

Public Health Practice



Stories from the Field

The University of Texas School of Public Health
Student Practicum Experiences
Summer 2013 – Management, Policy & Community
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 eleventh-edition e-magazine showcases student practicum experiences throughout the Summer 2013 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: 17

Hours per Week per Student	Approximately 12
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Campuses (Houston)	1
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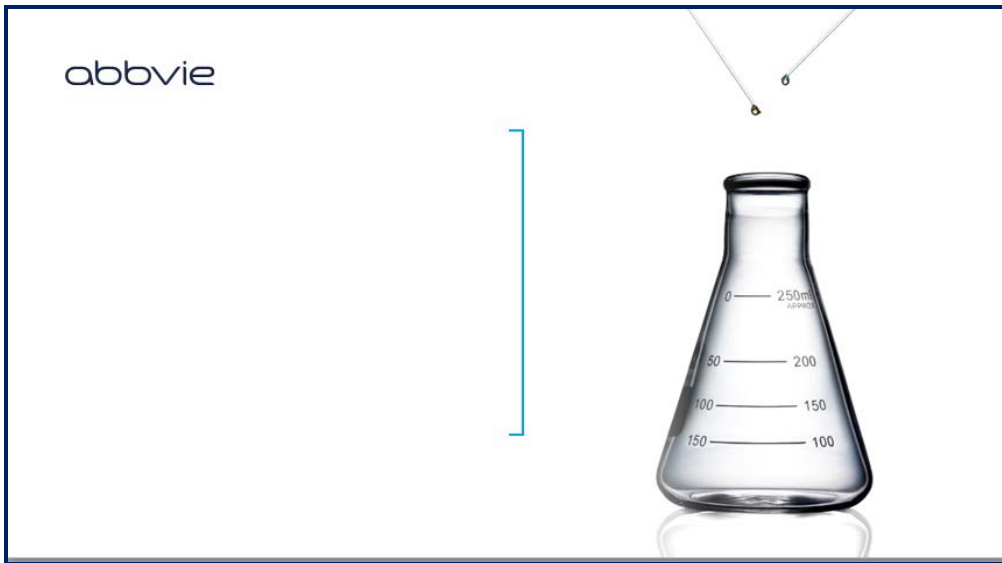
Division	1
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Student

Management, Policy & Community Health

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Innovating Value Drugs



Highlights

- Exposed to a unique experience with leaders in their fields
- Had great mentors who involved me in a variety of projects from R&D to post-launch phase of drug development
- Used new research techniques and databases
- Closely watched the collaborative and harmonized work of a multidisciplinary scientists coming from a diverse backgrounds of basic science, clinicians, commercial and health economics

Patient Reported Outcomes in Neuroscience and Hypogonadism

By: Ibrahim Abbass

During my internship with AbbVie, I worked in three projects. The first one was related to examining whether patients' clinical characteristics act as a determinant of physicians' valuation of multiple sclerosis treatment goals.

My second project was conducting a systematic literature review of

clinical, economic and humanistic outcomes associated with hypogonadism.

The third project was related to identifying and summarizing the psychometric properties of scales used to measure readiness to work for patients with severe mental illness. The goal was to use one of these scales in a clinical trial for one drug in development.

Public Health Significance

Nowadays and more than any time before, there is a greater pressure to create value drugs that not only proven to be safe and work, but also proven to be cost effective.

So the projects I worked on during my internship fall into this scope. For example, in the first project, we aimed to understand how physicians' valuation of treatment goals differs depending on the clinical characteristics of their

patients.

In the second project, we aimed to help policy and decision makers to understand the economic, humanistic and clinical burden of a disease so informed decisions can be made accordingly.

In the third project, we approached measuring and quantifying outcomes systematically to provide real world evidence of whether the drug is (or is not) working.

Lessons Learned

- Pharma led-research is a focused interdisciplinary and complex process with a lot of risk involved but a greater impact on patients' lives and their families.



Child Health Research & Advocacy



C@R's logo.
Source:
www.childrenatrisk.org

Site Visits and Special Events

- COURAGE Program for Youthful Offenders
- TRIAD Prevention Program
- Texas Children's Hospital
- Houston Food Bank
- Future of Our Children Conference

Improving the Quality of Life for Children through Research and Advocacy

By: Monique Gill

As a Research & Data Intern in the Center for Social Measurement and Evaluation, I had the opportunity to work on many different projects related to child health.

I spent the majority of my time helping with a Community Health Needs Assessment for Texas Children's Hospital. This included secondary data collection and interviewing key informants, such as community organization leaders, content experts, and public officials to identify

priorities in child health in the Greater Houston area.

I also assisted with the approval process for a school health environment survey in partnership with Healthy Living Matters, sat in on strategic planning meetings for the new Center for Child Health Research and Policy, and wrote a radio commentary about teen pregnancy and sex education that was read on KPFT 90.1's news show.

Public Health Significance

CHILDREN ATRISK is a research and advocacy organization with the goal of improving the quality of life of Texas' children in the areas of physical and mental health, education reform, human trafficking, and juvenile justice reform. As such, the organization provides many Essential Public Health Services.

Most of the research is done to **develop policies and plans** to support children. C@R also **mobilizes community partnerships** to identify and

solve health problems. **Evaluation and research** are two large parts of what the organization does, as well as using their reputation in the community to **inform, educate, and empower** people about health issues.

My work on the Community Health Needs Assessment was part of the service of **monitoring** health status of a community to identify any issues related to health.

Lessons Learned and Advice for Future Students

- Be flexible – the real world of public health is unpredictable! Take advantage of the opportunity to learn from people who are experts in the field, and enjoy your time at your practicum site.



Working at my desk at the C@R Houston office.

