

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BEHAVIOR

Introduction

In 2024, the department received approval to begin a new bachelor of public health (B.S.P.H.) program focused on community and global public health, designed to prepare students to work in partnership with local and global communities to identify, assess, and address health problems and to achieve health equity. The new program, commencing in academic year 2025–2026, aligns with the mission of UNC–Chapel Hill by ensuring students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to collaboratively address public health issues in North Carolina and with global partners. The department has a strong record of local and global community engagement that will be extended to undergraduate training.

Public health challenges that threaten public safety, economic growth, and security, including climate change, water crises, the opioid epidemic, and the coronavirus pandemic, have sparked students' interest in understanding the systems and behaviors that contribute to these challenges. The program will give students skills to improve health behaviors (e.g., vaccination, illicit drug use, hand washing) and develop structural interventions in partnership with the local and global communities where people live, learn, work, and play.

Upon graduation, students will be prepared for either entry-level positions at public health or related organizations (e.g., non-profits, community-based organizations, government) or for advanced degree programs (e.g., graduate school, medical school).

Advising and Mentoring

Student Orientation: B.S.P.H. advising begins with student orientation at the beginning of the first fall semester. After general orientation activities, the CGPH students will have separate orientation sessions with the program director and B.S.P.H. instructors to welcome them and provide an overview of departmental and school resources along with expectations for the program. As part of the orientation, students receive copies of the B.S.P.H. handbook, which details requirements, policies, and procedures.

Academic Coordinator (AC): Academic coordinators are student affairs professionals who have expert knowledge of the degree requirements within each program of study and a working knowledge of academic options and resources at Gillings and throughout the University. The AC will be available to students by email, appointment, or drop-in hours. ACs serve as primary academic advisors for students, helping them navigate academic policies, procedures, program requirements, and campus resources. They also assist with necessary paperwork including registration information and processes, policy exceptions, transfer requests, and continuous enrollment or leaves of absence.

Cohort Advising. Students will receive cohort advising and this is an effective mechanism for disseminating timely information (e.g., course registration, support services, elective and course guidance, graduation requirements, etc.) that is relevant to all students in the cohort. In addition, this helps foster a supportive community environment. We will have opportunities for a series of “lunch and learn” where students can receive information from doctoral students, faculty, and other public health professionals.

Graduate School and Career Opportunities

Upon graduation, students will be prepared for either entry-level positions at public health or related organizations (e.g., nonprofits, community-based organizations, government) or for advanced degree programs (e.g., graduate school, medical school). As students begin to graduate from this program beginning in 2027, we will have the opportunity to track our graduates' future steps and successes and share them with current students.

Major

- Community and Global Public Health Major, B.S.P.H. (<https://catalog.unc.edu/undergraduate/programs-study/community-global-public-health-major-bsph/>)

Courses

- Health Behavior (HBEH) (<https://catalog.unc.edu/courses/hbeh/>)

Professors

Clare Barrington, Global Health, Infectious Diseases, Minority Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Noel Brewer, Biases in Health Decisions, Health Communication, Decision Making, Cancer Prevention and Control

Edwin Fisher, Diabetes, Community and Peer Interventions, Chronic Disease Management, Smoking and Smoking Cessation

Vivian Go, Global Health, Opiates, HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Substance Abuse, Violence Prevention

Carol Golin, Adherence to Chronic Medical Therapy, Patient-Provider Communication, Medical Decision Making for HIV Therapy and Prevention

Laura Linnan, Applied Research in Worksites and Other Community-Based Settings, Multiple Risk Factor Behaviors, Organizational Change

Suzanne Maman, HIV/AIDS, Global Health, Associations Between HIV and Violence

Kurt Ribisl, Tobacco Control Policy, Built Environment and Health, Cancer Prevention and Control

Deborah Tate, Obesity, Computer/Internet Interventions, Health Communication

Associate Professors

Lynn White Blanchard, Research Around Public Service (Including Community Partnerships and Collaborations), Program Evaluation, Service Learning

Liz Chen, Adolescent Health, Design Thinking, Technology

Carolyn Crump, Worksite Health Promotion and Evaluation, Program Planning, Management

Melissa Gilkey, Adolescent Health, Cancer Prevention, Health Services Research, Barriers to Vaccination

Shelley Golden, Public Policies and Health Behavior, Tobacco Policy, Place-Based Health

Abigail Hatcher, Interventions for Intimate Partner Violence

Larissa Jennings Mayo-Wilson, Adolescent Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Economic/Mobile Health Interventions

Alexandra Lightfoot, Community-Based Participatory Research, Health Disparities, Healthy Choices and Behaviors to Support the Growth and Development of Youth, Educational Inequities

K. Elizabeth (Beth) Moracco, Women's Health, Violence Against Women, Evaluation Research

H. Luz McNaughton Reyes, Adolescent Health, Reproductive Health, Global Health

Nora Rosenberg, HIV/AIDS, Adolescent Health, Global Health, Women's Health, Sexual Behavior

Assistant Professors

Kristin Black, Reproductive Health, Health Equity, Community Engagement

Melissa Cox, Adolescent Health, Alcohol Use, Place-Based Health

Dane Emmerling, Pedagogy, Health Equity

Marissa Hall, Cancer Prevention Policy, Chronic Disease, Obesity Prevention

Lauren Hill, HIV/AIDS, Global Health

Megan Ellenson Landfried, Community Engagement, Culturally Relevant Interventions

Yessenia Merino, Health Equity, Community Engagement, Pedagogy

Sarah Mills, Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Disparities in Tobacco Use, Tobacco-Related Disease

Patsy Polston, Community Engagement, Health Inequities

Natalicio Serrano, Physical Activity, Neighborhood Environments, Health Equity

Deshira Wallace, Cardiovascular Disease, Type 2 Diabetes, U.S. Latin and Latin American Health

Contact Information

Department of Health Behavior

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