



MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY



Letter from the Director

The health status of populations around the globe is an integral component of our complex world. Public health is a diverse professional field that encompasses a wide variety of health-related disciplines. Public health professionals work together to protect the health of populations through health promotion and disease prevention.

Baylor University offers a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with specialization in Community Health. This 2-year program includes 42 credit hours of required course work and practical experiences that integrate the core areas of knowledge and competencies of public health with the professional responsibilities of health education specialists. Opportunities for practical, community-based experience are strongly emphasized and embedded within our program. Through our Community Health Partners program, students work with real community partners in course projects and complete internships, making our graduates well-equipped for professional settings.

At Baylor, you will have opportunities to explore vocational aspects of a service-oriented health career, work with faculty members who are active leaders in community service and research, and explore global health opportunities through study abroad programs like Baylor in Brazil.

Our program boasts small faculty-student ratios; 100% pass-rate success on national Certified Health Education Specialist exams; and strong success among graduates entering a variety of employment settings, doctoral degree programs and medical schools.

The public health profession is one of the fastest growing health-related professions in the country. The unique opportunities to explore one's career as a vocation at Baylor University renders our degree program an invaluable opportunity. We hope you will join us.

Eva D. Doyle

Dr. Eva Doyle
Director, Master of Public Health Program
Baylor University
Eva_Doyle@baylor.edu



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
PROGRAM SNAPSHOT
TEXAS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

BAYLOR IN BRAZIL

SERVING THE UNDERSERVED

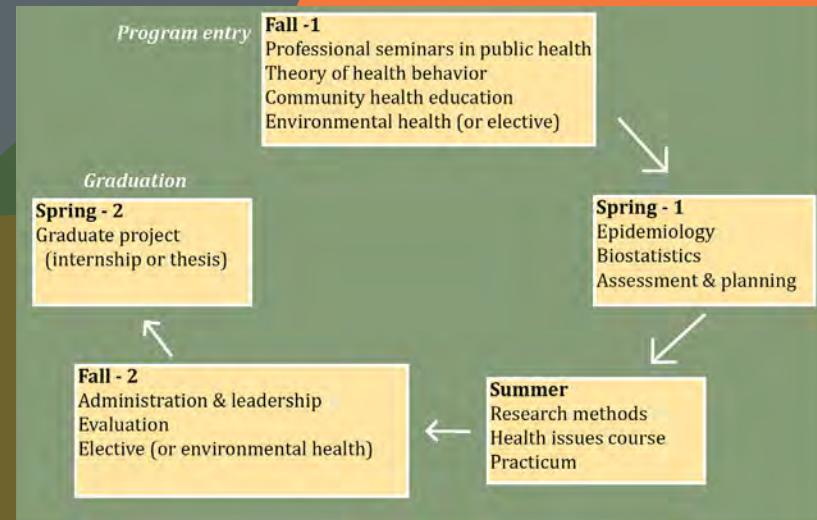
FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

MEET THE CREW

Program Snapshot

Example Two - Year Program in Community Health



Baylor in Brazil Summer Study Abroad Program

Program Highlights:

- Practice-based requirement hours among nation's highest
- Global health emphasis area
- Explore vocational aspects
- Graduate TAs receive teaching experience, stipend and tuition remission
- Current faculty:student ratio is 1:7

Community Health Education Concentration combines both public health and community health

Public Health Courses

- Behavioral Science
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health
- Epidemiology
- Health Administration

Community Health Courses

- Community Health
- Theoretical Foundations
- Assessment & Planning
- Evaluation
- Research Methods
- Administration & Leadership

Mission: to promote public health in local and global settings through the professional preparation of students, community service, research and scholarship, and workforce development.

Alumni:

- Become Certified Health Education Specialists
- Work in public health, NGOs, businesses and universities
- Enter graduate, medical and law schools

Texas Healthy Communities

By: Megan Rollow

Just across the Brazos River lays 76704, the community where the Texas Healthy Communities-Waco Project got its start. The Texas Healthy Communities Project was funded by the Center for Disease Control, or CDC, in order to identify communities poised for change. This project was implemented in Waco by looking at communities that had really strong infrastructure, sense of community and neighborhood leadership.

76704 had all of these qualities and more, as well as high rates of obesity. The community had previously worked hand in hand with the public health district, so 76704 was a great starting place for the Texas Healthy Communities Project.