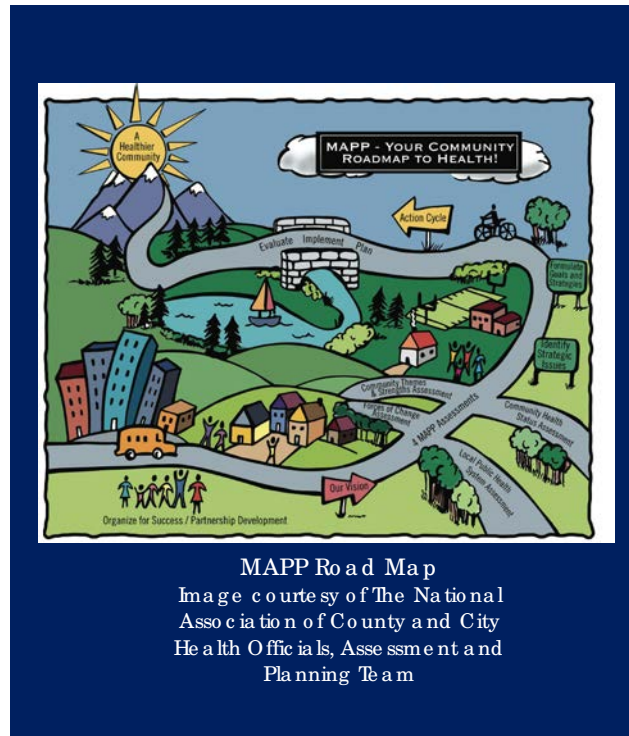
Photo Credit: Catherine Woodiel

Community Driven Strategic Planning

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships – Assessments and Planning Internship

By: Kathleen Gore

My practicum was at The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). They are based in Washington DC and represent 2,800 Local Health Departments (LHD) in the US. I was in the Community Health Division on the Assessments and Planning Team working on the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships program (MAPP). MAPP is a community-driven strategic planning process for improving community health programs. NACCHO does MAPP trainings with LHDs around the nation. One of my tasks was to develop one of the trainings into an eLearning module that could be accessed as an online resource by all NACCHO's partnering LHD's. The final product will be available in September.



Special events/ duties/ highlights during your practicum

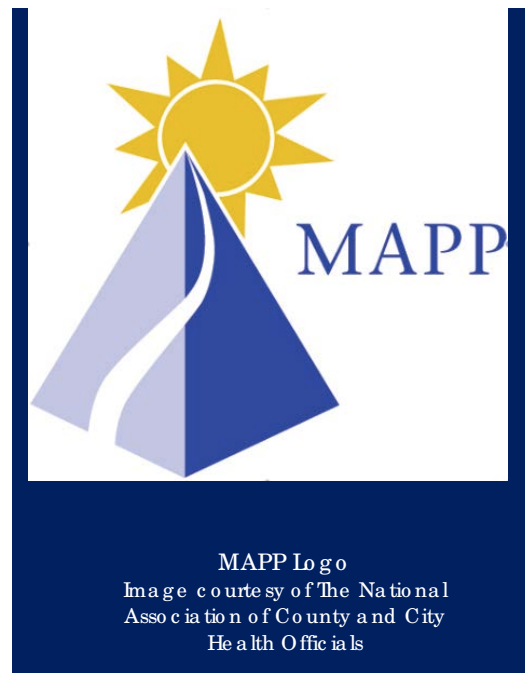
- The important role Local Health Departments play in the ir communities through initiatives set at a national level.
- An increase d understanding in the need for community partnerships to help build healthier communities.

Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Choose your practicum experience based on your future career goals; local level, national level or international level.
- Enjoy the experience!

Public Health Significance

The National Association of County and City Health Officials, Assessments and Planning Team focuses on all ten of the essential public health services, but most specifically on mobilization and linking Local Health Departments to organizations to enhance the ir communities over-all quality of health care services available through information exchange. During my practicum, I had the opportunity to attend NACCHO's Annual Meeting in Dallas, TX. I watched as Public Health Officials from all over the nation came together for a one-of-a-kind conference, which addressed the needs and concerns of Public Health Officials in attendance. This provided a unique opportunity for Local Health Departments to exchange best practices within the ir communities. Vital education and networking opportunities for Public Health Officials linked together communities and provided resources to better assess and plan within the ir own communities. It was an inspiring experience to see so many like-minded Public Health individuals in one place all striving for the same goal of healthier communities.



Strategic Planning - BCM



Baylor College
of Medicine

Source:
<http://otbfitne ss.file s.word pre ss.com /2011/08/1251231.jpg>

Special events/ duties during your practicum

- BCM is nominated for an AAMC Spencer Foxman Award for Community Service, which allowed me to learn how BCM gives back to the community
- A highlight for me was getting to observe planning meetings regarding the healthcare policy institute that Baylor is creating in order to be a leading authority on emerging healthcare related issues

Strategic Planning in an Academic Medical Center – Baylor College of Medicine

By: **Bailey Green**

Throughout my practicum in the Office of the President of BCM, I had the opportunity to see various facets of public health at an academic medical center.

Working with the project managers in the Office of the President, I gained exposure to the various aspects of strategic planning involved in many different areas of the college. I observed and helped do background research for meetings involving

strategic and tactical goals in areas such as research, corporate partnerships, and the healthcare policy institute that is being formed by BCM.

I was also involved in research regarding creating an office of professionalism as well as assisting with a committee chair search.

Overall, I learned more about the work that BCM is doing to continuously improve and remain innovative in the world of academic medical centers.

Public Health Significance

The institution of BCM as a whole performs all of the ten Public Health Essential Services (PHES). Within the Office of the President, the project managers work to organize and facilitate many of the PHES.

The PHES that most closely relates to my practicum experience would be developing policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts. Many of the meetings that I was part of centered around designing ways to develop policies or

plans regarding many aspects of health and healthcare.

Another PHES that is closely related to my experience is informing, educating and empowering people about health issues. The healthcare policy institute that BCM is creating will be a platform to more effectively perform this service.

