Public Health Practice

Assessment

Policy Development

Assurance

UTHealth School of Public Health Practicum Experiences
Fall 2015 - 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 gain a deeper understanding of public health practice, interact with professionals in the field, and expand their repertoire of professional skills.

This 18th edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Fall 2015 semester. Prior editions may be accessed on the practicum website at https://sph.uth.edu/academics/public-health-practice/#tabs-2 (click on the Reports tab)
## Practicum Topics

### Houston

*Number of Students: 8*

### Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated School Health Program</td>
<td>Deanna Belleny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool Physical Activity Evaluation</td>
<td>Sarah Bentley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Literacy and Health</td>
<td>Ila Casselberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Autism Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Pooja Chaudhary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Sexual Health</td>
<td>Imory N. Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient and Provider Communication</td>
<td>Gabriela Portillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Dating Violence</td>
<td>Cecilia Tamez-Rodriguez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women with HIV</td>
<td>Sarah Wesely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A group of children from the Peninsula Jewish Community Center participate in a CATCH Early Childhood Activity.

A CATCH-y Change for Promise Community School District

By: Deanna Belleny

The Promise Community School District was tasked with implementing a coordinated health program in accordance with their local wellness policy and the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. This was to improve child health and help decrease childhood obesity. They chose the CATCH curriculum however needed a point person/change agent to help explain and diffuse the necessary changes.

I was tasked with assessing and acquiring all the necessary materials and training needed to implement CATCH. Furthermore I would need to gain buy in from each school’s principal, curriculum coach any other key staff to ensure support and cooperation district wide.

In the end my tangible final product was an implementation and sustainability timeline with responsible parties listed. This timeline was to be approved and understood by all schools in the district.

Public Health Significance

The Public Health Essential Services that most closely related to my experiences were

- Inform educate and empower people about health issues.
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

The Promise Community School District is unique in that it is a community school, meaning that it strategically seeks to engage and empower the community along with the school families. Each campus doubles as a community center and contains a health clinic. Together each site educates their community on a variety of topics including immunizations, heart health, and diabetes.

The use of a coordinated health program also highlights this organization’s strive towards student and community health. With the use of CATCH, an ecological framework, they wanted a program that focused on changing the individual as well as the environment in order to promote health community wide.

Key Events During Practicum

- Teleconference with CATCH Global Foundation
- Identifying “CATCH Champions” at each site
- CATCH train the trainer
  - Attended: Nov 17th, 19th
- CATCH Training Implemented: Dec 9th
- CATCH Implementation & Sustainability Meeting - Dec 10th

Communication Channels when Diffusing Innovations

Although most professionals respond quickest to emails when wanting to implement a new idea, face to face conversation is much more effective and develops relationships and trust.
Afterschool Physical Activity Program Evaluation

By: Sarah Bentley

For my practicum I was the project manager for the Foundation Communities Afterschool Physical Activity Program Evaluation.

My job was to facilitate the evaluation of the peer-led and teacher-led physical activity programs as implemented at Foundation Communities seven properties around Austin, Texas.

I reported directly to the director of health initiatives who entrusted me to lead a small team in collecting and analyzing data.

Our team collected pedometer data as well as demographic and satisfaction survey data. The end product is a final report and presentation.

Public Health Significance

My practicum relates specifically to the evaluation of the effectiveness of population-based health services.

Foundation Communities provides a variety of health, education and financial services to lower-SES individuals and families.

My practicum specifically relates to their afterschool education and youth development programs.

In addition to the Learning Centers' afterschool programs for youth, Foundation Communities also provides primary and mental health services to their residents and neighbors. They also promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity promotion such as Zumba classes and walking groups. In addition, they provide education about nutrition, including a food pantry focused on healthy and fresh foods.

Advice for Future Students

• Working with elementary age students can be loud and over stimulating. Bring earplugs!

Lessons Learned

• Conduct a pilot at one of the more challenging sites. By choosing the most prepared site to do the pilot, we set ourselves up for a wake-up call when the actual evaluation began.

Special events/duties during your practicum

• We attended a CATCH Peer-led/Teacher-led training for the staff.
• We visited all the sites and learned their unique challenges and strengths.
• I managed staff schedules and budget for the project.

Fall 2015 • Sarah Bentley • Foundation Communities • Afterschool Physical Activity Evaluation
Financial Literacy and Health

Promoting health through financial literacy and affordable housing

By: Ila Casselberry

Covenant Community Capital is an organization that seeks to ameliorate poverty through the use of financial education, matched savings programs, home buying education, and home buying assistance. My practicum focused on helping incorporate greater health education into their financial literacy programs as well as plan health fairs at some of their affordable housing locations.