Thus began a partnership between the Waco- McLennan county public health district and Baylor University. Three faculty members in the MPH Program worked on the project with the health district, including Dr. Kelly Ylitalo, an assistant professor of epidemiology in Baylor's Master of Public Health Department. Throughout this project a series of five focus groups were conducted, as well as household surveys, in order to gather valuable data to better the community.

Ylitalo and MPH students set out on a rainy Saturday in March and used an approach called "The Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response," which is typically a set of methods and tools used to quickly, efficiently and accurately assess the health status of a community. This process allowed Ylitalo, students and colleagues the opportunity to quickly assess the neighborhood.

The project members went door to door to ask about obesity-related behaviors and beliefs, as well as the household's healthy eating habits and active living plans. These probing questions resulted in 100 surveys, which allowed the project members to get a glimpse of the kinds of things that prevent people from living healthy lives.

The most prevalent barriers to healthy eating were cost and taste. The most prevalent barrier to healthy living was cost, as well as neighborhood safety. "Everyone has factors in their life that keep them from being as healthy as they can be," said Dr. Ylitalo. This project was useful because students were able to take what they had learned in their classes, and then go out and collect meaningful data, through their partnership with the community members and public health district.

"I think at some level...people just want to be heard. This project gave people the opportunity to share their voice," said Dr. Ylitalo.

Developing blanket interventions does not work. The Texas Healthy Communities Project is unique because it allows us to gather data that can be used to develop interventions and programs to meet the specific needs of each community.

"I think it's really important when we're dealing with public health statistics to know that those aren't just numbers on a page, but those are actually people," said Dr. Ylitalo. "These are real people. Every number represents a face in the community."

"I think at some level...people just want to be heard and to give people the opportunity to *share their voice* is really important and I think this project was a part of that."



Let's Get Physical

By: Hannah Pittman

Dr. Renée Umstadd Meyer teaches primarily in Baylor University's Master of Public Health (MPH) program. Not only is she a faculty member, but she also conducts research on physical activity along the US-Mexico border alongside Dr. Joe Sharkey of Texas A&M School of Public Health.

When Dr. Umstadd Meyer joined Baylor's faculty in August 2010, she fully immersed herself in research. She originally joined this project because her Dr. Sharkey asked for help and quickly realized how under resourced the communities were, and was amazed by the families and people she met. This collaboration started with a focus on obesity-related projects in underserved communities. Dr. Umstadd Meyer was the expert in physical activity and inactivity while Dr. Sharkey was the expert in healthy eating.

"I am very grateful that my colleagues on these projects also feel this way and that we have been able to secure funding to continue our work with these communities," Dr. Umstadd Meyer said.

In the beginning of the project, both Dr. Umstadd Meyer and Dr. Sharkey, Baylor Public Health Undergraduate, MPH, and PhD students, started gathering information regarding the physical and social environments of the homes, and communities in Hidalgo County, located along the south Texas-Mexico border.

They work directly with community advisory boards and promotora teams, which are made up of trusted people in the community to collect information and act as a bridge between the community and the research team. Promotoras have the unique ability to act not only as community health workers, provide outreach and education, but also are actively engaged in conducting research in their communities. The promotora teams and residents will act as partners as they move into designing intervention strategies to combat the obesity challenges faced by these unique families. They have also looked at physical activity behaviors and perceived barriers and facilitators of physical activity for children and mothers during the summer and school year.

Dr. Umstadd Meyer has become "acutely and chronically aware of the great need within these communities and has fallen in love with the people."



"This project opened my eyes to the under-recognized poor health and living conditions of some communities along the US-Mexico border," Jasmin Sumrall, MPH student, said. "Many households in these areas lack the standard municipal services, such as running water, electricity, and sewage services, that many of us take for granted. However, these families are connected to their communities and are very

resourceful."

MPH students have had their hands in many different aspects of the project. They have helped design mother and child surveys, assist with promotora training in south Texas, design environmental assessment tools, data management and analysis, focus group design and promotora training, but their involvement does not end there. They have also partnered with Dr. Umstadd Meyer and Texas A&M for the past five Christmas food drives to provide families in south Texas with stocked pantries for Christmas, as well as assisting with book drives, clothing drives, backpack drives that give backpacks and school supplies for the upcoming school year and families are provided box fans for their homes.

"I was a member of the team that developed a focus group session guide focusing on physical activity. This guide will be used to conduct focus groups with mothers in South Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The information we collect from these focus groups will be used to help shape the development of some physical activity interventions," Christina Bridges, MPH student, said.