My practicum experience also allowed me to observe how BCM assures a competent public health and personal healthcare workforce.

Advice for Future Students

- Ask questions! This is the time to learn as much as possible about real world opportunities for a career in public health. Take advantage of it!



Source:
<http://ealbusine ss.file s.word pre ss.com/2009/05/busine ssp lanning pyram id.png>

The ACA and Oral Health

Practicum

Highlights

- I had the honor of interviewing Dr. Mary Wakefield, the Administrator of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Mr. Anton Gunn, Director of External Affairs of HHS.
- Increasing my knowledge of health policy and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) by attending meetings and webinars.
- Gaining a network of mentors within the field of Public Health who provide me with career guidance, professional development opportunities and encouragement.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- During your practicum act as a sponge; soaking in every opportunity and learning experience. Say yes to everything, you won't regret it!



The United States
Capitol Building
Washington, D.C.

Source:
hdwallpapers.in

Open Wide: Oral Health, Needs, Coverage and the ACA

By: Mahogany A. Hanks

My practicum was at the US Department of Health and Human Services with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). My duty was high level project management under the direction of Senior Executives in the Division of Medicine and Dentistry and Office of Planning, Analysis and Evaluation (OPAE) who lead the Oral Health, Needs, Coverage and the ACA initiative and entail ed assistance with all aspects of the initiative and self-directed

My primary responsibility was to provide an overview of oral health needs and coverage as we approach the implementation of the coverage expansions under the ACA. My presentation outlined the current oral health landscape, including workforce issues and disparities; coverage for oral health services under private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid and ACA provisions that may affect children's access to oral health services.

Public Health Significance

My presentation addressed policy development and assurance public health essential services. My project summarized that oral health is an essential part of overall health. Americans are much more likely to lack dental coverage than medical coverage and significant disparities exist in oral health status across racial and ethnic groups.

Also, Pediatric oral health care is an essential health benefit; however, in certain circumstances it is not required in the marketplace. Lastly, the ACA has no requirements for oral health coverage for adults -- not in the marketplace, the Medicaid expansion, nor in large group private insurance.

Unplanned Hospital Readmissions

Prevent Unplanned Readmissions from GI Cancer Surgery

By: **Michael Huang**

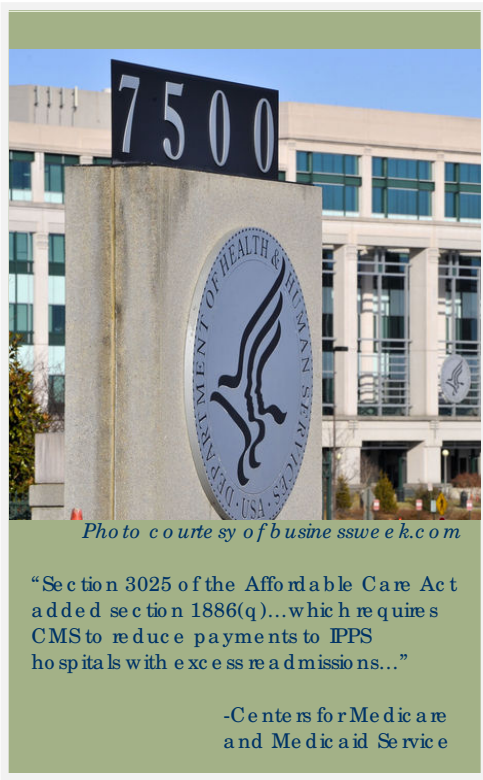
For my practicum, I conducted research in the General Surgery Department at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital (LBJGH) to examine the impact of post-operative complication on unplanned ER visits and readmissions to the hospital for GI cancer surgery.

To conduct my research project, I matched GI cancer surgery patients in the past year with their subsequent ER visits and admissions. By investigating the post-operative complications, as well as the rates and discourse of 30 day readmissions, I attempted to find a relationship between the two variables being investigated.

My duties involved creating and managing large databases, creating queries between databases, and patient chart review. While the project is still ongoing, the end product of this practicum will be a submitted abstract to an esteemed medical organization.

The Highlights of My Practicum

- *Participating in research meetings General Surgery faculty.*
- *Working alongside faculty on a variety projects*
- *Creating and managing my own research project*



Public Health Significance

Uncontrolled comorbidities, advanced tumor stages, low socioeconomic status, poor health literacy, inadequate support, and lack of access to primary care have all been identified as characteristics of medically underserved cancer surgery patients that increase their risk of readmission.

With the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services new guidelines, readmissions to the hospital within 30 days of discharge will not be covered. Thus, hospitals are looking at ways to strengthen the discharge process in order to avoid unnecessary healthcare costs and improve patient outcomes.

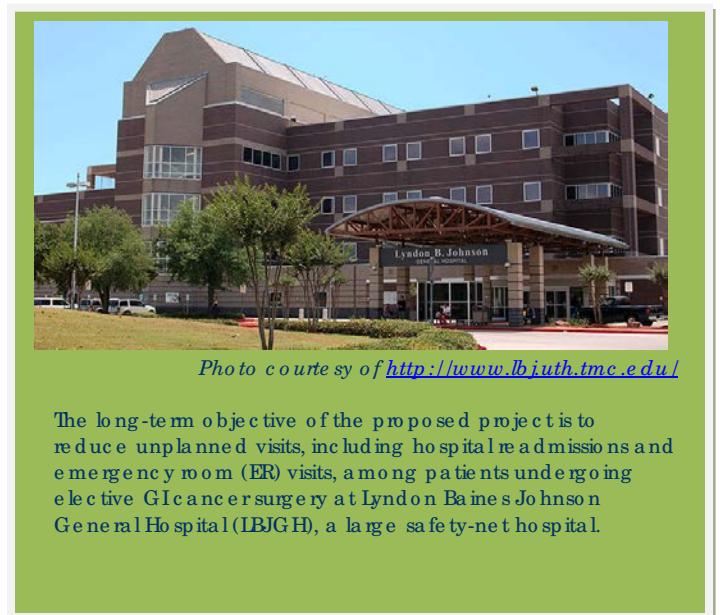
The Essential Public Health Services that my project informs include: *Evaluate* and *Research*

Evaluate: By following the hospital course of patients and comparing the services provided to outcomes, we are evaluating the hospital's ability to provide adequate services to prevent unnecessary admissions.

