UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION
MPH PROJECT GUIDELINES

All CHS students must successfully complete an MPH Project (PH 696D), including an oral presentation. The MPH Project represents the "culminating" "capstone" experience of the MPH degree program. The goals of the MPH Project are: (1) to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their comprehensive command and integration of all course work, including other program areas (e.g., epidemiology, etc.), and their application to actual public health problems, and (2) to provide student with an opportunity to purse a particular topic of professional interest in greater depth. We strongly encourage students to carry out their MPH projects in conjunction with their Practicum.

1. <u>Credits</u>: Three credits of PH696D: Independent Study - MPH Problem.

2. <u>Supervision</u>: The project may be chaired by any member of the CHS graduate faculty, ideally by someone with expertise in the particular subject area. We encourage student to take advantage of the opportunity to have more than one faculty member on their MPH Project Committee. All committee members shall be members of the graduate faculty.

3. <u>Proposal</u>: The student is expected to develop a short (2-5 page) project proposal, to circulate to committee members to gain their feedback and advice, especially about the scope of the proposed project.

The proposal should include the following:

a)   Introduction and background statement that outlines the context of the problem to be studied and at least a brief outline of pertinent literature and a summary of the state of the science on the topic to be addressed.

b)   Statement of the question(s) to be raised, problem(s) to be solved, and the objective(s) of the project.

c)   Methodology outline or description. This is the central feature of the proposal and should be carefully completed. It should make clear how the question(s) or problem(s), are to be addressed or objective(s) to be accomplished with reference to a theoretical framework or logic model. This section must explain how the project is conceptualized, its design and implementation, based on a survey of literature.

d)   Significance: There should be thoughtful comment that explains the importance of the anticipated outcome, such as its contribution to program effectiveness, meeting community needs, professional development, replication of an evidence-based program, etc.

e)   Limitations: It is important to include a section that states the anticipated limitations or problems that may be encountered.

f) Timing: Since the proposal should be filed in anticipation of the project (not as justification after its completion), <u>the proposal must be approved by your faculty advisor at least two months prior to the project's presentation.</u>

4. <u>Report:</u> A final written MPH Project report is required. In addition to the sections presented in the prospectus, it should contain a description of the process used, including any difficulties that required a change in methodology, a report and analysis of findings, and summary of limitations and the significance of the work. The final report is to be typed in the same format as that required for a master's thesis (see <u>Typing Guidelines for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations</u> available at the Office of Degree Requirements, 534 Goodell) and is to be reviewed and approved by the Committee members. A suggested outline for the final project report is presented below. It does not, however, need to be submitted to the Graduate School. A soft-bound copy on acid free paper must be filed with the Division of Community Health Studies.

5. <u>Presentation:</u> All students are required to make an oral presentation of the project to which all DPH faculty and graduate students are invited. Selected relevant community and agency representatives may attend. Please note that this is not an oral defense of a thesis.

Suggested MPH Project Report Outline

I. Problem Statement

    A. Introduction & Overview of Issue/problem addressed

    B. Epidemiology of issue: size of problem, trends, disparities

    C. Population Affected & Setting

    D. Significance [why this works matters]

II. Background [optional — usually needed only if the reader needs further information about context of project in order to understand how and why the project came about or if there is something unusual about the circumstances or the issue being addressed]

    A. Needs Assessment [optional - only if one was conducted]

III. Goal and Objectives

    A. Goal(s) - broad statement of health improvements the program/project is designed to achieve (link to *Healthy People 2020*)

    B. Operational Objectives (may be defined at the following levels; not necessarily all)

        1. Health Outcomes
        2. Behavioral Outcomes
        3. Individual Intra-psychic/psychological
        4. Social environment
        5. Physical environment

IV. Literature Review

    A. Previous Programs addressing the problem or issue of interest

    B. Theory(s)/Model(s) used to design the program

V. Program/Project Description

    A. Operational Objectives (what, who, where, by how much, by when)

        1. Health
        2. Behavior
        3. Individual Intra-psychic/psychological (must use theories)
        4. Social environment (must use theories)
        5. Physical environment

B. Logic Model (schematic diagram illustrating the flow of activities)

C. Methods/Activities

1. Description of activities: what one actually did: outreach, trainings, curriculum development, small group discussions, community organizing, etc.

