

Public Health Practice



Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Spring 2015 – Doctoral Students

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

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

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

This sixteenth-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Spring 2015 semester. (Prior semesters may be accessed through the e-book, a collection of student abstracts and e-magazines describing their experiences.)



Practicum Topics

Number of Students: 2

Hours per Week per Student Approximately 12

Campuses 2

Student

Austin

Geospatial Analyses and Public Health

Matt Turner

El Paso

Teaching Experience in Higher Education

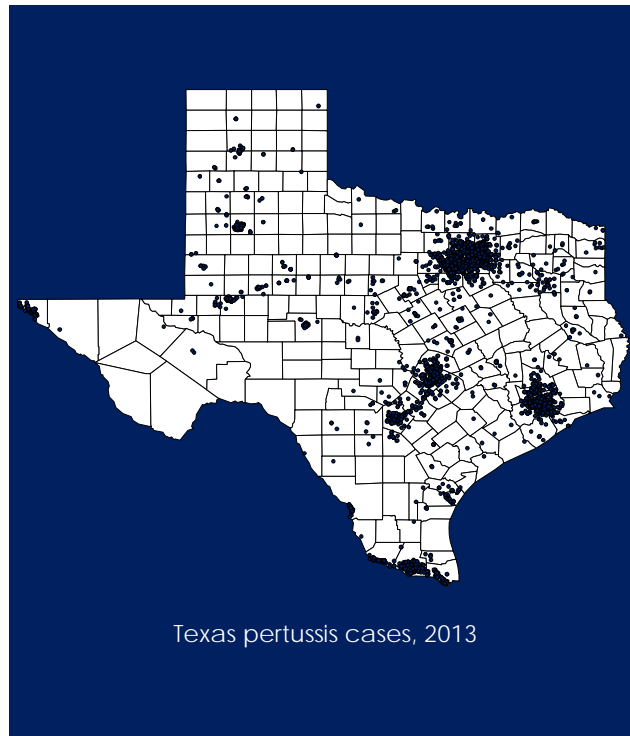
Cynthia Wittenburg

Geospatial Analyses and Public Health

Comparison of geospatial distributions of infectious disease and health care providers

I worked with a GIS professional at the Texas Department of State Health Services to analyze the state's distribution of infectious disease cases (collected via public health surveillance systems) and health care providers. I started by collecting data from the relevant programs, cleaning and geocoding the data, and then constructing maps to visualize the data.

As I continue to work on my practicum, I am incorporating spatial statistics to explore how disease and providers are dispersed throughout the state and how the two distributions might interact. When completed, the final product will be a report containing a series of maps identifying, statistically, areas with higher or lower infectious disease incidence after controlling for the health care provider workforce.



Special events/ duties/highlights during your practicum

- Working closely with a GIS professional to improve my skills using Centrus and ArcMap
- Conducting analyses that otherwise wouldn't have been done

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Work on your practicum project some each day, or as much as possible. This way you can identify and solve problems quickly and limit their impacts.

Public Health Significance

In my practicum experience, I was able to witness how the Texas Department of State Health Services fulfilled many of the ten essential public health services. Most notably, I would argue that my practicum related to assuring a competent public health and personal health care workforce and evaluating the effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services. In the case of the former, my project considered potential clustering of both infectious disease cases and health care providers and sought to determine how well the state's health care workforce is able to meet the population's need, especially in the case of infectious disease. In the case of the latter, this analysis can inform considerations of methods of infectious disease surveillance.



Teaching Experience in Higher Education

Practicum Highlights

- Experience teaching at the collegiate level
- Application of content material learned throughout DRPH program
- Ability to implement different styles of teaching
- Increased classroom management skills
- Apply personal research experience and knowledge to Public Health Theory
- Overall culmination experience in the academia realm

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- When undergoing a practicum teaching experience, take into account the possible enrolled number of students. Class enrollment should indicate what type of evaluation methods and assignments to implement. If no T.A. is provided, grading essays and technical papers on a weekly basis may be overwhelming especially if you are taking other doctoral level classes and working. Overall wonderful experience!



Mining Minds!

Picture of UTEP's Miners Pick Axe.

Photo courtesy of Brian Wancho

http://www.brianwanchophotography.com/wp-content/uploads/utep_axe_02.jpg

Public Health Theory in Higher Education

By: Cynthia Wittenburg

My practicum encompassed teaching public health theory during Spring semester 2015 to 60 upper division students enrolled in the Interdisciplinary health science program at The University of Texas at El Paso, under the division of Public Health Sciences.

I was provided this opportunity from networking in the public health community of El Paso. My host institution was supportive and felt this would enhance my Dr. Ph. skills.

Public Health Significance

My practicum experience related to the Essential Services of Public Health was best categorized under the **Policy Development Service** which addressed the 3rd competency which is to **Inform, Educate, and Empower people (students) about health issues (public health theories).**

To keep the pipeline of future public health providers, researchers, and educators, my contributions as an academic instructor in public health will provide foundation in education.

Teaching was the project and my duties included; preparing the lecture content material, developing quality power point presentation, providing resources on Black board, evaluating the student's learning abilities via quizzes, presentations, midterm and final exams. I was the instructor on record.

The final project was providing final grades and student evaluations.

As a doctoral student working with public health theories in grants and research, I was able to relay the importance of public health theory in my teaching methods to undergraduate students who may implement these resources in their respective careers.

Teaching is more than just lecturing, the passion one has for the content material sets a positive learning environment for all.

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/>