Public Health Practice

Stories from the Field
The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Spring 2012 – Regional Campuses
The practicum experience is an integral part of the MPH curriculum. 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 seventh-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Spring 2012 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: 35

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### Austin Regional Campus

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<td>Influenza Reagent Resource</td>
<td>Damaris Garcia</td>
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## San Antonio Regional Campus

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## STEER: South Texas Environmental Education & Research

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Public Health Significance

My practicum experience has related to public health in multiple ways. The Peace Center focuses on the Essential Services below:

- **Inform, educate and empower:** We work with schools and educate them on violence prevention programs and train youth in conflict resolution skills. We empower communities
- **Evaluate:** I have helped evaluate the Schools for Peace program
- **Mobilize:** We mobilize high school and college students to participate in youth conferences. I mobilized 45 youth for the Human Rights Day event that promoted one’s right to safety
- **Research:** A large part of my role has been to research evidence based violence prevention programs for African townships

Creating Cultures of Peace at the Desmond Tutu Peace Center

By: Tiffany Burd

I have been fortunate enough to spend my last semester at the Desmond Tutu Peace Center in Cape Town, South Africa. Desmond Tutu and his wife started the organization in 1999 with the intention of creating cultures of peace throughout the city. Our Schools for Peace program works with 10 impoverished township schools.

The agency addresses violence by training youth to be peer mediators, working with school administration to create prevention plans and training staff on conflict resolution skills. My involvement has been in creating a student-training manual; facilitating trainings; and working with the schools to create violence prevention implementation plans. I was also given the opportunity to create an event for the national holiday, Human Rights Day.

It’s been a very inspiring experience...

“When we see others as the enemy, we risk becoming what we hate. When we oppress others, we end up oppressing ourselves. Our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”

Desmond Tutu

Special events/duties during your practicum

- Drank tea with Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- Coordinated an anti-violence movement for Human Rights Day
- Facilitated Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution training for 75 middle school aged youth

Human Rights Day event on March 21, 2012 (Photo courtesy of Tiffany Burd)
Social Media and Safe Kids Austin

Grassroots Coalition - Social Networking for Change

By: Anna Compton

My practicum was in the Dell Children’s Hospital Trauma Center, with the non-profit organization Safe Kids Austin. I worked to enhance the connectivity of Safe Kids Austin and audiences in Central Texas (such as parents, health care workers, legislators, etc).

The Safe Kids Austin facebook page was updated at least twice a week with injury prevention information, available to all “followers” of the page.

The creation of two facebook ads, each one week in length, helped to increase the number of “followers”, thereby increasing the audience receiving information. The increase in “likes” after both ads were run was a total of 49.

The final product was a Facebook Guidelines for Operation and Management document, which will help maintain these changes in the future.

Public Health Significance

This practicum helped to inform, educate, and empower people in Central Texas on childhood injury prevention. During this experience, the community was also mobilized to create a partnership with Safe Kids Austin.

Through the use of posts on the Safe Kids Austin Facebook page, the followers associated with Safe Kids Austin were able to learn more about safe kid practices.

Links were provided on each post to lead parents and caregivers to Safekids.org or another accredited website for more information. Questions were asked, such as “What is the most common source of accidental poisoning in children?” to facilitate community involvement.

Through information dissemination, Safe Kids Austin hopes to arm child caregivers with the information needed to promote a healthy, injury-free environment for kids.

Highlights:

- Developed guidelines to enhance the social networking between Safe Kids Austin and identified audiences in Central Texas
- Created Facebook ads to increase followers of the Safe Kids Austin Facebook page

“This practicum helped to inform, educate, and empower people in Central Texas on childhood injury prevention.”

Children illustrating proper booster seat usage.
Image from: Christian Science Monitor at http://www.csmonitor.com

Safe Kids Austin works to prevent childhood injuries and deaths in children ages 14 years and younger.
Maternal and Child Health - India

By: Saba Danawala

In the state of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, Community Empowerment Lab has been known for its proven interventions to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality through what is called “The Shivgarh Experiment”. Today, CEL takes on different projects to continue towards such goals, which is why I was placed on a qualitative project called the “Self-Help Group” (SHG) Project. Self-Help Groups are based on a behavior change model which aims to empower groups of 15-20 (mostly women) of poor through pooling together funds to start a business, pay for education or unforeseen medical emergencies, and gain a loan. The model has been in India since the 1980s and employees the use of microcredit, especially with the loans. Since the project is in its preliminary stages and CEL is currently working on designing an intervention package, my role is to create some preliminary reports for pre-sensing, contemplate questions that aim to help modify the SHG model can improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes (through the economically empowering nature of SHGs), and work on the creation of a blog for CEL.

Special events

- SHG Field Visit in Lucknow with Bharatiya Muslim Mandolan
- Shivgarh rural village visit and upcoming visit with a women’s group

Public Health Significance

Community Empowerment Lab’s proven interventions to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in the Shivgarh rural block of Uttar Pradesh received international attention, and hence today, is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. CEL was founded in 2003 by Vishwajeet Kumar from John Hopkins University, a doctor and epidemiologist. The Shivgarh experiment showed scientifically proven effectiveness of community-based behavioral change interventions. Among these is the Behavior Change Management (BCM) framework, which led to a 54 percent reduction in newborn death rate over a 16 month intervention period (Gates Foundation Website).

Since the time that these interventions were proven and effective, CEL’s direction has changed. The organization was solely based upon maternal and child health interventions, but now it has expanded its scope to continue to innovate. Since it is a non-profit organization hybridized with scientific and academic institutional skills, CEL has truly lived up to the research aspect of the essentials of public health. It has also lived up to mobilizing, monitoring, and informing, educating, and empowering through its projects. The SHG project I am doing now is precisely striving to link a loose, but important social institution to maternal health status through incorporating CEL’s BCM framework into the SHG model. Hence, the innovation continues to be encouraged.

The ability to proactively involve and empower communities in the improvement of health outcomes among the poor goes a long way, rather than just dictating what they should do.

Determining the Need for an Intermediary PHI Training at DSHS
Utilizing a Management Level Agency Wide Survey Tool

Following the passing of HB 300 DSHS was required to conduct an agency wide review of processes and trainings to ensure compliance.

We conducted a survey across the agency to determine the present status of intermediary level training, and to assess the need for further development of training at the intermediary level.

This was a sub-project of a larger, agency wide initiative that addressed the full range of compliance issues necessitated by the passage of the bill.

My work involved participation in the survey process, including follow up and data review, resulting in an 85% response rate.

The final result of this phase of the sub project is to issue a report and to present the findings. This report will support an agency-wide determination as to the need for additional programmatic training.

Initial findings seem to indicate some additional need, and further discussion and review will be required to determine the scope of the training to be recommended.

PHI

The Privacy Rule protects all "individually identifiable health information" held or transmitted by a covered entity or its business associate, in any form or media, whether electronic, paper, or oral. The Privacy Rule calls this information "protected health information (PHI)."

Public Health Significance

In order for public health to be viable in our communities, there must be a fundamentally sound relationship between public health officials, front line service delivery teams and the public.