Most recently, the project has expanded due to a five-year grant from the USDA to also include U.S. communities bordering Mexico in both New Mexico and Arizona. They have started at the ground level to better understand the physical and social environments, barriers, and facilitators of physical activity, screen time, and healthy eating. Currently, Dr. Umstadd Meyer is leading this project across all sites on everything related with physical activity and screen time.

Over the next four years, the gathered information from this year will be used to inform the development of a family based, community driven obesity prevention intervention with promotoras at its core.

At the heart of the research, Dr. Umstadd Meyer is most excited to use this line of research to help improve the health of families living along the U.S.-Mexico border because there is not an evidence base to draw from when working with families in these conditions. As immigration increases, this information becomes more and more important. They plan to use the findings from the current project to help improve obesity-related behaviors in other families residing along the U.S.-Mexico border or in new-destination Mexican immigrant communities across the U.S.

"I feel that if there is something I can do with my energy and time to help make a difference in the lives of these people, then I should," she said.



Baylor in Brazil

By: Meagan Thompson

Baylor in Brazil is a study abroad program offered every summer that allows students to gain hands on experience in public health practices to promote health in local churches and communities that are at high risk and are underserved.

"Baylor in Brazil is designed to equip health interested students in a public health perspective," Dr. Eva Doyle, Director of Baylor in Brazil, said. "We equip students to promote health in local Brazilian communities and we also work with local churches in Brazil to equip those churches to promote health in their neighborhoods."

Each summer, no more than 12 students are selected for the program, enabling participants to interact directly with the local Brazil community.

"My favorite memories are when we're out in the community and children are just gathered around hugging our Baylor students," said Dr. Doyle. "Wanting their autograph and not wanting them to leave after we've spent some time with them."

The point of Baylor in Brazil is to partner with the local communities and enable them to continue to grow their health practices long after the Baylor students have left.

A lot of the learning takes place outside of the traditional classroom setting. Just like any other study abroad program, students are required to take two courses, global health and environmental health. Usually students will attend class in the mornings then go out into the community during the afternoon or night.

Dr. Doyle sees being out in the community as lab based classroom setting.

"They're using what I taught them in the classroom about communication, interpreters and finding that information in a simple format or individuals who may have no more than a fourth grade reading level," Dr. Doyle said.

Working in the communities allows for students to apply their lessons to real world experience. Jordan Nelson is one of the Baylor graduate students who participated in the program this past summer.

"I think I learned way more than I taught everyone there," Nelson said. "I learned more about the culture. I've learned that I love Brazil. I've learned how to work with others, because you know we learn so much in the classroom, but it doesn't translate until you go out in the real world and you actually learn this is really messy and nothing goes the way you plan. Which isn't a bad thing."

Baylor in Brazil isn't all work, there's some time for play. The last few days of the trip are spent exploring Rio de Janeiro. The students have the chance to visit the famous Christ the Redeemer statue, attend a soccer game or hang out on the beach.

"If you want an experience that challenges you to think about how to promote wellness in an underserved population and to give of yourself in a way that's probably going to make you exhausted by the end of the day, and yet proud of the work that you did, Baylor in Brazil is for you," Dr. Doyle said.



"I think I learned way more than I taught anyone there."



serving the *underserved*

By: Chelsea Sanford

The city of Waco is known nationally as an up-and-coming college town. From the exterior, it's natural to assume Waco's economy is above the Texas average, as it houses one of the most profitable universities in America.

An inside perspective will tell you otherwise. There's no denying poverty consumes the rural city, nor can one deny the blatant divide between the college portion of the city, and the remaining parts. About a quarter of Waco's population falls below the poverty line, which outweighs Texas' overall poverty level by more than 10 percent.

Baylor University is constantly striving to eliminate this rift between the university and its community, and enhance the lives of people who call Waco home.

The Baylor Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate program is among the leading forces making a genuine difference in Waco residents' lives. Every year, MPH students, community/public health undergraduate students, and faculty rally together to host a Community Health Fair for Waco's Homeless.

"The Health Fair provides a unique opportunity for students to interact with a diverse group of people in our community who are eager to learn more about health," Ashley Steenberger, a senior Community Health major said. Ashley has volunteered at the fair twice with her undergraduate Health Education Classes (HED). "It really allows the students, professionals and community members to come together and learn from one another in a really special way."

