, which is part of the Texas Children’s Health Plan. The STAR Babies program provides primarily education classes to mothers-to-be and new mothers on a variety of relevant topics, such as childbirth, breastfeeding, and infant care.

The primary goal of my internship was to assist the health educator with the currently offered classes and to create a postpartum class series for the members, which is my final project. With feedback from previous member surveys, the women wanted more class of topics in postpartum, such as weight loss and child development.

My final project is the curriculums and lesson plans for the postpartum series previously mentioned. I will be presenting one of the classes from this series at a Mommie and Me Expo Texas Children’s Health Plan is participating in. These classes will be integrated into the schedule of class offered by STAR Babies.

Practicum Duties

• Develop and present postpartum classes offered by Texas Children’s Health Plan for mothers on various topics, such as fitness, nutrition, and child development
• Assisted in prenatal classes and baby showers offered to plan members
• Organized class teaching materials
• Tracked class participants for effects of classes on health behaviors

Advice for Future Practicum Students

• Find a practicum that interest you in and with duties you will enjoy.
• Get to know your preceptor and coworkers. They have so much helpful insight about career life and can possible be a door to a future position.

Postpartum fitness for new moms can be alternative method to bond with baby, while working on weight loss.

Nutrition Education in Houston, TX and Surrounding Communities

By: Tiffany Johnson

The Houston Food Bank provides many services to the greater Houston area. During my practicum, I was able to work with a registered dietitian to assist in providing nutrition education classes to a variety of populations. I also assisted in curriculum development and program evaluation. In addition to nutrition education, I was able to participate in various community health fairs.

Public Health Significance

My experience providing nutrition education through classes and health fairs relates to two of the Essential Services of Public Health: inform, educate, and empower, and mobilize community partnerships and actions.

Providing sound nutrition and health information that is supported by evidence-based research is an example of informing, educating, and empowering the community. The Houston Food Bank has developed partnerships with community organizations such as Urban Harvest to bring awareness to issues such as food insecurity and the importance of having good nutrition. During my practicum experience, I was able to teach classes to a men’s group through the Salvation Army Transitional Living Program. This opportunity to teach this series of classes is due in part to the relationship that has been cultivated between the nutritional services department at the Houston Food Bank and the Salvation Army.

The public health issue addressed is promoting a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. Prevention of chronic diseases is also a public health issue that is targeted.

The final product that I developed for my practicum was a nutrition education curriculum for adults that teaches participants how to prepare healthy meals on a budget.

Nutrition Education in Houston, Texas

Advice for Future Practicum Students

• Don’t be afraid to try new things. It will help build your confidence and make you a better public health practitioner.

Recipe demonstration for popcorn seasoning at the Montie Beach Back to School Health Fair

Photo courtesy of Tiffany Johnson

Promoting the USDA My Plate™ at the Freedom Over Texas Event

Photo courtesy of Tiffany Johnson

Practicum Highlights

• Provide nutrition education to a variety of age groups
• Perform cooking demonstrations of healthy recipes
• Develop curriculum for nutrition education programs

Practicum Highlights

• Provide nutrition education to a variety of age groups
• Perform cooking demonstrations of healthy recipes
• Develop curriculum for nutrition education programs
Tobacco use in the LGBT Population in Texas

The PRIDE Project
By: Hillary Lapham

For my practicum I was a summer trainee in the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program (CPRTP) at MD Anderson. I worked with Dr. Irene Tami-Maury in the Department of Behavioral Science. The main focus of my 10-week program was a project aimed at assessing the tobacco prevalence in the LGBT population in Texas. It has been shown in other states in the US that tobacco use among people in this vulnerable population is almost twice as high as in the heterosexual population. However, in Texas no data pertaining to this topic have ever been collected. For this reason we conducted a 20-item survey at the pride parade and found that 43% of self-identified LGBT participants surveyed are users of tobacco. This proved our hypothesis that tobacco use in the LGBT population in Texas is higher than in the heterosexual population.

Public Health Significance

The first Public Health Essential Service is to monitor health status to identify community health problems. The PRIDE project was focused on exactly this topic. We thought there was a chance that tobacco use was more prevalent in the LGBT population in Texas, so we conducted a survey to find out. It showed that we were correct and we identified a community health problem here in Texas that had yet to be recognized.