Research: By informing a larger initiative at LBJ General Hospital to evaluate effectiveness of a comprehensive transitional care program for cancer surgery patients, we are researching an innovative solution to a long withstanding problem.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Your mentors and your colleagues want to help you succeed. Get to know them early and seek their help- they've been doing it for much longer than you have!



BUILT ENVIRONMENT & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION.



*Photo Courtesy of Rochester Cycling Alliance
<http://www.rochestercyclingalliance.org/active-transportation/>*

How Does the Built Environment Influence Active Transportation and Access to Community Resources.

By: **Jjeoma “EJ” Ihenacho**

The objective of the practicum was to inventory and align existing active transportation plans and identify gaps by prioritizing the needs (transportation) of the disadvantaged in the Austin-Travis County Metropolitan. This was part of the I-CHIP project, collaboration between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, and the University of Texas, as well as other local and regional stakeholders to increase accessibility to community resources through safe, active transportation.

Public Health Significance

The practicum experience highlighted three main aspects of Public Health Services- Mobilize, Evaluate and Research. During this project, I was able to observe how partnerships between various community stakeholders influence health issues. Our team was charged with evaluating the effectiveness of numerous city plans with regards to transportation & health services, while also analyzing plans for different, innovative insights to target objectives.

The main public health aspects that were explored during this project dealt with evaluation and research of various city and neighborhood plans for relevance to active transportation, and subsequently generating spreadsheets and reports that analyzed the different plans—past, current and future. The long-term goal is to use the information generated to prioritize community needs and improve health and wellness in the Austin/Travis County community.

The UTSPH-ARC houses the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, who are currently, in conjunction with the ARC faculty, spearheading activities with regards to the Austin/Travis County I-CHIP [Community Health Improvement Plan] project. During the project, we were able to research and analyze the relevance of city plans with regards to improving public health. Our team compiled a report featuring the various stakeholders and weighing the extent of their involvement in improving the community's [health] needs.

Highlights: Meetings with Stakeholders!

- The main highlight was the boardroom meetings with stakeholders in this large-scale project; seeing how the different agencies interact, each participant wanting to get their deliverables accomplished—everyone wants to be a headline!

Take my advice: The classroom is definitely NOT the “real world.”

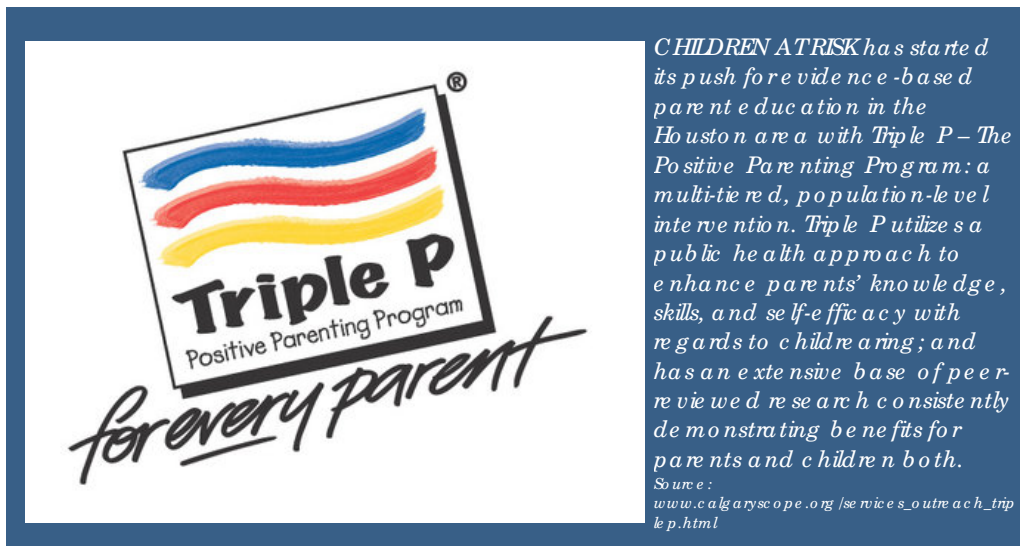
- We normally get told that everything is different in the “real world.” Trust me when I say, it really is. The classroom provides hypotheses and idealized situations, and that is really where those reign supreme—in the classroom. So breathe. Results might take a [LONG] while, but trust me, patience pays off.



UTSPH- Austin Regional Campus (headquarters)

<https://sph.utth.edu/campus/austin/>

Evidence-Based Parent Education



Highlights!

- Going on site visits; learning how parent education fits into the broader context of children's issues and child wellbeing in Houston.
- Helping C@R's research and data team with a Community Health Needs Assessment for Texas Children's Hospital.

Lesson Learned

This was a great opportunity to learn more about an aspect of public health practice that I hadn't had much exposure to yet. I knew very little about evidence-based parent education, communications, and social marketing at the start of the summer – so this was a great way to expand my knowledge and expertise in these areas.

A population-level approach to parent education

By: **HALEY JENSEN**

The major focus of my practical experience was helping Children At Risk's Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being [CPFWB] plan a social marketing campaign to promote and normalize evidence-based parent education in the Houston area. My duties in this area included conducting preliminary research on social marketing and communications, and reaching out to local marketing firms

and providing support during the request for proposal process. I finished off my experience this summer by synthesizing relevant findings from the literature on social marketing with key suggestions from these campaign proposals, with the goal of producing a foundational document for future grant proposals, including content and language that can be modified to accommodate a range of smaller and larger grant and funding opportunities.