Privacy, trust, and adherence to regulatory requirements are all central to this central relationship.

Privacy is essential for the delivery of each and every essential service of public health.

The Department of State Health Services is central to public health in Texas.

The concept of Protected Health Information (PHI) is central to public health in Texas.

The concept of Protected Health Information (PHI) is vital to modern day public health practice.
Technology for Children’s Health

Favorite Features:

- Tablets as a modern approach to address health education
- Experience at the Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity at Dell Children’s Medical Center.
- Collaborating with local companies to develop and utilize applications (apps) that make tablets safe and useful for children

“Tablets and cell phones continue to gain popularity across all ages – using these devices for public health is relevant, exciting, and can lead to numerous possibilities.”

Using Dell tablet PCs to promote health at the Dell Children’s Medical Center

By: Michelle Hashemi

The Texas Center for the Treatment and Prevention of Childhood Obesity (TCPTCO) at the Dell Children’s Medical Center (DCMC) works with children and adolescents aged 2-18 on obesity, nutrition, and physical activity. As a result of the Powering the Possible grant, 70 tablets were donated to TCPTCO from Dell, Inc., and are being used to spread exposure to technology through the channel of health education.

Collaborations were made with local app developers and software designers to transform the tablets into safe, kid-friendly devices.

Research was done to identify appropriate apps that differentiated based on a child’s inpatient or outpatient status. Each of the tablets was individually customized to qualify for use within the TCPTCO outpatient clinic and DCMC Child Life inpatient services.

Prepared tablets were used by outpatient children to explore and learn about health and nutrition. Children were exposed to games that had children pick the healthier food dish, identify fruits and vegetables, and look up nutrition facts on foods found in the home and in popular restaurants.

Public Health Significance

This project is most directly related to the 10th Essential Service of Public Health, “Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.” It offers innovative ways to address obesity. It will also contribute to public health practice through the utilization of new methods to provide access to health information. As technology is only becoming more relevant in our lives, it is necessary to integrate technology in programs and services. Younger generations will continue to depend on technology - this project addresses this, and helps children become more comfortable with the integration of technology in their lives.

Many of these children currently do not have easy access to computers, Internet, etc., but this is changing. Continued advancement in technology is making such devices and tools more accessible for people. This project exposes children to tablet computers, teaching them how to use these devices early in life to meet their weight-loss and nutrition goals, increasing self-efficacy to be confident in using similar devices for their health goals in the future.
Staff Wellness Program for the UT Austin Division of Student Affairs

By: ELIZABETH JOHNSON

At the University of Texas at Austin Health Promotion Resource Center, my supervisor and I were tasked with creating a Wellness Program for the Division of Student Affairs staff of about 800 employees.

We started by creating a mission statement for the program and then an outline of programs along with the plans for a website.

The final product is a new wellness program with several different activities (listed in side column) and a website, Facebook page, flyers, posters, and monthly newsletter emails to promote these new activities.

New Activities
- Walking groups
- Yoga Classes
- Meditation sessions
- Cooking Classes
- Book Club
- Pick-up Basketball

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience has related to three of the Essential Services of Public Health.

We work to inform, educate, and empower staff about common health issues. This is done through our web and email communications and the programs we have created.

We mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems. I have worked with several other organizations within the university and outside the university to help us accomplish our mission of healthier staff.

Lastly, we develop plans and policies that support individual and community health efforts. The wellness programs that have been implemented will serve this purpose.

The University of Texas Division of Student Affairs cares about the health of staff members and is working to create a healthy workplace environment. This is a part of the university-wide goal of a culture of health throughout campus.

“A campus wellness program can be expected to improve modifiable health risk factors, decrease medical costs, reduce absenteeism and presenteeism, boost employee morale, and support the recruitment & retention of key talent.”

http://www.utexas.edu/staff/council/documents/wellness.pdf
Providing Education and Developing Case Management System for Refugees with Hepatitis B & C in Austin

By: Hahn Kim

I had an opportunity to work with One to One for Health in Austin for my practicum. The non-profit organization promotes healthy behavior among refugees with hepatitis by educating about hepatitis and providing access to the care they need.

The basic information about hepatitis gives the refugees knowledge regarding transmission, prevention and management.

The organization encourages refugees to get tested for hepatitis and stay on medications, especially those who have hepatitis B which is a chronic disease.

As part of developing case management system and “deal with the health care system,” I put together the brief and easy Medical Access Program flyer to help educate the refugees about healthcare assistance system.

Public Health Significance

One to One for Health in Austin is helping many refugees who came to United States to have “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.”

The program is developing the access-network for refugees with hepatitis that will enable them to get care for their chronic conditions.

Fundamental belief of everyone should have a right to live a healthy life may be the fuel for the volunteers to work together.

As part of responsible public health community, One to One for Health wishes to “inform, educate, and empower” refugees about hepatitis.

One to One for Health is also building relationships with local refugee communities in order to seek community members who can be trained to be the mentors to individuals with hepatitis.

Furthermore, the organization directs refugees to needed personal health services and assures the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
Webinars in Child Health

Using Webinars to Combat Childhood Obesity
By: Jessica Liu

The Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living is dedicated to childhood obesity prevention research and educating the public about the importance of encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviors among children and adolescents. The Center recently utilized webinars, also known as web-based seminars, as a communication tool to disseminate information to larger audiences.

The objective of my practicum was to perform an environmental assessment of current organizations which host webinars about child health, specifically pertaining to obesity, nutrition, and physical activity. Tasks included performing a literature search on webinars, searching for and identifying organizations, viewing and attending webinars, and categorizing organizations and webinars to uncover gaps in information provided to the public.

Ultimately, the goal was to present the Center with the results of my findings so that they are able to impart the public with new knowledge to empower them to become activists in reversing the childhood obesity epidemic.

Public Health Significance
In terms of the 10 Essential Services of Public Health, the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living serves to ‘inform, educate, and empower’ people about issues related to childhood obesity. The Center seeks to promote healthy lifestyle choices and behaviors among children and adolescents by providing the public with the necessary knowledge and tools.

My practicum experience allowed me to aid the Center in carrying out this service. Through my assessment of the various topics discussed in their webinars, the Center may conduct webinars which address less publicized yet equally pertinent issues and factors influencing childhood obesity. As a result, the public will be more knowledgeable and readily able to combat childhood obesity.

Source: https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/research/centers/dell/

Source: http://www.facebook.com/msdcenter

Source: https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/research/centers/dell/

Highlights:
- Attended and viewed informative webinars held by various organizations
- Learned about the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) Program and the role of the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living in promoting and disseminating CATCH

“What is CATCH? A fun and exciting program that promotes physical activity and healthy food choices.”
-Peter Cribb, CATCH Program Director

“...a recently completed study in Travis County and 93 elementary schools...found that schools who were implementing CATCH...saw an 8.3% reduction in the prevalence of overweight and obese...fourth grade students.”-Peter Cribb
Public Health Significance

The prevalence of diabetes has more than tripled over the past 3 decades. About 26 million in the U.S. presently have diabetes, and hypertension follows many afflicted with this disease. The effective management of both is a key for improved health.