In addition, the fourth Public Health Essential Service of mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve problems was utilized during the PRIDE project. When we conducted our survey we worked with Houston Area Community Services (HACS) to gather our data. This partnership ultimately helped us to identify the problem of tobacco use in the LGBT population in our community.

Special Events

- As a summer trainee I was required to attend many events. These included career conversations with renowned scientists and leaders in cancer prevention. It was a wonderful learning opportunity to have the chance to talk to them.
- I also gave an “elevator speech” at the end of my practicum. In this speech I discussed what I did over the summer in 90 seconds. Although it was difficult to condense the whole summer into this short speech, the assignment was a great learning experience as it taught me how to explain my work succinctly.

Advice for Future Students

- This practicum was wonderful. I highly recommend trying to find a practicum that is also a training program. Not only did it give me hands on experience in cancer prevention, but I also had access to the many resources provided by the CPRTP.
A.I.S.D. Employee Wellness

Special Events
- I assisted with the “wellness room” at the Curriculum Writers Cadre at Austin High School. Teachers came to take breaks for yoga, massage, and physical activity.

Lessons Learned
- Networking, communication, and collaboration with others are fundamental elements of public health.
- Health promotion efforts can be very fun and engaging!

E-Wellness: Healthy Teachers, Healthy District
By: Allie Lodine

I worked with the Austin Independent School District (A.I.S.D) Wellness Specialist, Ian Kahn, to plan the 2014-15 school year employee wellness (e-wellness) programs. To do this, I reviewed the results from the End of Year Wellness Survey, coded the data, and compiled my findings to determine the most successful aspects of the 2013-14 program.

A.I.S.D. e-Wellness aims to promote healthy behaviors to staff in order to reduce health risks district wide.

E-wellness incorporates an annual Health Risk Assessment (HRA) to monitor employee health. The results of the HRA are used to link at-risk individuals to health care providers and to relevant health-promoting resources and information.

Public Health Significance
A.I.S.D. e-Wellness incorporates many of the Essential Services of Public Health. My practicum most closely relates to the development of policies and plans to support individual and community health efforts. My project has been to develop the campus- and district-based health initiatives featured in the wellness calendar, which provides healthy tips, resources, and challenges for individuals and school groups.

Summer 2014, Allie Lodine. A.I.S.D. Employee Wellness
Long-Acting Reversible Contraception

Promoting long-acting reversible contraception to adolescents at Baylor College of Medicine Teen Health Clinic

Amanda Miller

As a health education intern for the Baylor Teen Health Clinic in Houston, I have spent the summer educating adolescent women (and men) on long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods. These include the implant, Nexplanon, and the intrauterine device (IUD), Mirena. I began by identifying evidence-based approaches to increase the uptake of LARCs and educating myself on everything there is to know about these two methods. I then designed educational tools to further help patients understand these two birth control options. Included are pocket-sized handouts on both methods and a tri-fold display board. I presented in the waiting rooms at three of the clinic locations. Presentations included a brief introduction, conversations and a ten-minute DVD. I brought devices with me and demonstrated the insertions using models. As I approach the end of my practicum, I am designing a permanent poster that will be displayed in each waiting room encouraging the females to ask their health care provider about these two methods. The Baylor Teen Health Clinic hopes to see an increase in the uptake of the implant and the IUD.

Public Health Significance

While the Baylor Teen Health Clinic practices the majority of the Essential Services of Public Health, my practicum experience focused on the service of informing, educating and empowering people about health issues. Neither the implant or IUD method are very popular among the adolescents that use the clinic’s services and I found it very rewarding to inform and educate them on these two methods so they can make the best decision possible regarding their health and sexuality. Empowering these young women with the knowledge of long-acting, extremely effective birth control is very important, as many of them know very little about how contraception works. Over the summer I realized how important it is to give them accurate information so they can make the right choices for their lifestyles. The Baylor Teen Health Clinic plays a vital role in the community and has proved to be a significant contributor in advancing public health in Houston.

Practicum Highlights

• Attending the 6th annual Emerging Tech Conference and meeting several prominent leaders who are using technology to advance the public health field.

• Being allowed the flexibility and creativity to design promotional materials for the LARC campaign.