Thus my practicum focused on the interplay between poverty and poor health. Currently, this organization is mainly focusing on health education as a tactic for alleviating the problem.

My deliverables were 3 health fairs promoting Medicare enrollment, healthy diet and exercise, and self-managing chronic diseases. Additionally, I created a comprehensive PowerPoint for healthy habits.

Public Health Significance

The bulk of my practicum involved these two core functions: 3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues. 7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

This was achieved through:

- Health fairs that:
  - Educated participants on blood pressure, blood glucose, healthy diet and exercise, and
  - Provided information on affordable, accessible healthcare services close to residents
- Creating educational PowerPoints and handouts that showed the importance of preventative health services and affordable services for clients

Special events/duties/highlights during your practicum

- Planning health fairs at senior residential centers to reduce barriers to health education, Medicare information, and flu shots
- Analyze current outcome measures of financial literacy clients to help measure success

Advice to Future Students

- Be willing to self-teach during your practicum
- Don’t expect your preceptor to always have a clear vision for your practicum. Create a vision for yourself

40.7% of the poor are likely to be homeowners compared to roughly 64% of the general population that own their home (Historical Census of Housing Tables - Homeownership). Children whose parents own their homes have higher math and reading scores and fewer behavioral problems (Haurin, Parcel, & Haurin, 2002).
Statewide Autism Needs Assessment

LoneStar LEND Autism Needs Assessment Program
By: Pooja Chaudhary

LoneStar LEND training program is designed to develop leaders in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (ASD/ND) through an interdisciplinary training model focusing on leadership, cultural competence, and evidence-based practice.

I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in one of its efforts to assess the needs of children and families living with ASD across Texas.

My duties included participating in the recruitment efforts, data collection, data analysis, preparation of an executive summary and final report.

Public Health Significance

The prevalence of ASD has significantly increased in recent years. According to a surveillance study conducted by the CDC, 1 in 68 children have been diagnosed with ASD. These individuals with ASD and their families need a variety of services to live independently and improve their quality of life. Henceforth, a comprehensive needs assessment is the key to develop and implement effective programs.

Evaluate: The needs assessment aims to evaluate the effectiveness, affordability, accessibility, and quality of services received by individuals with autism and their families.

Research: Using results from the comprehensive needs assessment, innovative approaches to address these gaps will be identified and implemented.

In sum, this is a crucial effort to promote independent living & the quality of life of families and children affected by ASD.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Make best use of the opportunity: Practicum is a wonderful opportunity to fulfill the gap between text-book learning and real-life experiences. Make sure you make the best use of this opportunity. Make connections, meet the experts, ask questions and don’t be afraid to volunteer for challenging tasks.

Thesis Idea: Your practicum can also generate a thesis idea.

Practicum Highlights

- Participated in the literature review, recruitment of participants, data collection and data analysis
- Contributing to an ongoing statewide executive summary and report to explore the needs of families and children living with Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD)
Adolescent Sexual Health

Adventures to #justbe: A Contributing Writer

By: Imory N. Jefferson

The We Can Do More (WCDM) project addressed the issue of teen pregnancy and risky sexual behavior in adolescents living in Houston (Harris County), Texas. WCDM found an innovative way to communicate with teens on their level through #justbe, a digital magazine that uses engaging and interactive media to connect with teens, while still providing education on important issues regarding sexual health and a myriad of topics. I was responsible for providing magazine content that was relevant, authentic, and engaging for teen readers.

My final product was an article featured in the magazine about seasonal depression in teens. It is my hope that it can provide a transition in future focus group conversations to probe teens about mental health issues they may be experiencing.

Public Health Significance

The Public Health service most relevant to my duties and experience with WCDM were found in the area of policy development which included:

Informing, educating, and empowering youth about health issues through:

- An interactive magazine designed specifically for the teen subscribers
- Focus groups encouraging open discussions about sexual health issues that may be uncomfortable

Linking youth to needed personal health services while mobilizing community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems through:

- Partnerships with the Baylor Teen Health Clinic and organizations like Communities in Schools (CIS) housed inside participating WCDM schools

Special events/ duties/ highlights during your practicum

- Observing a focus group for one of the WCDM schools
- Publishing an article in #justbe Magazine about an issue I am passionate about, adolescent mental health

Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Your practicum may not be what you expect, but do not allow that to hinder your learning experience
- Have fun and make connections!
Patient and Provider Communication

Assessing Communication between Providers and Patients at Free and Charitable Clinics in Texas

By: Gabriela Portillo

I completed my practicum at the Texas Association of Charitable Clinics (TXACC), an organization that provides resources and education for independently run free and charitable clinics in Texas.