Throughout this experience there have been ample opportunities to “inform, educate, and empower” patients concerning their management of diabetes and hypertension.

Diabetic and Hypertensive Management in the Community Setting

By: Scott Luke

The aim of this project is to attain diabetic and hypertensive goals for patients in the community setting using a multi-faceted approach. A team model is utilized bringing specialized services to the patient in order to facilitate success. Services include nutritional support, clinical pharmacology visits, behavioral health resources, and the expertise of physicians, nurse practitioners, and nurses. Patients receive all care at their “medical home” clinic.

Much of my time was involved in the arrangement of medication treatment tutorials, a diabetic workshop involving members of the team at the South Austin clinic, as well as participation in the coordination of a diabetes collaborative to be spearheaded here.

Our efforts benefited over 30 members of the community through the hosting of a Diabetes Workshop.

Key Events:

- Presenter at Diabetes Workshop held 14 April 2012
- Involved in coordination of shared medical appointment model at South Austin
- Member of Diabetes Collaborative at South Austin

“A team approach to the management of diabetes is perhaps the best way to empower the patient to achieve their medical goals”

The South Austin Clinic is engaged in a Diabetes collaborative that will utilize shared medical appointments in the creation of a “medical home” so that patients in the community can be cared for effectively, efficiently, and with the highest standard.

The team at South Austin is dedicated to the dissemination of medical care at the highest level. An example is how the clinic will reach out to the community by hosting workshops that serve to educate.

Above is a depiction of the necessary systems that need to be in place for an intervention to be successful:

www.cdc.gov.
Know Your Line
A social norms approach to counter high-risk college drinking

The University of Texas (UT) Social Norms Project is a collaborative Anheuser Busch Foundation and National Social Norms Institute (NSNI) grant-funded intervention being conducted by University Health Services at UT Austin to test the effectiveness of social norms messages to promote responsible alcohol use amongst college students age 18-24. Staff and students developed the "Know Your Line" campaign to encourage students to drink alcohol responsibly.

Components of the intervention include:
- UT Social Norms Survey to collect baseline and follow up data on students' perceptions of college drinking
- Direct ArcGIS environmental scan to determine alcohol outlet density within a 3 mile radius of the university
- Social norms media campaign countering alcohol misperceptions using Facebook and Twitter posts, t-shirt and promotional item distributions, and poster displays throughout campus and at community businesses.
- 21st birthday cards with pre- and post-test surveys to measure the effectiveness of a risk management only message, a social norms only message, and a combined risk management and social norms messages including a control message regarding 21st birthday alcohol consumption

My duties have included monitoring the grant budget, assisting in the development of media messages, distributing promotional materials, working with undergraduate peer educators to promote the campaign, implementing components of the intervention (e.g. 21st birthday card), and attending high-risk drinking ad hoc meetings with campus administrators.

The final product for my practicum site will be a progress report for the spring 2012 semester. I will continue to work as a Graduate Assistant through the end of the grant period in December 2012.

Recent Events
04/04/12: Collaborative t-shirt distribution with UT School of Social Work
04/05/12: Collaborative t-shirt distribution with UT Athletics Department
04/11/12: “Stress Fest” alcohol screenings and live t-shirt screen printing of all “Know Your Line” designs

“The highlight of this practicum has been working with the priority college student population in getting ideas and feedback over our intervention and marketing materials. A college campus is a vibrant, dynamic environment to conduct health promotion.”

For more information, please go to: www.facebook.com/KnowYourLine

Above are examples of our promotional displays on campus-wide monitors and kiosks.

Above is an example of a Facebook insight assessment to monitor student reach of our campaign.

Public Health Significance
This practicum experience contributes to public health essential services to 1) monitor health; 2) diagnose and investigate; and 3) inform, educate, and empower. Initial surveys assessed current drinking practices and misperceptions of alcohol consumption amongst students. These data, along with live student feedback and online focus groups, were used to guide the development of our social media and marketing materials. Our goal is to provide the knowledge necessary for college students to make an informed decision regarding alcohol use.

For more information, please go to: www.facebook.com/KnowYourLine
Obstetric Emergencies in Kyrgyzstan

Opportunities for Intervention in Obstetric Emergencies in Kyrgyzstan

By: MEGHAN MADDEN

For my practicum, I researched the most common obstetric emergencies that cause maternal mortality in developing countries in central Asia and specifically, in Kyrgyzstan. These emergencies are: post-partum hemorrhage, hypertensive disease (pre-eclampsia), and protracted/impacted labor. I also researched what technologies/resources are available to physicians and midwives in Kyrgyzstan and also looked into what life is like for physicians in Kyrgyzstan and looked into their culture.

The public health issue that I focused on was maternal and child health and specifically, maternal mortality during pregnancy. The physician that I researched for will be using this information as he leads an intervention in Kyrgyzstan this summer with Global ALSO and USAID.

Public Health Significance

My practicum most closely aligned with “evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.” After I finish my research, I hope that it helps “mobilize community partnerships (like Global ALSO and USAID) to identify and solve these problems.

Reducing maternal and infant mortality rates are very important focuses of public health. The maternal mortality rate in Kyrgyzstan remains far too high: 63.2 per 100 thousand live births in 2007. Though the infant mortality rate has been declining in recent years, the maternal mortality rate has remained somewhat stagnant.

Intervention is needed both in educating pregnant mothers and training health care providers to prevent and handle these obstetric emergencies so that the maternal mortality rate can decline.

Spring 2012 • Meghan Madden • Brackenridge Hospital, Austin, TX • Opportunities for intervention in Obstetric Emergencies in Kyrgyzstan
Special events from the practicum include:

- Research on the community health worker model
- Reviewing and revising necessary forms such as medical release forms

“Community health workers (CHWs) are lay members of communities who serve for pay or as volunteers in association with the local health care system in both urban and rural environments and usually share ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and life experiences with the community members served.”


Practicum with One to One for Health
By: Jennifer L. McGowen, J.D., M.P.H. candidate

During my practicum with One to One for Health, I researched the community health worker model—the model employed by the organization to help refugees with hepatitis B receive adequate and routine care. The research was then put into a paper that could be shared with community members. This research is necessary in order to be able to inform and garner support from the community regarding One to One’s mission.

The body of scientific literature to date demonstrates that community health workers can augment the delivery of health information and care to certain disadvantaged population groups in a community.

In addition to the CHW research, I also helped revise forms for One to One, including a medical record release form.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience related to the following Essential Services of Public Health:

#3: Inform, educate, and empower people

One to One makes presentations throughout the refugee community in an effort to increase awareness

#7: Link people to needed health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable

One to One reaches out to health care providers in an effort to link infected refugees with medical homes
Public Health Significance

Public Health Essential Services

- Inform, Educate, and Empower - The program is designed to do just this. We teach techniques and provide learning materials for healthy lifestyles and deliver motivation in an effort to sustain healthy behavior. The goal of the program is to jump start women to adopt healthier lifestyles and provide resources to maintain this change over time.