Public Health Significance

My practical experience primarily involved two essential public health services: (1) mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems, and (2) researching for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems. The CPFWB is heavily focused on mobilizing partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the community; because CHILDREN AT RISK is not a direct service organization, mobilizing partnerships and maintaining a network of partner agencies is one of its major objectives with regards to its

parent education initiative. One of my major duties that fit with this aspect of public health service was to solicit proposals for the CPFWB's marketing campaign from different firms in the Houston area. The majority of my work beyond that was research-based – including research on messaging and framing communications about families and children, as well as on previous marketing campaigns that have targeted parents on similar topics with measurable success, with the overall goal of determining best practices for use in developing the



CHILDREN AT RISK seeks to impact a range of issues affecting Texas children – including parenting, public education, juvenile justice, mental health, human trafficking, and food insecurity – through strategic research, policy analysis, collaboration, and advocacy.

Source:
givinglibrarity.org/organization/children-risk

Pre term Birth/ Infant Mortality

Women With



Harris Health System is trying to increase birth rates in some of Houston's poorest neighborhoods.

Practicum Spotlight

- Attending IMPACT Collaborative Stakeholder's Meeting to discuss how



Harris Health System employees Chelsea Johnson (left) & Jamie Freeny (right) congratulate participants for finishing the WWI Program

(Picture courtesy of Bridget Johnson)

Lessons Learned

- "Your thoughts/ideas can help make a health program or intervention better". As an outsider looking at the program with fresh eyes, you may see something which can improve the effectiveness of the program. So don't be afraid to share your thoughts.

Making an IMPACT on Pre term Birth & Infant Mortality in Harris County

By: **Bridget L. Johnson**

This summer I had the opportunity to work with Harris Health System (HHS) on the Women With Impact (WWI) program. The program is designed to address a health disparity that has been on the rise in Houston neighborhoods such as 3rd Ward, Settagast, 5th Ward, and Sunnyside - preterm birth and infant mortality.

As part of my practicum, I had the opportunity to attend bi-weekly workshops. What was unique about the workshops were that facilitators

were from some of same communities as the participants. In addition, workshops were held in the participants' communities.

During the sessions, Harris Health System employees and the facilitator educated women, ages 18-35, on topics ranging from contraception to health & wellness through interactive talks and demonstrations.

By the end of the workshops, women had an increased awareness of the physical and psychological behaviors required to deliver a healthy baby.

Why Is This Program Important?

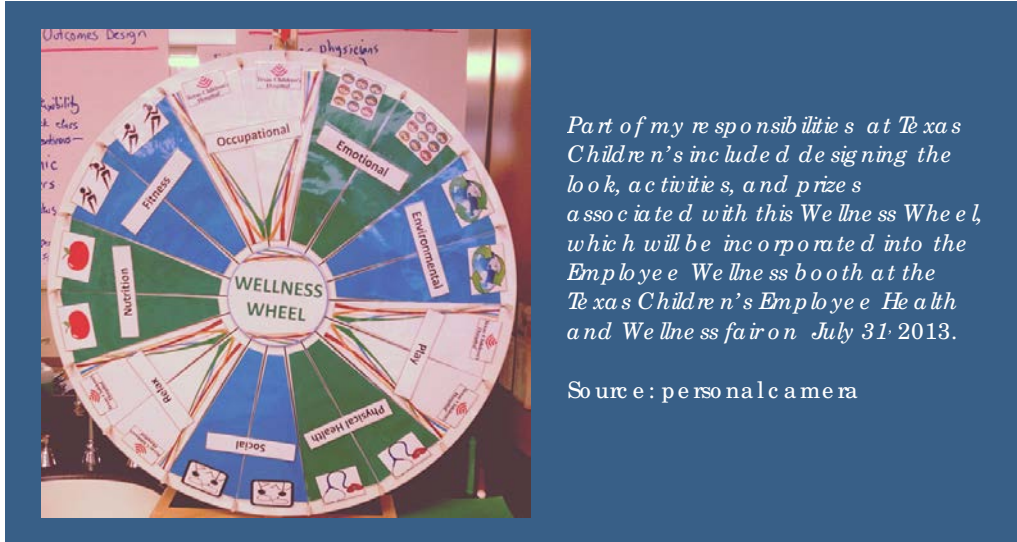
Certain zip codes in Harris County have the highest number of pre-term births and most infant deaths. These zip codes are in the poorest areas, with little to no access to doctors/clinics and no easy access to grocery stores. In addition, the number of would-be moms receiving prenatal care in these areas had steadily declined.

The Women With Impact (WWI) Program is attempting to tackle the issue of preterm births and infant

mortality by informing, educating, and empowering women on pre-conception and inter-conception.

The program is also trying to build "care connections" or a sustained link with participants and other women in the communities. HHS employee assist women with obtaining health and social services they need in order to maintain a healthy mind and body by referring them to different service providers.

Employee Wellness at Texas Children's Hospital



Part of my responsibilities at Texas Children's included designing the look, activities, and prizes associated with this Wellness Wheel, which will be incorporated into the Employee Wellness booth at the Texas Children's Employee Health and Wellness fair on July 31, 2013.

Source: personal camera

Special Duties

- Designing a social media strategy for Employee Wellness: blog, Twitter, etc.
- Working on a collaborative marketing strategy to partner Employee Wellness with the Fresh Bistro food services in the Women's Pavilion.

Advice for Future Students

I was lucky to be placed with a preceptor who happily took up the role of mentor as well. Fostering a positive relationship with your preceptor is one of the keys to professional success and personal happiness at your practicum.

Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating Employee Wellness Programs at Texas Children's Hospital

By: **Kelle Kampa**

My summer at Texas Children's Hospital Employee Wellness has been a wonderfully illuminating and valuable experience. The purpose of the Employee Wellness department is to define and address employee wellness issues through programming that integrates educational and active components that are tailored to the on the health/wellness issue at hand. As an intern in a relatively small and new department, I was afforded the opportunity to get right into the thick of

things from the very beginning: I've helped analyze data from the recently completed Diabetes Management pilot program, I've worked heavily on developing a six-week MyPlate nutrition challenge for employees, and I've aided my preceptor in planning for the upcoming annual Employee Health and Wellness Fair. While the wheels are still in motion for each of these projects, I look forward to seeing their positive impact on employee life at Texas Children's Hospital.

Public Health Significance

The Employee Wellness department at Texas Children's covers several of the essential services of public health. The health status of the employee population is routinely monitored, especially with respect to chronic disease. Informing, educating, and empowering employees to better their health comprises the bulk of the department's wellness programming, along with developing policies and plans to help employees reach their health goals. For example, the MyPlate

Challenge, a six-week program that asks participants to track their intake of healthy foods, uses informative newsletters and a social support component to foster better eating habits. Lastly, every program implemented by Employee Wellness is evaluated for participation and effectiveness, while maintaining a focus on how improving the health of the employee population at Texas Children's can foster a more engaged workforce with lower healthcare costs overall.



Borrowing heavily from MyPlate.gov, I helped to create a logo for the six-week MyPlate Challenge for Texas Children's employees, which is slated to kick off in September.

Source: TCH Employee Wellness

Hospital International Cooperation



Special events/ duties during your practicum

- Initiated, developed and implemented projects from the beginning to the end

Home > Houston Methodist International

Houston Methodist International provides education and training, clinical collaboration, patient services and advisory services around the globe.
Source: <http://www.houstonmethodist.com/international-services>

Lessons Learned [OR] Advice for Future Students

- Be flexible and never be picky about the tasks assigned to you. Instead, pay attention to what you can learn from the process.
- People around you in a working environment are always your best teachers to help you grow in your career.

Promoting best clinical practice and advanced hospital management experiences globally

By: **Yuanyuan Li**

In the practicum, I have been involving in many education and training projects targeting collaborations between Houston Methodist International and hospitals in China. To promote best clinical practice and share advanced clinical and management experiences with strategic partners globally is one of the most important goals of Houston Methodist International.

I have conducted the market assessment research and strategic plan of China healthcare market for

Houston Methodist International. The final product is a presentation given to the vice president.

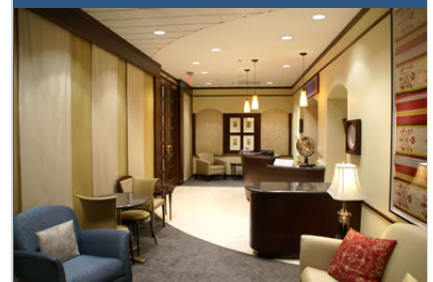
My regular duties included of promoting Houston Methodist International services to hospitals in China, initiating and implementing education and training projects, developing and maintaining relationships with clients, communicating with health professionals and administrators, promoting healthy life styles among the Chinese community in Houston, etc.

Public Health Significance

Promoting best clinical practice and share advanced clinical and management experiences internationally will benefit all populations on receiving excellent health care services around the world.

The collaborations on education and training, clinical diagnosis and treatment, etc. increase the quality of health care and eventually improve the public's health.

My duties in the practicum reflected the public health services, such as monitoring, diagnosis and investigation, mobilization, policies development and plan, linkage, assurance, evaluation and research.



Scirock Tower Service Center
(Scirock Tower, Suite 220)

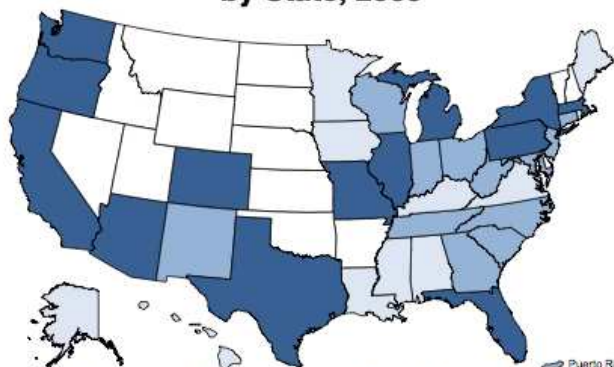
Source:
<http://www.houstonmethodist.com/PatientEngage>

Healthy Communities

Funding Community Health Clinics

By: Cymone McNeil

Community Health Centers' Economic Impact by State, 2009

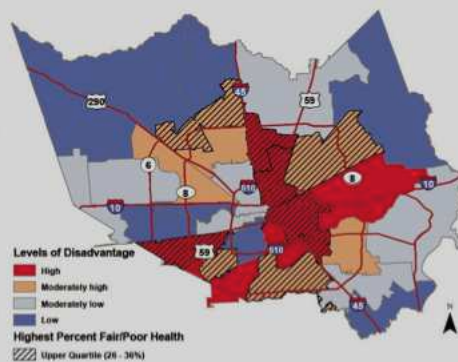


Source: The Economic Impact Analysis was prepared by Capital Link with MIG, Inc. IMPLAN Software Version 3.0, 2008 structural matrices, 2008 state-specific multipliers, and data from 2009 Uniform Data System.

Community Health Centers' Economic Impact by State

Source: <http://www.nachc.com/client/documents/EI%20Snapshot%20Economic>

Relative levels of disadvantage and health status by quartiles

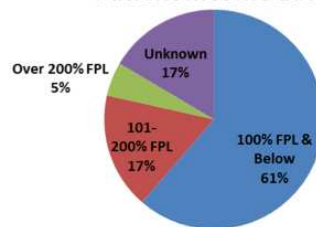


Note: Weighted percentages of respondents with one to seven indicators present for each geographic area were standardized as z-scores, and the totals were ranked in quartiles from high to low levels of disadvantage.