2. Process objectives: How many people were reach how many times (# of sessions) by when

3. Staffing

4. Outreach/recruitment: how people were recruited & enrolled in program

5. Timeline

D. Evaluation

1. Evaluation Design: one-group pre/post; quasi-experimental; randomized control trial

2. Types of Evaluation

      a. Formative
      b. Process Evaluation
      c. Outcome evaluation
      d. Impact Evaluation

3. Instruments

4. Sampling

5. Analysis

VI. Results

A. Findings: what happened, expected & unexpected

VII. Discussion and Recommendations

A. What you learned

B. What you would recommend to anyone trying to do something similar in the future; what you would do differently next time.

Examples of Recent Projects

HPM

Title: Cost-effectiveness analysis of the Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus education program at Baystate Medical Center.
Student: Christopher F. Jasinski.
Description: The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is metabolic evidence to support the current practice of admitting newly diagnosed T1DM children to a hospital for initial disease management training, regardless of whether hospitalization is needed and to determine the most cost-effective setting for newly diagnosed T1DM children to receive their initial diabetes education and disease management training. This study could help to establish new evidence-based practices in the pediatric T1DM field.

Title: Reducing the maternal mortality rate in Nigeria by 2015: A situational analysis, major challenges and route map to accomplish the Millennium Development Goal 5 in the country.
Student: Nwamaka I. Ifionu
Description: At least one woman dies during childbirth or in pregnancy every minute around the world, while several others develop either short or long term illnesses associated with reproduction. Nigeria has one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world. The United Nations, in an effort to accelerate human development, has devoted goal 5 of the MDGs to improve maternal health and to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015. This paper examines the current maternal health situation in Nigeria, analyzes the public health policies implemented in the country to reduce maternal mortality, and proposes feasible policy recommendations and health strategies for accomplishing the Millennium Development Goal 5 in Nigeria by 2015.

Title: Improving access to primary health care in rural communities in Nigeria through community based insurance;
Student: Nene C. Okunna
Description: This project assesses the feasibility of developing community-based health insurance schemes in Nigeria to improve access to primary health services for the rural poor. The aims of the project are: (1) to analyze the characteristics and main components of a community based health insurance; (2) to show that community based health insurance is a viable option for providing access to primary health care in rural communities in Nigeria; (3) to outline the basic components of a community based health insurance scheme in Nigeria; and (4) to analyze the challenges and opportunities to integrate this community based health insurance plan in the Nigerian government program to provide universal access to health care by 2015.

Title: An examination of fees for public health services provided by Western Massachusetts towns
Student: Anne Shila Waritu
Description: This project involved analyzing data on the fees charged by local health departments in Western Mass. The study found enormous variability across towns in the types of public health services for which fees are charged and the level of those fees. Some towns charge fees at a level that covers the cost of providing those services, but many towns do not.

Given the limited resources of local governments, some health departments may want to reconsider how they set their fees.

Title: A regional comparison of sexual harassment policies of large public universities in the US
Student: Jessica Curry
Description: This project involved collecting data on the sexual harassment policies of a random sample of large public universities, stratified by region of the country. Information about university policies was obtained mainly from schools' web sites. Each school's policy was assessed to determine the degree to which it adhered to the recommendations of the American College Health Association. The proportion of schools meeting selected recommendations was compared across regions.

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Title: Digital Storytelling (DST) Produced by College Students Interested in Reducing Alcohol Consumption
Student: Megan Griffin
Description: The objective of the MPH project was to describe the experience of digital storytelling in the context of a university recovery program, and to document how their digital storytelling process affected students' narratives about alcohol use and identity. The project involved being trained as a digital storytelling trainer, conducting a digital storytelling workshop with undergraduate students affiliated with the recovery center, collecting data through exit interviews and analyzing these data as well as the themes in the digital stories themselves.

