

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

### EMPLOYERS

### STRATEGIES

#### HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

##### Health services administration:

- Operations
- Finance
- Program development
- Program evaluation
- Management
- Material management
- Human resources
- Medical staff relations
- Information technology
- Marketing
- Public relations
- Project management
- Facilities
- Patient care services
- Provider relations
- Government relations
- Strategic planning

##### Health Policy:

- Research
- Analysis
- Policy development
- Legislative work
- Lobbying

- Hospitals
- Health systems
- Clinics
- Medical practice groups
- Home health agencies
- Long-term care facilities
- Mental health facilities
- Managed care organizations
- Health finance organizations
- Insurance companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Academic medical centers
- Federal government agencies:
  - Department of Health and Human Services
  - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
  - Department of Veterans Affairs
  - Food and Drug Administration
  - Office of the Surgeon General
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - National Institutes of Health
- Military
- Legislative offices
- State government agencies
- Public health departments (state and local)
- Advocacy groups
- Health foundations
- Professional associations
- Nonprofit organizations

For health services administration, choose an undergraduate major in business, accounting, finance, or management. For policy-related careers, consider public administration or political science.

Gain experience through internships or jobs in a healthcare setting.

Develop strong oral and written communication, analytical, and technological skills.

Learn how to use database and spreadsheet software.

Develop problem-solving skills for finding creative solutions to problems.

Learn to work well on teams and cultivate leadership skills.

Get involved in student government or campus organizations related to health issues.

Earn a master's degree in public health, health administration, public administration, business, or a related field.

To prepare for positions in lobbying and legislation, some will earn a law degree.

Join related professional organizations and build a network of contacts.

Stay abreast of new laws and regulatory changes in the healthcare industry.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Quantitative research  
Behavioral research  
Program planning  
Program implementation  
Program evaluation  
Advocacy  
Policy

Federal government agencies:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Surgeon General  
State government agencies  
Public health departments (state and local)  
Nonprofit organizations:  
American Red Cross  
American Heart Association  
Colleges and universities  
Hospitals  
Private research foundations  
Research and development firms  
International health agencies

Pursue research experience at the undergraduate level.  
Become involved in health programming or peer education on campus.  
Volunteer in the community to gain experience and develop expertise in a particular area or organization.  
Develop strong public speaking and presentation skills. Prepare to communicate effectively with both groups and individuals.  
Learn to work well with diverse populations and people of varying ages.  
Become familiar with grant writing techniques and grant submission procedures.  
Earn a graduate degree for advanced research positions.

---

### **HEALTH PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION**

Intervention:  
Planning and development  
Implementation  
Evaluation  
Health Education:  
Prevention  
Promotion  
Social Marketing:  
Mass media  
Web-based  
Organizational communication  
Project management

Federal government agencies:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Surgeon General  
State government agencies  
Public health departments (state and local)  
Wellness centers  
Community mental health centers  
Corporate wellness programs  
Fitness facilities  
Schools  
Colleges and universities

Become involved in health programming or peer education on campus.  
Volunteer in the community to gain experience and develop expertise in a particular area or organization.  
Obtain a part-time or summer job with a campus health center or wellness coordinator.  
Learn to work well with diverse populations and people of varying ages.  
Develop strong communication skills for building and delivering effective interventions.  
Gain knowledge of funding sources, grant writing techniques and submission procedures.  
Research the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) credential.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### **BIOSTATISTICS**

Research  
Public health surveillance:  
    Data collection  
    Analysis  
    Interpretation  
Clinical trials  
Data interpretation and presentation

Federal government agencies:  
    Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
    National Center for Health Statistics  
State government agencies  
Public health departments (state and local)  
Pharmaceutical industry  
Biotechnology firms  
Nonprofit organizations  
Colleges and universities  
Research institutions  
Hospitals  
International health agencies:  
    World Health Organization (WHO)

Choose an undergraduate major in mathematics, statistics, or basic science. Develop strong quantitative and computing skills.  
Assist with faculty research projects or apply to a summer research program.  
Gain experience through related internships. Learn to work well on an interdisciplinary team.  
Develop strong written and verbal communication skills, as statisticians in this field write technical reports to share findings.  
Earn a graduate degree in public health/biostatistics.