- Link - We provide the opportunity for women to come together, be active, and find support.

- Evaluate - A survey was administered before the program began and will be administered again at the end. The main factors we will evaluate include amount of physical activity, barriers to being physically active and eating healthy, and self-efficacy.

Each shirt sold puts money towards health promotion programs for the community.

Women in East Austin Register to “Take Back” Their Health

By: Kristen Nussa

Over the course of the semester, I have helped plan, manage, and evaluate a health promotion pilot program for Take Back the Trail. The pilot is a 6-week program aimed to help minority women “take back” their health. Each week, the women meet for 90 minutes to take part in physical activity and discussions focusing on self-worth and barriers to living healthy lifestyles.

I assisted in recruitment, finalizing logistics, creating measurement surveys, and data collection. I managed all aspects of the 6-week pilot and assisted in evaluation.

Take Back the Trail is working to help decrease the prevalence of overweight and obese minority women. Their programs are funded through the sale of fitness apparel. This pilot is the beginning step to what will hopefully be a full range of programs to offer both in and outside of Austin.

“Take Back the Trail is working to decrease the prevalence of overweight and obese minority women.”

Special Events

- 6-week pilot program
- Weekly sessions featuring guest aerobic instructors and discussion facilitators
- Concludes with a Celebration Walk & Social!

Photos courtesy of Kristen Nussa

Take Back the Trail T-shirts

Graphics courtesy of Kerry Meath
Infection Prevention

Infection Prevention through Education and Monitoring

By: Michael D. Rountree

My practicum was with the Infection Prevention Department at St. David’s Medical Center. I was assigned to two projects.

The first was an education brochure that served as a guide for those visiting patients that are on Isolation precautions such as contact, droplet, airborne and enteric contact. The brochure illustrates what color sign is paired with which precaution and what is required upon entering that kind of environment.

My second project consisted of creating a tool from which data from infectious disease cases could be entered and an infection rate could be extrapolated for various areas in the hospital which includes critical care, surgical sites and the rehabilitation hospital. This is to be used for monitoring and quarterly reporting purposes for the entire facility.

Highlights

• Helped educate patient population on Infectious Disease
• Created a data monitoring tool from Microsoft Excel for infectious disease monitoring and reporting.

Public Health Significance

My projects covered the entire range of the essential public health services. More specifically, it dealt with monitoring, education, policy and research into infectious disease, and how to prevent the spread of monitored diseases such as VRE, MRSA, C.difficile and CA-UTI.

St. Davids Medical Center’s Infection Prevention program monitors nosocomial infection rates, reports to NHSN, and participates in employee and visitor/patient education and training. Also, they create hospital policy for disease prevention and reporting of those patients who develop a monitored disease in addition to answering questions from the nursing staff about appropriate care of those patients.

Hand hygiene is the best method to stop the spread of infection and illness.
The majority of my practicum experience was aiding in the development of a food purchase behavior study. The study was originally intended to focus on all categories of unhealthy food purchases (snacks, processed foods, sugar sweetened beverages, etc.), but after some time passed my practicum group decided to focus on the amount of sugar sweetened beverages and desserts being purchased by local mothers.

The second half of the development has included gathering intervention materials that will concentrate on teaching the focus group mothers to make better food and grocery shopping purchases. These materials have included articles, media videos, and cooking demonstrations. My duties involved developing materials, and later conducting the group meetings and data analysis. This project has not yet been completed.

**Public Health Significance**

A great success will come from this project if the intervention materials are able to inform the focus group mothers of the idea that they may be purchasing too many sugar based items. The intervention material is meant to educate them on better food purchase practices, and ways to replace the sugar based items they are consuming. Hopefully, all that combined will empower these mothers to continue to improve their diets and their family’s eating habits.

There is always a need for better eating habits within a community, especially in today’s society where mass amounts of food are available and convenient to obtain. Improvement of individual eating habits will always be beneficial at the community level, therefore this study is a way to have a positive affect on community health.

The learning objectives for this study include implementing and developing a project protocol. I feel that if by the completion of the project I am then able to successfully plan and implement a targeted behavioral intervention I will have met my objectives.
Assessing the Implementation of Standardized Nursing Data Sets for Nursing

During my practicum experience I served as a member of the Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers' Research Committee, whose recent focus has been on determining the level of implementation of national minimum data sets for nursing supply, demand, and education by its member states.

This task is a continuation of a project that originally started in 2008 to establish national minimum datasets for nursing. My involvement during my practicum experience included collecting, cleaning, and summarizing findings from a survey that asked states to report the variables and response options from the minimum datasets that were being collected in their state.

The results from this survey will be used for the second part of a two article series called “Toward Standardization: Assessment of State and National Nursing Workforce Data Sources,” as well as for a presentation that will be given at the Forum’s annual conference in June of 2012.

Public Health Significance

The primary way that my practicum experience has related to the Essential Services of Public Health is by meeting the function of assurance and most specifically the essential service of assuring a competent workforce.

The Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers is focused on addressing the nursing shortage through the collaborative work of the different state nursing workforce centers. To this end, a major component in addressing the nursing shortage is determining if there is a nursing shortage and to what extent. This cannot be done without data. Data is necessary not only to inform us of the nursing shortage but to help inform us of whether the nursing profession is educationally and culturally prepared to address the issues of our growing, changing, and aging population.

Through the minimum dataset project, the Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers is working toward collection of standardized nursing data that can be used for assessing the current workforce and planning for an adequate supply of nurses to address future population needs. Making sure that an adequate and competent workforce is available to treat the population is an important aspect of public health.

Highlights

- Conducted assessment of current implementation of nursing minimum datasets
- Assisted in collection, cleaning, and summarization of survey results regarding implementation of nursing minimum datasets
- Survey results to be published in second article related to this project and presented at Forum’s national conference

“Making sure that an adequate and competent workforce is available to treat the population is an important aspect of public health.”
One of the contributions I was able to see firsthand as part of the Campus Suicide Prevention Program (CSPP) was to “inform, educate, and empower” a variety of campus members including students, faculty, and staff.

The main goals of CSPP were to raise awareness to the sensitive but serious issue of suicide especially among college students. This means not only reaching out to traditional incoming freshman straight out of high school, but also to students who are continuing education at a different stage in their life, sometimes as an older adult.

We informed students of the services offered on-campus such as SHS, which provides free counseling for students and can include their partners and family members for free! The program aims to break some of the barriers on speaking up and recognizing when to seek out assistance using the collaborations of services in the community as well.

Public Health Significance

One of the contributions I was able to see firsthand as part of the CSPP was to “inform, educate, and empower” a variety of campus members including students, faculty, and staff.

The program aimed to break some of the barriers on speaking up and recognizing when to seek out assistance using the collaborations of services in the community as well.

A short video in English & Spanish was created to serve as a “Message for Parents” regarding the transition to college for their student. UTB students from different backgrounds participated in the project to post on the CSPP webpage.