My project involved conducting a needs assessment at three clinics in Austin and Round Rock looking at the effectiveness of communication between providers and patients. I developed two surveys and conducted interviews with both providers and patients over several weeks.

The needs assessment showed that communication issues are more frequently reported at clinics with fewer resources and funding. One major finding is that interpretation services for individuals whose primary language is not English or Spanish is limited both in terms of face-to-face visits as well as medication instructions.

Public Health Significance

My practicum was most closely associated with two essential public health services; evaluating the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services and linking people to needed personal health services and assuring the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

TXACC provides support to free and charitable clinics that administer health care to individuals who do not have health insurance and who otherwise cannot afford basic medical care. Most of the patients are refugees, new immigrants or individuals with income that puts them below the poverty line.

Additionally, the clinics under TXACC not only provide medical care but they work hard to ensure that it is well rounded and high quality. This includes offering acute and chronic disease care, offering specialty care appointments; making sure interpreters are available and following up with their patients.

Special events/duties during your practicum

- Meeting with and interviewing patients and providers at three free clinics in Austin and Round Rock.
- Going to the Texas State Capitol and learning how to advocate for non-profits.

Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Students

- Take initiative, set deadlines, make connections, learn a lot, and have fun.
TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Fight Teen Dating Abuse

http://divasindefense.com/wp/category/teen-dating-violence/

DATING VIOLENCE AMONG HOUSTON/GALVESTON AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By: Cecilia Tamez-Rodriguez

Dating It Safe, a six year longitudinal study by Dr. Temple in UTMB Galveston assessed teen dating violence and other adolescent risk behaviors in 1,042 high school students starting in 2010. My role in this project was to assist in the development of a summary report that will be distributed to the participating high schools.

For this project, I was responsible for analyzing the dataset, creating graphs and tables of relevant findings and assisting with the final summary report. The final product was a report that had relevant and easy to understand information that would inform educators and school administrators about this study’s findings.

PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

Research and raising awareness can be agents of public health and health policy changes. The Dating It Safe project excels in both these areas.

Public Health Essential Service(s) (PHES):
• Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
• Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

I assisted with the second PHES. Through the report I helped create, educators in the participating high schools will be informed and learn about dating violence among their student population and hopefully feel empowered to take measures to address this issue. Through a six year effort the research team behind the Dating It Safe project will shed light on a public health burden and measures such as sexting and cyberbullying put them at the forefront of aiding in future prevention efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED DURING MY PRACTICUM

• I was able to develop and practice a skill in which I lacked confidence.
• I learned to work with a different statistical software than what I was used to.

ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

• If your practicum includes completing self-paced work, it is imperative to maintain a schedule and stick to it.
• Stepping out of your comfort zone can be a good thing.

http://www.ncrdv.org/dvam/2015-Promoting-Youth

Fall 2015 • Cecilia Tamez-Rodriguez • UTMB • Teen Dating Violence
Pregnant women with HIV

Houston OB/GYNs improve care for pregnant women with HIV

By: Sarah Wesely

For my practicum, I was able to work with Dr. Levison, a Houston physician who has taken the lead on improving care for pregnant women with HIV, as well as Dr. Eppes, the quality improvement director of Ben Taub. For my practicum, I served as a research manager for three research programs. My primary duties included database management, overseeing the administrative side of research projects, as well as providing my input on approach, protocol and measurement during team meetings.

The practicum site was Harris Health System clinics. I was able to see how the clinic staff organize their patient visits, provide group therapy for behavioral interventions, utilize a partnership with social workers and develop research approaches for care improvement.

Public Health Significance

The practicum experience with Dr. Levison related to many of the key essential services of public health.

Creating a database of all women who had HIV during their pregnancies over the past ten years in the Harris Health System will provide one the largest databases of pregnant women with HIV ever created. This database will serve the Harris Health System’s ability to monitor the health of this specialized population.

The surveys that evaluate the behavioral outcomes and feedback from women who have been through the centering program helps with the public health essential service of the evaluation of programs.

Compiling a list of all physicians in Texas that provide care for pregnant women with HIV will help to ensure that the mother and infants get connected to the specialized care they need. This serves the public health essential of linking the population with care needed.

Special events/ duties during your practicum

• Attending centering sessions, small patient group discussions about pregnancy and HIV.
• Working with quality leaders in the Harris Health System

Advice for Future Students

• I wish I would have gotten an earlier start in the badging process for Baylor and Harris Health Systems. Patience is a virtue.
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/