Relative Levels of Disadvantage and Health Status Quartiles

Source: http://www.hc Alliance.org/images/cabinet/initiatives/communityhealth/stateofhealth/The-State-of-Health_2012.pdf

Patient Income Level



Texas FQHCs Patient Income Levels

Source: <http://www.tachc.org/content/files/02%20Programs%20and%20Services%20-%20Policy%20and%20Research/>

Harris County Healthcare Alliance (HCHA) works to provide funding to improve the healthcare system of Harris County. The Funding goes primarily to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to fund projects that are sustainable, link multiple clinics, and will have a lasting impact on the community especially in medically underserved areas.

Pearl of Wisdom

Experience is life's best teacher. Don't be afraid to jump right in. Sometimes doing is the best way to learn.

Public Health Significance

It is estimated that 30.2% of Harris County is uninsured. Additionally the capacity of the safety net system meets less than 1/3 of the demand. Through mobilization and linking HCHA ensures the health of Harris County. HCHA strives to address the 4 key areas of: 1) Legislation and Policy 2) Community Health and Awareness 3) Safety Net Capacity Building 4) Access to Care for Uninsured and Underinsured Residents.

My Duties

- Develop project summary sheets for newly- funded projects for website
- Grant research
- Assist in data collection for project that maps all health centers in Harris County
- Assist in data collection for a project regarding the state of health in Harris County
- Develop billing status reports to measure project growth

Educational Highlights

- Learning the role of FQHCs especially after the Affordable Care Act
- Learning the art of project management and seeing those efforts come into fruition

Business Development and Sustainability



UNIVERSAL
SURGICAL ASSISTANTS
www.universalsurgicalassistants.com

Branding is important as business grows. The more companies know your quality of work, the more they will contact you. Source: Universal Surgical Assistants

Practicum Highlights

- Networking Opportunity
- Contact with patients
- Contracted and credentialed physicians/ staff
- Hire d New Staff
- Managed employee relations
- Business Planning/ Development

The importance of Understanding

- Asking questions to procedures, protocol, and how anything in the office occurs is critical. If you do not understand, make sure you ask. Even repeat after being given directions to ensure quality outcomes.

Effectively Managing an Office in Growth

By: Jennifer Ochoa-Vela

During my time at Universal Surgical Assistants, in Sugarland, Texas, I was able to learn a wide variety of business management skills and practices.

Developing the company was a focus for us as we were growing fast. We needed to ensure that all areas of the office were done correctly and efficiently. I was able to work on finances, staffing, scheduling, billing, a growth plan, credentialing,

organizational practices and office protocols.

To focus on our growth, I helped hire new assistants, and office personnel. For our billing, I organized claims and the office implemented Medisoft for more efficient billing.

For Universal Surgical Assistants, I was able to create a system for our billing as it was growing and in transition from paper to EHR.

Public Health Significance

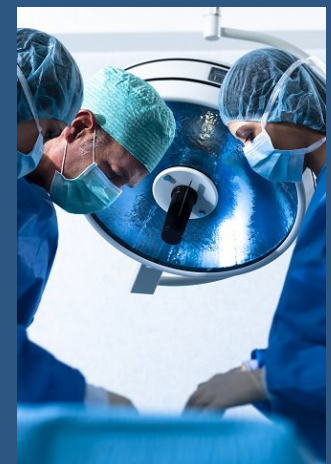
My practicum experience has public health significance because I helped develop policies and plans while there. We as a business also assured that there is a competent public health and personal health care workforce.

For my personal experience, it was important to implement policies and plans to ensure we had a system to work with our large loads of claims and how to schedule our staff for surgeries.

My host organization has public health significance as they help schedule

assistants for surgical procedures that will be done. Many times, the surgeries are not planned and the assistants have to be on-site within a short time frame. Universal Surgical Assistants assist in ensuring that our public is safe during surgeries/procedures and that our staff is properly credentialed.

It is important to have a plan and have the workforce prepared with the right people in public health.



Networking in Houston with other medical practitioners helps us grow our practice as we are utilized for surgeries. Source: Universal Surgical Assistants

Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns



Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns, through the maternal medical home model, aims to promote:

- *Optimal care through a Nurse Care Coordinator and Community Health Workers*
- *Improved health using quality and safety measures*
- *Reduced costs by efficiency and increase patient access to care*

Practicum Highlights

- MIHS was 1 of 27 grantees awarded nationwide.
- The first baby born to the entire program on a national level was in our program – full term at 37 weeks, and requiring no NICU stay.

Advice for Future Students

- Acclimating to a new work environment is a straightforward as learning your job requirements and as abstract as identifying who to ask for certain things in order to expedite a process or minimize the red tape involved.

Implementing a CMS Grant Targeting Preterm Births

By: LINDA PHAM

With this CMS grant, the maternal medical home is being evaluated as to whether this model of care provides better care, improves health, and reduces costs for patients at risk for preterm births. The integrated approach includes a RN care coordinator, Community Health Workers, and referrals to community resources.

I participated on program management and ongoing evaluation tasks. Building evaluation into the implementation

process allows for adjustments to be made as part of quality assurance and improvements.

My primary function was to analyze data on a weekly basis to track trends and develop meaningful charts to visualize what progress is being made on program implementation. Given the novelty of this grant, much of the work requires thinking and innovation, as well as extrapolation from similar situations on other grants when possible.

Public Health Significance

Essential Public Health Service #9: Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

MIHS (Maricopa Integrated Health System) is the health care safety net provider in Phoenix. Therefore, the ir patient population is disproportionately vulnerable and often facing several barriers to care.

The current program builds on previous research that supports early entry into prenatal care in order to achieve

maximal health outcomes both for mother and infant. The program provides delivery of care in the framework of a life course perspective.