*The video content was taken from the UT Counseling & Mental Health Center in Austin

Several Events Hosted by CSPP this past semester include:

- Mental Health Discussion Panel: “Reducing Stigma on Mental Health Issues”
- QPR Training for Students, Faculty, & Staff
- Wellness Retreat
- Conference on “Recognizing Mental Health Issues Among Adolescents and Young Adults for Suicide Prevention”

“UTB was the only university in Texas awarded the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant in 2011, a 3-year grant”

Here is the program logo, designed by a student to help in the branding of CSPP and to bring awareness of the initiative throughout the campus and local community.
Public Health Significance

Public Health Essential Service(s)
Related to Project:

- Develop policies and plan
- Evaluate
- Research

For this project I worked collaboratively with a government contractor and the Chief Laboratory Preparedness Officer in the Influenza Division to provide technical support services for the development of the international capacity strategy and operation plan in Africa. During this process I evaluated data and researched potential solutions to improve the delivery of enzymes, influenza testing kits and other ancillaries distribute to public health labs in Africa more than 27 countries in Africa.

Optimization of Shipments to African Countries (OSAC)

By: Damaris E. Garcia

The IRR was established in 2008 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under a contract with American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) in Manassas, VA, USA to provide viruses, reagents, kits and panels to researchers, public health laboratories, vaccine manufacturers and diagnostic test developers to improve influenza diagnostics and vaccines and promote basic influenza research. IRR mission is to enhance detection, surveillance, and control of influenza and support pandemic preparedness globally. I collaborated on the evaluation of shipments sent to all African countries in 2011. The main goal of OSAC was to improve the shipment of reagents and reach out to those countries were IRR is currently facing difficulties to deliver successfully. This evaluation consisted of data analysis and the creation of a feedback questionnaire.

Special events/ duties during practicum

- Weekly meetings with the Chief Laboratory Preparedness Officer
- Presentation of Data to Deputy Director of the Preparedness Division
- Attendance to Annual Conference for the All hands on Epi Labs

“To improve the delivery of influenza testing kits to more than 27 countries in Africa”
Dental Unit Waterline Contamination

The Possible Risk of Infection after a Dental Treatment

By: TEMITAYO ADEWUYI

My practicum was with Dr. Puttaiah Raghunath of the Diagnostic Sciences Department at the Baylor College of Dentistry, Dallas. The practicum involved Literature Review on Dental Unit Waterline Contamination and analyzing secondary data on this topic. The Dental Unit Waterline (DUWL) connected with the dental unit chairs is the source of water provision during most dental treatment. There have been scientific evidences suggesting these DUWLs harbor bacteria which colonize and replicate within these tubes forming “Biofilm” that could become pathogenic and are harmful to both the Dental Health Care Professionals (DHCPs) and their patients. The literature review and data analyzing on this topic is still an on-going one for me presently as we continue to get the information together in order to prepare a manuscript for a peer-review journal in the subject of environmental biofilms and microbial contamination of dental unit water systems.

Public Health Significance

From the available evidences, the biofilm fragments from the DUWL during dental treatment when inhaled; colonized the lungs without any symptom. In the presence of immune compromised situations (patients with uncontrolled diabetes), post-radiotherapy patients and those with chronic illnesses, these fragments become pathogenic leading to infections associated with species of Legionella or Pseudomonas.

The Essential Services of Public Health that my practicum relates to include (#3) to inform, educate and empower the public and the DHCPs about the risk of infection due to DUWL contaminants. The proposed final manuscript will also help to hasten the effort of the American Dental Association to implement policies that could bring the dental treatment water to be ≤200 Colony Forming Unit/ml (#6), and lastly, it will aid in encouraging further research into how to control contaminants in DUWLs and make the water and clinic safe for patients and their DHCPs (#10).
HOSPITAL ACQUIRED INFECTION CONTROL

TRIAL OF POSITIVE DEVIANCE IN INPATIENT WARDS TO REDUCE HOSPITAL INFECTIONS
BY: DEEPAK DONTHI

An estimated 99,000 deaths occur due to Hospital acquired infections (HAI) occur every year and excess healthcare costs of $28-33 billion. What are we doing about it?

Parkland hospital infection control Department introduced me to the project which used a novel concept of positive deviance where existing practices in prevention of HAI’s were identified and implemented uniformly in the study wards. I did a thorough chart review of more than 1500 charts in search of HAI’s. As suggested by health care professionals who were recipients of our intervention, we directed a video that described appropriate technique of hand washing. As a final product I created a case list of patients that succumbed to hospital acquired infection. This list would provide immense information to parkland hospital staff assisting in control of future infection.

PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

Hospital acquired infections reflects the quality of hospital care. Our team is taking the effort to identify such HAI which provides valuable estimate of the problem. This helped us provide an evaluation towards the effectiveness of existing practices in control of hospital acquired infections. We provided education in the form of intervention that was selected by the hospital staff.

In this process we successfully put into perspective few essential functions of public health like diagnosis and investigation, education, evaluation and research.

Parkland Hospital at UT Southwestern campus is essentially a non-profit organization. My department toils hard in maintaining quality control and prevention of the nosocomial infections. The Department undertakes research and quality control at a regular basis serving the general public to provide good health care.

PEARLS FROM PRACTICUM

- CDC definitions, criteria, approach and overall knowledge about health care associated infections.
- Organization and planning of a research study
- Confidentiality, ethics and work culture related to a research study.
- Positive deviant interventions in control of health care associated infections.
- Handling medical data software like EPIC.

"1.7 million Healthcare associated infections in US- every single one was preventable!!"

An ironical cartoon

Coordinated Approach to Child Health:
Dallas Independent School District

Practicum Events

- Provided training/guidance for Dallas ISD Faculty on CATCH Toolkit
- Conducted SOFITs to measure student’s physical activity level in gym class
- Provided resources for and attended Family Wellness Events
- Collected and distributed Teacher and Student Surveys

Dallas Independent School District makes Middle School Health CATCHy
By: Jenny Eyer

Childhood obesity is increasing at an alarming rate, in Dallas 21% of students are considered obese. To combat this health issue, DISD was awarded a grant that allowed personnel from the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program to help with the implementation of CATCH in thirty-five middle schools. This grant would allow for stronger implementation and more personnel to guide the DISD faculty.

For my part in this implementation, I was assigned eleven schools that I helped guide through the CATCH program. To do this, I provided goals for the schools to meet, provided resources for the schools to use in order to meet these goals, and helped with ideas for school health events. I also worked with DISD to write CATCH lessons into the DISD middle school Health and P.E. curriculum.

Public Health Significance

Through this practicum experience, CATCH provided many of the essential public health services while striving to improve the health of middle school students. The service to inform, educate, and empower was seen during the many trainings and meetings that were held with the individual schools. Through conducting surveys and SOFITs, the CATCH program was able to monitor the health status of students as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation. In order to improve the students’ health, policies and plans were developed specifically for each school. The CATCH Champion in charge of each school’s program was asked to select specific goals to meet by the end of the semester. A plan to meet these goals was designed by the CATCH facilitators, and helpful resources were given to the Champion.

CATCH contributes to public health by creating a healthy school environment. This program not only changes the health classes, but every aspect of the student’s school day by involving all entities of the school.