---

### **EPIDEMIOLOGY**

Research:  
    Design  
    Data collection  
    Analysis  
    Interpretation  
Grant writing  
Incident/Disease investigation  
Risk assessment  
Surveillance  
Technical writing

Federal government agencies:  
    National Institutes of Health  
    Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
    Military  
State government agencies  
Public health departments (state and local)  
World Health Organization (WHO)  
Private research foundations  
Pharmaceutical industry  
Research and development service firms  
Nonprofit organizations  
Hospitals  
Colleges and universities  
Medical schools

Develop a solid background in the biological sciences, statistics, mathematics, and the software utilized for statistical analyses.  
Gain experience with research. Volunteer to assist professors with research or apply for summer research programs.  
Find a topic of interest and seek as much knowledge and experience in that area as possible.  
Develop strong communication skills for grant and report writing.  
Plan to work collaboratively with other professionals who study risk factors and disease distribution.  
Earn a master's or doctoral degree in public health, epidemiology, or related field. Some clinical epidemiologists are also MDs.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Research  
Field research  
Air quality  
Food protection  
Radiation protection  
Solid waste management  
Water quality  
Noise control  
Housing quality  
Vector control  
Toxicology  
Occupational safety  
Risk assessment  
Management  
Policy development  
Consulting

Federal government agencies:  
CDC's National Center for Environmental Health  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Food and Drug Administration  
Military  
Department of Energy  
State government agencies  
Public health departments (state and local)  
Private research facilities  
Nonprofit organizations  
Environmental agencies  
Consulting firms

Major in biology, chemistry, or other science area.  
Develop strong research skills and the ability to manage data.  
Become involved with environmental-related organizations on campus.  
Learn to work well with a team of other professionals such as physicians, engineers, and scientists.  
Read related journals to stay abreast of new trends and legislation in the field.  
Plan to earn a graduate degree in public health or related field.  
Research the many specialties to determine interest areas in which to gain experience.

### GLOBAL HEALTH and EPIDEMICS

Social and economic development  
Health policy  
Demography  
Women's health  
Children's health  
Nutrition  
Design of healthcare systems  
Disease prevention and control:  
    Education/Medication  
Distribution  
Disaster relief

International organizations:  
World Health Organization (WHO)  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
United Nations Development Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
World Bank  
USAID  
Bilateral government development agencies:  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Public Health Service  
Office of International Health  
Nonprofit organizations:  
Peace Corps  
International Red Cross  
CARE  
Doctors Without Borders

Major in a social science and plan to continue education in public health.  
Learn one or more foreign languages.  
Study, volunteer, or intern abroad as much as possible.  
Participate in international service learning trips or missions.  
Volunteer in the local community with health-related issues.  
Develop excellent research, writing, communication, and organizational skills.  
Learn to adapt to cultural and racial diversity. Be willing to live and work in third world nations.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- Public health is a broad, multi-disciplinary field, and most professionals specialize at the graduate level. Other specialties within public health include maternal and child health, nutrition, health disparities, and veterinary public health. Additionally, some professionals choose interdisciplinary career paths that involve public health, such as MPH/RN, MPH/JD, MPH/MD, etc. Learn about all the options through the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH).
- Seek involvement in undergraduate and community-based public health programs. Some higher education institutions have peer health educators trained to provide education and support to fellow students.
- A bachelor's degree opens the door for entry level opportunities in areas such as health education and promotion and environmental health.
- A master's degree is typically required for management, administration, research, policy development, biostatistics, and epidemiology.
- A doctoral degree is required to reach the highest levels of administration or research and for university teaching positions.
- Some public health programs utilize the Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS).
- Research the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) and Master Certified Health Education Specialist (MCHES) offered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc., as these certifications may be preferred or required for some positions.
- Many opportunities in public health exist with government agencies: The Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, Indian Health Service, National Institutes of Health, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Become familiar with government hiring procedures. Obtain a government internship in an area of interest.
- Develop a specialty area of interest via supplemental coursework and/or work experience for greater marketability within that specific career field.
- Writing, research, and presentation skills are critical in most career fields related to public health.
- Gain experience working with diverse populations across diverse settings. Learn to work well with others individually and in groups.
- Technology skills are integrated and demanded across all areas.