If this Strong Start program can prove the success of this model with measurable outcomes, it could drive policy on a national level when determining Medicaid reimbursement of such services, thereby impacting maternal and child health on a national scale.



Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns provides enhanced prenatal care to improve outcomes for Medicaid patients at risk for preterm births.

HIV/ AIDS Planning in Houston Area

Practicum Highlights

- Experienced the day-to-day activities and challenges of a federally funded agency.
- Had first-hand experience of program planning, implementation and evaluation processes.



Image from
<http://www.rwpc-houston.org/>

Lessons Learned

“Don’t be afraid to call the practicum site to ask if they are in need of an intern. I got my practicum opportunity by calling potential preceptors”

Recommendation

“The Ryan White Planning Council team is amazing! Definitely recommend the site for a practicum opportunity!”



Ryan Wayne White (1971-1990) was an American teenager who fought against HIV/AIDS discrimination in the United States after being expelled from middle school because of his infection. Four months after his death (1990), the U.S. Congress passed the Ryan White CARE Act in his honor. The act is the United States' largest federally funded program for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Image and source
from <http://hab.hrsa.gov/about/hab/ryanwhite.html>

By: PRISCILA ROEDEL

During my practicum, I assisted the Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council to conduct the 2013 HIV/AIDS Needs Assessment. I participated in the 10-county area survey administration, quality assurance and conducted data entry in SPSS.

The 2013 Needs Assessment results will be used during the 2014-2016 allocations process and Comprehensive HIV Prevention and Care Services Plan design. This plan aims to respond to the needs of people at risk for or infected with HIV.

Public Health Significance

The Public Health Essential Services (PHES) that most closely relate to my practicum experience include:

#1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.

#4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.

#9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.

Besides supporting the 2013 Needs Assessment process, I also helped the Ryan White Planning Council during the 2012-2014 Comprehensive HIV Prevention and Care Services Plan – Year 2 mid-year evaluation. I created evaluation tools; reports; presented the results to the Planning Council and had first-hand experience of the decision-making process.



Image from
<http://www.rwpc-houston.org/>

The Needs Assessment process basically covers all three areas. In order to conduct a representative demographic assessment, the Ryan White Planning Council had to create new community partnerships throughout the Houston area; it monitors the health of the HIV/AIDS community and the results will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of current services in attending the needs of the HIV/AIDS population.

Health Systems in International Development

Practicum Highlights

- Presentation by Secretary Kerry commemorating the 10th anniversary of PEPFAR as well as the millionth child prevented from contracting HIV
- The opportunity to participate in frequent brown bag lunches that helped me gain a greater understanding of the work that USAID does.

Lessons Learned [OR]

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Apply for an internship you are truly interested in. Your motivation and passion will shine through the application process.
- Aim high. Look for something that may take you out of your comfort zone.



Global Health Fellows Program II is a 5-year cooperative agreement implemented by the Public Health Institute

Image from www.ghfp.net

Health Systems Strengthening within PEPFAR

By: Mark Timme

As a Health Systems Strengthening Intern, I worked closely with the Office of HIV/AIDS within USAID on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The PEPFAR initiative is the world's largest HIV/AIDS program in the world that hopes to stem the epidemic through prevention, care, and treatment in countries around the world. PEPFAR is especially active in Sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia. My main duty at USAID involved

assisting the costing team on issues related to expenditure analysis (EA). EA allows for USAID Washington to better plan across program areas for future budget allocations. Program areas include Facility-based care and treatment, HIV testing and counseling, voluntary medical male circumcision, etc. I was directly responsible for developing training materials for a training that will take place in South Africa with numerous USAID partners.

Public Health Significance

This internship allowed me to **develop policies and plans** that support individual and community health efforts. Expenditure analysis allows USAID to better **plan** for future PEPFAR budgeting. Expenditure analysis also allowed me the opportunity to **evaluate** the effectiveness of PEPFAR dollars. This was done through indicator data that is simultaneously reported alongside expenditures. Through EA I was also able to **link** people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of

health care when otherwise unavailable. EA allows USAID Washington to effectively target populations especially hard hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic whether it be HIV testing and counseling or anti-retroviral treatment. I was also able to **assure** a competent health and personal health care workforce. Through other projects, I was able to identify research methodology gaps for community health workers in an attempt to connect populations with preventive care from local community members.

Maternal and Child Health/Low-weight and premature birth

Practicum Highlights

- The WWI Program aimed to inform and enable women to be healthy before pregnancy.
- Program was carried out on a community scale.



Women With Impact- A preventive community-based program

By: Alexandra Zingg

For my practicum experience I worked with the Harris Health System in the department of Community Outreach Services.

The program that I was assigned to was the Women With Impact (WWI) program, which was designed to educate women of child-bearing age on the importance of having a healthy lifestyle before or in between pregnancies. The ultimate goal of the program is to prevent low-weight and

premature births. It was also targeted toward low-income women.

My duties were to develop a database containing all responses from participants' 6-month and 12-month follow up surveys, as well as conducting an analysis of the data gathered.

Results suggested that the program did have a positive influence towards participants' health decisions.

Advice for Future Practicum Students

- Before you start your practicum take time to think about what you would like to learn from the experience and what skills you would like to develop. This will keep you focused as you go along. Don't forget to enjoy it and have fun as well!

Public Health Significance

Out of all the Public Health Essential Services, I would say that the two services which the WWI program was especially good at were: 1) informing, educating, and empowering people about health issues and 2) mobilizing community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems. These two services were delivered through workshops which were given approximately once a week and lasted two hours. For example, during the workshops participants were given food samples in order to learn about

more nutritious food choices, and conducted simple exercises like walking to learn techniques to stay fit.

The program also gave participants information about available resources to meet their health needs, which they perhaps would not have known about had it not been through their participation.

Women With Impact is a great example of how community health programs work to bring health changes to a community.

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/>