“In order to effectively better the health of middle school students, we cannot just change one element of their life. We must change all elements, in a coordinated approach, in order to assure that change will occur.”


Spring 2012 • Jenny Eyer • CATCH Dallas ISD • Childhood Obesity
High Sensitivity Troponin in Diabetic Cohort

Assessment of High Sensitivity Troponin Assay in Diabetic Cohort with Rosiglitazone treatment

By: David Bennett Grinsfelder

Through a practicum with the Cardiology Clinical Research Group at the UT Southwestern, I have applied my education in biostatistics and epidemiology to perform statistical analysis for the Dallas Heart Study and the Rosiglitazone Study.

I spent the majority of my time working with data from a study that examined the effects of the anti-diabetic drug, Rosiglitazone on heart failure.

Public Health Significance

My experience with the Cardiology Clinical Group relates to the essential services of public health in multiple ways. Primarily, the Rosiglitazone Study expands research in the area of diabetes and heart failure as well as providing a monitoring of the diabetic population with respect to risk factors for heart disease.

Furthermore, the study acts to diagnose and investigate two major health problems in the Dallas community: diabetes and heart disease. Because a drug treatment is an exposure of interest in the Rosiglitazone Study, it evaluates the effectiveness of current treatment as part of an effort to ensure the ongoing competency of the public health and personal health care workforce.

The Rosiglitazone Study and Dallas Heart Study improve understanding of the impact of heart disease on the local community. The results of the study will be used to develop policy and interventions designed to reduce heart disease in Dallas.

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The Side effects of treatment

By: Anshula Kesh

Dental Unit water line contamination has been a long standing problem in dental offices and hospitals. There has been extensive research in this field since the 1980's. Literature search on this topic has yielded a vast amount of published work. The ultimate aim of this project taking place in the Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas is to develop a data collection instrument for secondary data from published manuscripts, ending in a systematic review. As the final product of my practicum, I am going to summarize my findings on the topic and list out the variables that can be used to measure and compare the degree of contamination in dental unit lines, hence taking us further in our goal of a sterile environment during treatment.

Public Health Significance

The two main public health services that come to mind in relation to my practicum are:

- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population based health services.

It is necessary to monitor the available health care services in the community to ensure that they are being practiced with the same ethical principles that led to their development in the first place. Complacency in any field can lead to numerous problems, especially when we cannot “see” the havoc our actions may be causing. The fact that the teeming millions of bacteria in the same dental waterline that is an essential part of treatment cannot be seen with a naked eye has lead to this situation today.

“A bacterial infestation in dental unit water lines may develop due to infrequent flushing of water lines with appropriate chemicals.”

Legionella pneumophilla in dental unit water lines

(http://www.thenextdds.com/uploadedImages/The_Next_DDS/Articles/3338650.jpg)
Assessing the health literacy of low-income populations in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex  
**By:** Erum Khalid

The Department of Clinical Sciences at the University of Texas Southwestern medical center located in Dallas, TX was the site for my practicum. I worked on the health literacy study which sought to evaluate the health literacy of low socio-economic populations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The study was comprised of a few steps. Primarily, letters were sent to participants who had registered in the community research registry. Calls were then made to follow up with the participants, in order to schedule possible interviews. The participants would then come in and take the health literacy assessments and a health topic survey.

The health literacy study evaluates the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

Most of the participants in the study are recruited from free health fairs around the Dallas area such as Kwanzaa Fest and Viva Dallas. The study requires there be an equal amount of English-speaking and Spanish-speaking participants. Both of these factors ensure that we are targeting a wide array of lower-income and less educated people, in other words, the population that most needs its access to/ quality of health care and health literacy assessed. In the health survey we administer to each participant, questions are asked on the participant’s insurance coverage and the availability of health care services to the individual.

I directly ask the study participants questions related to their ease in seeing a healthcare professional as needed, whether insurance status plays a part in not being able to access health care immediately, and whether the participant finds difficulty in reading hospital instructions. Furthermore, the participant’s literacy levels are assessed through a questionnaire which I administer. Through this information we will be better able to identify key points of concern in terms of quality and accessibility of health services.

**Special events/duties/highlights during your practicum**

- Called people to schedule appointments
- Mailed letters to people registered in the community research registry
- Conducted interviews with participants at UT Southwestern
- Went to Parkland clinic to recruit participants for study

**“I was constantly surprised by the participants; Demographics are far from being sole defining factors.”**

UT Southwestern Medical Center logo

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/articles/impact/

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program: 2008 Case Evaluation

By: EMMANUELO VIDAL

At the epidemiology department of Dallas County Health and Human services, my task was to input into a database, the 2008 Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention program case files and analyze the data imputed to discover how to better improve the program in Dallas County.

Prevention of the transmission of hepatitis B, from pregnant mothers to their unborn child.

Public Health Significance

This practicum experience has enabled me to monitor perinatal hepatitis B program in Dallas and to identify which areas in Dallas County the problem is most prevalent. It also enabled me to inform and educate Dallas County residents about the importance of testing and vaccination in perinatal hepatitis B prevention.

The Public Health Essential Services (PHES) that most closely relates to my practicum experience are monitor, assure, evaluate and Research.

A Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program was established and a database was formed to address this issue. I was involved in the data imputation, management and analysis.

The final product was a project report and postal presentation.

I’m not sure if I’m at liberty to share the major results of this study.

Special events/duties during my practicum

- Imputation and analysis of data
- Send-off party for one of the departing staff of Dallas County Health and human services
- Significant contribution to a CDC funded program.

“The prevention is always better and cheaper than cure”

Joy of a mother kissing her new baby that is hepatitis B free.

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program:

Source for pix: San Mateo County health system http://www.smchealth.org/node/438
Texas department of state health services>infectious disease control>Perinatal Hepatitis
Challenges in Treatment of Patients Co-infected with HCV and HIV

By: ANKITA VORA

A qualitative approach was used for this study. The data collection of this retrospective study was done in Parkland Hospital, Dallas. Two focus groups were created. One group included 10 patients with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and other group included 10 patients co-infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and HCV. Structured interviews were carried out by physicians during clinic visits. The themes were created depending on patient’s knowledge and attitude towards HCV treatment. We used NVivo 3.2 software for the analysis. My role in this study was to define each theme and tag relevant codes when reading through the interviews. I and my colleague tagged the interviews individually and measured inter-reliability to be sure that we were tagging relevant text taking the definitions into consideration. I also had the opportunity to do a literature search for this topic that helped my team to create an abstract.

Public Health Significance

Co-infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) and HIV is a major public health problem. About one-third of all HIV-seropositive Americans are co-infected with HCV. Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) has extended lives of people with HIV, whereas end-stage liver disease has emerged as a leading cause of HIV-related morbidity and mortality. Little is known about the factors that contribute to HCV treatment decision making process for HCV treatment.

A qualitative approach has been used in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of factors responsible for barriers to HCV treatment in co-infected patients. A comparative study with two focus groups including patients with dually infected versus patients infected with HCV only will guide us to witness unexplored differences in variables responsible for inadequate HCV treatment.