Title: Lessons Learned: A Formative Evaluation of Holyoke Fuerte
Student: Elizabeth A. Baldwin
Description: Pediatric obesity is an ongoing challenge for public health and clinical health providers. To address this public health issue, Holyoke Health Center pilot-tested a community-based weight management program, called Holyoke Fuerte. Based on the Transtheoretical Model, Holyoke Fuerte utilizes goal setting, nutrition and behavioral education, and exercise as the primary means to encourage lifestyle changes in families. During the six-month program, children and adolescents (8-18 years old) attend biweekly sessions at the Greater Holyoke YMCA with a parent or guardian. Families receive a YMCA membership as an incentive to participate and remain in the program. All families are Latino, mostly Puerto Rican. The formative evaluation of Holyoke Fuerte utilized document reviews, key informant and staff interviews, participant interviews, and session observations to identify successes and areas of improvement for implementation. Descriptive statistics, Chi Square tests of comparison, and qualitative data coding were used in analysis. Key findings from the evaluation were presented to organizational representatives, and recommendations for utilizing findings to improve retention and program outcomes were described.

Title: What Works? Conversations with Substance Abuse Treatment Providers in the Greater Western Massachusetts Region
Student: Molly W. Breitbart

Description: While there is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of different substance abuse treatment strategies, the research still leaves many unanswered questions. One of these gaps in knowledge is due to the common focus on 'what works' rather than 'why it works'. Qualitative inquiry can explain the processes behind various outcome statistics, and allows room for unanticipated responses that may change the direction of the research. In this MPH project, inquiry focused on talking with substance abuse clinicians or counselors about what they perceive to be the most and least effective treatment strategies. Themes in the interviews were analyzed and compared to the literature on treatment and recovery. Areas of contrast and synergy were discussed in the context of organizational, policy and other practice issues. Results of the project were used to offer recommendation regarding how to improve care for substance users and addicts.

Title: Developing an youth leadership program curriculum for the Youth Empowerment Adolescent Network, Hampden County, MA
Student: Dayana Paula
Description: The project involved participant- observations of the teen advisory council and youth leadership program in the existing YEAH Network. Based on these observations, the project consisted of developing and implementing a new curriculum for the program.

Title: Developing and evaluating an arts-based sexual health curriculum for the Care Center, Holyoke
Student: Bethan Lamb
Description: The project developed and implemented a pilot sexual health curriculum, and used the evaluation of the pilot to develop a full sexual health curriculum. Process and outcome evaluations of the program were conducted.

Title: Evaluation In Programs Designed For Asthmatic Children
Student: Angela Reza
Description: The purpose of this project is to examine types of evaluation that have been conducted in relation to health programs for asthmatic children.

Title: The Development of a Secondary Alcohol Abuse Prevention Program for Adolescent in Russia
Student: Jessica Vickery
Description: The project developed a secondary prevention curriculum for adolescents attending an alcohol abuse treatment center in Novgorod, Russia and the development and pilot-testing of a training-of-trainers manual for counselors working at the clinic.

Title: A needs assessment of children's health needs of residents living in the North End neighborhood in Springfield, with a particular focus on environmental triggers of asthma
Student: George Kamakula
Description: In collaboration with community health workers from the Brightwood Community Health Center, the project involved developing a needs assessment instrument and collecting data via door-to-door survey to identify and develop recommendations regarding asthma triggers in young children.

Title: The development and dissemination of a radio program for HIV/AIDS education targeting men in St. Lucia.

Student: Hermence Matsotsa

Description: The project involved a secondary review of data collected on the health beliefs of men living in St. Lucia regarding the spread of HIV/AIDS, developing a culturally-tailored radio program for men, and networking with radio disc jockeys to gain air time for the program.