• Helping so many girls understand their birth control options!

Advice for Future Practicum Students

• Talk to everyone you can at your practicum site in order to get a look at how your organization and the world of public health really works.

• As you complete your practicum, pay attention to your own work ethic and leadership style. Also, take note of what kinds of things you like and dislike about the work environment as to better understand what type of job you want in the future.

Logo Source: www.teenhealthclinic.org

Photo by: Amanda Miller
**Cancer Prevention Behaviors in Individuals and Families with Lynch Syndrome**

By: Katrina Polivka

My practicum took place this summer as part of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center. I worked in the Department of Behavioral Science with my mentor, Dr. Susan Peterson. My work was on a study involving Lynch syndrome patients and families. I drafted abstracts and manuscripts that documented some of the primary findings from these studies, most of which centered on patient-provider relationships and health behaviors in this population.

Our findings indicated that these patients report lower levels of satisfaction with their provider than other cancer survivors. This is important because the relationship with a provider has an impact on adherence to screening and other health behavior recommendations. Given this population’s high risk for recurrence and development of other cancers, screening adherence and health behaviors are a crucial component of prevention. This necessitates our area of research.

**Public Health Significance**

There are several public health essential services that relate to my practicum experience.

**Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards.** The bulk of research at MDACC is dedicated to diagnosing and investigating cancer. In my case, we were investigating barriers to cancer prevention behaviors in Lynch syndrome patients.

**Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.** This applies to the clinical significance of my research work, since the desired outcome of our investigation is to better educate patients about the importance of screening adherence and healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved via effective patient-provider communication.

**Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.** The health behavior implications for Lynch syndrome populations in the literature are lacking. My team’s current and future research seeks to fill this gap and better understand ways to improve health behaviors and health outcomes in these patients.
Post-discharge Appointment Matters

Promoting Post-discharge Appointments

By: Hsingyi Song

To respond to the CMS readmission penalties and improve health care quality, Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH) has implemented Project BOOST (Better Outcomes through Optimizing Safe Transitions) as an approach to control the readmission rate and improve health care quality.

As an intern in Physician’s Alliance for Quality, I am involved with the project components related to increasing post-discharge appointment rate among patients. Through observation, interviews, and discussion with key personnel in the project, I provided strategies and implemented solutions to ensure the fidelity of program delivery.

The final product of my practicum will be a program evaluation report along with solutions used to increase post-discharge appointment rate.

Public Health Significance

Project BOOST at HMH has shown its public health significance regarding "research for new insights and innovation solutions to health problems", which is listed as an essential service of public health by America Public Health Association.

Houston Methodist Hospital has been a pioneer in reducing 30-day readmission rate through projects on post-discharge appointments. Different approaches were designed in Project BOOST to help patients with follow-ups. Multidisciplinary rounds are made to evaluate discharge plans. Nurses are appointed to inform patients of the importance of follow-up appointments, record contact information of their doctors, facilitate the process of making an appointment, and remind the patients of the appointment date and time. In addition, care navigators are requested if the patient does not have a PCP or have other problems with making follow-up appointments.

Duties during my practicum

- Observe processes
- Interview personnel
- Develop strategies
- Implement solutions

Advice for Future Students

- Sharing common goals and communication are the keys.
- Try to wear in the shoes of the target population as well as your teammates in the project.
Progress against Childhood Obesity

Recipe for Success: Challenging You to Eat Better!

By: Vyvy Tran

Every March, Recipe for Success (RFS) Foundation promotes a campaign called VegOut! This challenge is a call to action for Houstonians to eat 30 different veggies in 30 days.

It’s an attempt to address obesity and health as a result of nutrition. RFS originated by focusing on childhood obesity, but is expanding this campaign to reach people of all ages and in all the facets of their lives (as parents, employees, etc.).

For my practicum, I was involved in evaluating the previous campaign and subsequently developing tools to measure the next ones.

I also began creating toolkits to help facilitate participation in the challenge; this included toolkits for individuals and families to be part of the challenge as well as toolkits for companies to partner with RFS during VegOut! These toolkits are my final product, and they’ll be going out all over Houston this March!

Public Health Significance

The most relevant Public Health Essential Services to my experience are (1) **Develop policies and plans** that support individual and community health efforts and (2) **Inform, educate and empower** people about health issues.