Special events/ duties during your practicum
- Different aspects of qualitative research
- Using NVivo software
- Team work and leadership qualities

“Today if you are not confused, you are just not thinking clearly.”

Co-Infection: How To Treat?

www.hepatitisd/en/564/hepatitis-c-hiv

Spring 2012 • Ankita Vora • Parkland Hospital• Barriers to Treat Co-infection
Youth Coalition Functioning

Evaluation of Youth Coalition Functioning with the Smoke Free Paso del Norte Initiative

By: Alisha Hayden

I worked with Dr. Louis Brown in conjunction with the Paso del Norte Health Foundation (PDNHF) and three youth coalitions in the region. I was responsible for preparing and conducting a survey and focus groups, data analyses, and preparing the feedback report for each coalition. I worked directly with the coalitions to identify the activities intended to:

1) influence youth participants and
2) to reduce tobacco use in the broader community. A final feedback report will be generated for each coalition. Following the presentation of results, we will facilitate the development of specific aims designed to improve weaknesses and build upon strengths.

Public Health Significance

The Core Functions and Essential Services of Public Health provided by my host organization consist of:

1) Mobilizing community partnerships
2) Empowering people
3) Evaluating current health promotion programs.

Most of my duties consisted of the last of these functions: the evaluation of the tobacco prevention youth coalitions.

The coalitions work to empower youth in order to make a difference in their individual lives as well as in the community. Youth spend time conducting compliance checks, advocating with local and state government, and presenting about the effects of tobacco at health fairs and elementary schools.

Our evaluation process and the technical assistance we will provide in the coming months is expected to help the coalitions to become more effective at empowering youth and creating community change in the future.

“...tell them that we don’t do [tobacco] so they don’t have to do it to just be cool.”

- Youth participant

Special duties:

• Develop relationships
• Conduct mixed methods research
• Facilitate the development of a strategic plan then provide key technical support
• Present results to youth and disseminate to wider community

Alisha Hayden
UTSPH/PDNHF
Measurement of coalition functioning of youth coalitions with a Smoke Free Paso del Norte Initiative

Poster presented at 2012 CCPH conference in Houston, TX (April 21, 2012)

Kick butts- PDNHF Teen Empowerment Summit 2011
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1VRPnB0QaE

Photo courtesy of Alisha Hayden

Logo courtesy of http://research.utep.edu/Default.aspx?alais=research.utep.edu/smokefree

Spring 2012 • Alisha Hayden • UTSPH/PDNHF • Measurement of coalition functioning of youth coalitions with a Smoke Free Paso del Norte Initiative

Spring 2012 • Alisha Hayden • UTSPH/PDNHF • Measurement of coalition functioning of youth coalitions with a Smoke Free Paso del Norte Initiative
Public Health Significance

Of the ten Essential Public Health Services, the one that best applied to my practicum experience is develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Through my practicum experience, I learned the importance of establishing and implementing a thorough commissioning plan for PV systems. Commissioning is a mechanism used to ensure PV systems are safe and performing according to manufacturer’s specifications. Sub-standard systems can increase the risk for personal injury, and property damage.

By developing this policy for UTHSCSA, we can also assure that periodic checks on the PV system are performed, thereby ensuring continued benefits of a clean, renewable energy system.

The UT Health Science Center is dedicated to being good environmental stewards, and this is just one way they are able to accomplish this.

Photovoltaic System Commissioning & Training at UTHSCSA

By: Rebecca Bloodworth

With the recent addition of a photovoltaic (PV) system at UTHSCSA, my project was to develop and implement a PV system commissioning policy and training program for maintenance workers at UTHSCSA. My duties including becoming familiar with the components of a PV system, the installation and commissioning process, and the associated occupational hazards for maintenance workers who would have a potential exposure to these hazards.

My final product is a written commissioning policy for PV systems installed at UTHSCSA. A training module will be developed over the summer to be delivered to maintenance workers, roofers, and electricians who may come in contact with the PV systems.

Current Statistics:

- 416 solar panels on the STRF roof, 342 solar panels on the carport at Greehey North Campus, UTHSCSA.
- 250,971 KWh of total energy generated by system since installation (May 2011)
- This is equivalent to providing power to 282 homes for one month.

“By using clean solar power, we avoided generating an amount of carbon dioxide that is equivalent to driving a family sedan 382,913 miles.”

Pollution Prevention –
Total amounts avoided since system installation (May 2011):
- 335,046 lbs Carbon dioxide
- 476 lbs Nitrogen oxides
- 1,244 lbs Sulfur dioxide

Dr. Michael Charlton, Asst. Vice President for Risk Management & Safety, points to the energy display at the STRF. Photo courtesy of Dr. Charlton, Environmental Health & Safety, UTHSCSA.
Exercise Programs for Cancer Survivors in South Texas

By: Elsa Camou

Cancer and physical activity, two major public health problems, are issues being addressed through a program funded by the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). Dr. Stacey Young-McCaughan’s evidence based program (EBP) called “Maximizing Cancer Survivorship: Implementation of an Evidence Based Program” is responsible for the state-of-the-art fitness center located within CTRC. The services offered at this fitness center include assessments, exercise prescriptions, exercise training & supervision.

With the assistance and supervision of highly qualified professionals, cancer survivors are able to take part in this individualized exercise program free of charge.

As the initial group of cancer survivors return for their follow-up assessments, an initial program evaluation will also begin. With the assistance of subject matter experts and the program’s staff, I developed the program evaluation questionnaire that will be launched within this group of cancer survivors. The questionnaire will provide valuable data on issues pertaining to program satisfaction and program awareness.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience is related to two main Public Health essential services: evaluation and development of policies and plans. As the program completed its first quarterly review, it was noted that a program evaluation was necessary to assess and improve the outcomes of the program. The newly developed program evaluation questionnaire will provide information that will be vital for our stakeholders and the community.

Due to the great participation rate and interest in the program, the program’s staff is now investigating possible collaborations with other organizations to meet the demands of the community. This practicum experience has allowed me to explore and consider potential community partnerships and possible avenues to implement and deliver health promotion programs.

“Over 300 survivors and family members have signed up to participate in the CTRC Fitness Center program.”

-CTRC Fitness Center

Practicum Duties

* Assist with community outreach events
* Design program evaluation questionnaire
* Research existing exercise programs and resources
* Evaluate current data collection instruments and assist in development of program database

Healthy Futures of Texas, an Excellent Practicum Experience

By: Robyn Koch

As an intern at Healthy Futures of Texas HFTX I was exposed to all the channels of becoming a professional Health Educator. I was able to assist in teaching lessons, attend health fairs, inputting data, staff meetings and community outreach.

I specifically worked with the Project Specialist Jennifer Moore. Together we educated teens and young adults on Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy Prevention.

Healthy Futures of Texas teaches abstinence-plus curricula to teens and young adults in the San Antonio Community.

It was a great experience to be able to reach out to various age-groups and talk about teen pregnancy. It is great to know that working here has helped me to make a positive impact on the San Antonio community.

Public Health Significance

This practicum experience is most related to the 3rd Essential Services of Public Health, “Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues”.

As health educators we play a significant role in informing the public on important public health topics like teen pregnancy.

But it is not enough to just inform. We are also responsible for taking action, and Healthy Futures does just that. Their involvement in the schools and the community helps to educate not only teens and young adults but also parents. These educational tools given help empower the community to work together on making informed and responsible choices.

Healthy Futures of Texas is currently working with:
- San Antonio ISD Middle and High Schools
- Bexar County Juvenile Probation
- Municipal Court
- Haven for Hope
- Boys and Girls Club
- Urban Connections

“Working together to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies to build a community with Prepared Parents, Planned Pregnancies, and Healthy Families…”

Picture Courtesy of Healthy Futures of Texas

Spring 2012 • Robyn Koch • Healthy Futures of Texas • Preventing Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies
This past year I was able to work with four grade levels; pre-kinder thru 2nd grade. Some of our lessons included “Building a Healthy Body” and “Fitness can be Fun.”

To build a healthy body we taught the students about “healthy” foods and “not so healthy foods” then had the students “fill” a traced body with all the healthy food choices. (see picture at right).

At another visit we focused on physical activity by playing a charades type game with the students which required them to move around and be active. This activity showed the students that physical activity can be fun and easily incorporated into their daily play.

**Public Health Significance**

Ready, Set, FIT! is a school based educational program that teaches elementary school children about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating. A pillar of this program is to position fitness (to include physical activity, nutrition, and emotional well being) as a cornerstone for prevention and management of many chronic conditions, specifically childhood obesity.

Ready, Set, FIT! works to **inform, educate, and empower** young children about their health and fitness choices.

**Inform** - There are many options on what to eat and how to play

**Educate** - It’s easy to make good choices and incorporate healthy options into your life

**Empower** - You can be a part of determining what you eat and how active you are
HIV MEDICATION ADHERENCE

Master Your Meds: HIV Medication Adherence
An Interprofessional Project

By: Meg Zoffuto
For my MPH Practicum, I worked on an interprofessional project, involving students from the Schools of Public Health, Medicine, Pharmacy, Respiratory Therapy, and Social Work at the UT Health Science Center, San Antonio.

Our project aimed to create an educational tool for HIV+ patients. I conducted a needs assessment on HIV Education at the Alamo Resource Center at the Brady Green Clinic in Downtown San Antonio.

Public Health Significance
My practicum experience applies to the Essential Public Health Service, Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

For example, the organizations I worked with, the FFACTS Clinic and The Alamo Resource Center, work diligently to approach medical problems by educating and enabling patients to understand their disease processes. They provide case managers, counseling, financial aid, and social services to empower patients to live with chronic disease.

Using the results of the needs assessment, the group worked together to create a useful tool for HIV+ patient education, specifically addressing the importance of medication adherence.

I worked specifically on creating a representation of the pathophysiology of HIV that patients can understand. This explanation was translated into a visual representation shown above.

The final educational aid was printed and donated to community HIV organizations.

In addition, the educational tool developed in this project additionally works to help patients understand their disease and why it is important to take their medications as directed. This teaching document allows patients to be active participants in disease treatment as well as active voices in decision-making.

Results of the Community Based Needs Assessment
Important Educational Messages
- Don’t let the HIV virus control you, you control it!
- Adherence makes a difference in quality of life and survival
- Explanation of HIV resistance

Image by Isaac Phan, member of the Interprofessional Group, UT School of Pharmacy
During my month in STEER, we discussed many different subjects including vector borne diseases, autism, folk medicine, and others. However, the one subject that kept recurring was the Border Wall which divides the US and Mexico. The overwhelming consensus was that the wall does more harm than good.

One specific party we heard from was US Fish and Wildlife. The biologist at the Santa Ana Refuge described the effects of the wall on area wildlife. Such a large barrier was already preventing wildlife from their natural migration or escaping predators. I would have never thought of such an effect. STEER was full of information like this and provided a new perspective in many areas.

Public Health Significance

While the Border Wall was a significant experience for me, there were many others that relate to some of the Essential Public Health Services.

One of the bigger service influences was to “Inform, educate, and empower.” This was the overall theme of the experience, whether we were being educated as participants or discovering ways the public was being educated. We met with several officials in the School of Public Health in Brownsville who told us about all of the interventions taking place in the Valley for its citizens. There is a CATCH program for childhood obesity, the tuberculosis outreach, chronic disease management such as diabetes, health in the colonias, and many more. It was not limited to obvious health issues. Learning about Harlingen’s recycling center and visiting a landfill in Donna provided an interesting view.

Overall, the information presented gave me ideas for potential interventions as well as a better understanding of public health needs different populations.
Exploring Border Health

The Border Region Faces Special Obstacles to Health

By: ANDREW CHANG

My time in Laredo, TX was eye-opening to say the least. Health issues that are not even concerns in other parts of the country, such as tuberculosis and lack of sewage and clean water, are prevalent in this region. Poverty is rampant, and citizens fear asking for rights because of their questionable residency status. The main source of drinking water is the Rio Grande, which is shared with Mexico, a country with less stringent regulatory measures.

Despite these obstacles, I was able to partner with local organizations, ranging from the local health department to customs agents to provide education. I helped monitor water quality by taking water samples from the Rio Grande and was challenged ethically as I witnessed the dire conditions the individuals are forced to endure with everyday.

Public Health Significance

During my experience, I learned about the investigation process for tracking down index cases for tuberculosis at the local health department. We evaluated the current system of providing health services via visits to the local hospital and health center. We also learned about the enforcement of laws placed to protect the region via visits with border patrol and customs.

However, the major focus of my experience was monitoring the health status of the population through home visits, meetings with local health officials, and sampling the source of the community’s drinking water.

STIEER remains relevant in the realm of public health by educating students about the special issues involved with border health. They send out health workers to the homes of locals to provide education concerning issues such as diabetes and pesticide use. They also play an activist role, taking part in protests and imparting their expertise knowledge.
The South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER) Program is designed to give students an overview of the health issues unique to the Rio Grande Valley region. This area is unique in many ways which are highlighted throughout the program. One of the most interesting aspects of this program was the hands-on experience we were given through our work with Operation Lone Star, a free week-long clinic that offers screenings, school physicals, vaccinations, medications, and health information. I served primarily as a translator in the pharmacy which gave me the opportunity to see everyone who came through the clinic before they left.

**Public Health Significance**

The STEER Program helps to educate me as to the health issues that are facing an important and unique region of our state and has therefore helped shape me into a better future public health professional. I think that all too often this region of the state and country is overlooked and not seen as unique in the health challenges that it faces. By experiencing them firsthand and fully immersing myself in them, I was able to get a better understanding of what the problems are and how we as future public health professionals can help. Some topics that were covered during the program were environmental exposures that are common in the area as it is an agricultural community, visits to “colonias” in both Brownsville and San Benito, and a visit to the Bayview Detention Center, all of which taught me more about the region than I ever could have learned in a classroom.

All pictures were taken by Anna Engle, Summer 2011
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/