RFS Foundation works directly with children and adults to inform, educate, and empower them about making best food choices. My project gives advice, for example, to teachers about healthy, non-food rewards they can use in their classrooms. RFS also gave a demonstration to a WIC program about nutrition.

All of my toolkits are plans to support individual and community health efforts. For example, I'm creating a tool for RFS to work with local grocers to promote fresh produce to VegOut! participants and, ultimately, all their consumers. RFS is also very involved in working on recent food policy development with many key stakeholders in our community.

Special events/duties during your practicum

- Volunteered with Recipe for Success Foundation Summer Camp, where kids were so excited to learn about food!
- Attended a food policy meeting where we chose what policies to focus on for the next legislative session!

Advice for Future Students

- Don’t look for handholding, but make sure you communicate often and well with your preceptor to make sure you’re going in the right direction and not on a wild goose chase.

VegOut logo

Source: vegoutwithafs.org
Women’s Rights to Safe and Affordable Healthcare

National Women’s Health Network
By: Amy Wieczorek

During the summer of 2014, I served as a Health Communications Intern for twelve weeks at the National Women’s Health Network (NWHN) in Washington D.C. The NWHN strives to improve the health of all women by developing and promoting a critical analysis of health issues in order to affect policy and support consumer decision-making. My main responsibilities included responding to diverse health information requests through the Women’s Health Voice hotline using evidence-based research; writing blogs on current events including FDA regulation of sunscreen, inclusion of women in clinical trials, increasing cancer survivorship and other topics; managing content on the website and social media sites; and attending congressional hearings, press conferences, and other events related to women and healthcare. My final project was creating a comparison fact sheet on the Medicaid coverage gap between Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Public Health Significance

- **Inform, educate and empower** people about a variety of women’s health issues specifically concerning reproductive health.
- **Mobilize** community partnerships with Planned Parenthood, Women’s Law Center, and NARAL to identify and solve health problems.
- **Develop policies and plans** that support individual and community health efforts to raise women’s voices and provide safe, affordable health
- **Link** people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable through the Women’s Health Voice and Raising Women’s Voices collaborative initiatives.
- **Research** for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems including strengthening FDA regulation of drugs and devices offered to women and increasing the inclusion of women and women of color into clinical trials.

Highlights from practicum experience

- Meeting Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, House of Representatives Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez at the “Make Progress Summit”
- Hearing former President Clinton’s speech at the “Addressing America’s Poverty” event
- Networking with professionals and interns who are passionate about health

At “Sex and the Capital City” Advocacy Day intern event (courtesy of Planned Parenthood)
Infant Exposure to Second-hand Smoke

Protect fragile babies from second-hand smoke

By Yue Xu

Second-Hand Smoke Exposure (SHSe) causes the increase in mortality and morbidity rates in infants and children.

UTHealth Medical School aims to reduce the SHSe and create a smoke-free environment (Home and Car) for children by using motivational interviews (MI) with health/psychological counselors.

I am responsible for home visits with health/psychological counsellors; collecting sample and data analysis,

E.g. collecting urine and saliva, nicotine wipe, and monitor hanging.

Posters based on current finding would be presented as my final practicum project.

Public Health Significance

Motivational Interview (MI), combined with Transtheoretical Model (TTM), is proved to be an effective method in medication management and smoking/alcohol cessation program. Postpartum is a significant period to mother both physically and mentally. Concerning about their babies' health could be the trigger to help them set up a total smoke ban and thereby quit smoking in the future.

Based on Public Health Essential Service(s) (PHES), three essential elements are covered in my practicum, including educating and empowering people, evaluating health services and searching for new insights to existing health issue.

We educate and empower people about second hand smoke exposure to raise their consciousness and encourage them to create a smoke free household for the babies.

Face-to-face interviews and questionnaires are conducted to help researchers evaluate the effectiveness and quality of the health services in order to improve in the future.

Highlights

- Motivational Interview and Timeline Follow-back Training
- Visit Families (Homes) in Various Social and Cultural Background

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Health literacy: Be able to explain medical information to participants/clients in simple way
- Be patient when confronting difficult patients and work settings

Children are innocent passive smokers in household
Source: www.ct.gov
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/