Dr. Beth Lanning, Health and Human Sciences professor at Baylor, took ownership of this event from Mission Waco more than six years ago. Lanning viewed the fair as a perfect venue to serve Waco's underserved residents, and provide them access to basic physical exams and health care.

The Health Fair occurs biannually in the fall and spring. In conjunction with Waco's Church Under the Bridge, the fair offers free services such as blood pressure checks and body-fat analyses. Attendees also receive extensive educational materials about various areas of health and wellness, including heart disease and nutrition.

As an additional perk and token of appreciation, attendees are pampered with free



haircuts and manicures.

An average of 130 people attend the fair each semester. Several members of the Baylor community volunteer to deliver this well-deserved event to Waco's impoverished population.

"My favorite part [of the Fair] is interacting and bonding with my classmates. From there, I love getting to have conversations with our guests," Lindsey Breunig, a senior Community Health major. Like Ashley, Lindsey has volunteered at the fair twice before. "I feel like the more I participate the more comfortable I become and am excited to interact with everyone involved."

Baylor is fortunate to be rooted in such a diverse community. MPH recognizes this, and devotes their services as a way to give back to the community that laid the foundation upon which Baylor University has grown and flourished.

"[The Health Fair] allows the students, professionals and community members to come together and learn from one another in a really special way."

from the emergency room to the classroom

By: Megan Rollow

Naomi Abel is a Master of Public Health candidate at Baylor University, a teacher of record for an undergraduate course on Health and Human Behavior, and a research graduate assistant from Peoria, Illinois. Abel earned her Associates in Applied Science in Nursing from Illinois Central College and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Illinois State University.

She worked as a nurse for 12 years in the emergency department, intensive care unit and home health, holding positions as a staff nurse, charge nurse, staff educator and supervisor before trading in her scrubs for a bag full of textbooks to head back to school.

"I liked the clinical side of medicine, but wanted to branch out to the preventative side," Abel said.

Abel found out about Baylor at the Global Health Missions Program in Louisville, Kentucky. There she met a nurse in charge of the Christian Nurses Association who had a nurse practitioner degree and wished she had gotten her Master of Public Health. She recommended Baylor for its great college reputation, Christian base, and because of Abel's interest in international work.

"I'd always said I would never get a bachelors let alone a masters, but there are job opportunities that I'm really interested in on an international scale that prefer someone with a Master of Public Health," Abel said.

At the time Baylor only had a four-year community health degree, but it has since become accredited. Abel looked for two years at in-state schools, online programs, and settled upon applying at Baylor. She also had to decide if she wanted to work full time and go to school, or take a break from work and go to school full time. Baylor gave her the opportunity to go to school full-time by offering her a TA position for an undergraduate course. This quickly became a highlight of Abel's program because she was able to develop her own personal teaching style through student interaction.

Abel has learned a tremendous amount from the Master of Public Health Program, and it has given her hands on skills and helped her in terms of collaborating, grant writing and surveying populations.

"The Master of Public Health Program is doing a better job of incorporating hands on learning with real community partners, and they're doing a great job of bridging the community with the program for us as students and people in the community. It's a mutually beneficial relationship," Abel said.

One of her primary interests in public health is working to improve health through community health worker programs. During the summer of 2015, she completed a program planning and grants writing practicum at a local non-profit organization, specifically focused on a new community health worker initiative. She is interested in working with underprivileged and elderly populations at the local, national and international level.

Abel has always wanted to go out and do work on a global scale, and is hoping to have an internship with Samaritan's Purse with either their nutrition program, water and sanitation program, refugee work program, or disaster relief program. All of these things are something that public health can interplay with. She said that there is application in the states and her interests would be using community health workers to help implement health programs, however she would rather be out in the community on a more educational level.

"My heart is more in the empowerment model of helping people help themselves. That's what I love." Abel said.

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Where are they now?

Meg Patterson

By: Riki Lee Burhans

Meg Patterson is a successful Master of Public Health graduate living in Waco, working and enjoying her job as the director of wellness for Baylor University, which is housed under a division of student life.

Patterson graduated with her MPH from Baylor in 2012. After leaving Baylor, she went on to pursue her doctorate at A&M University while working as a graduate assistant. She will complete her PhD in December 2015.

As the director of wellness Patterson, “[gives] Baylor students the best shot at a healthy college career” she said. She plans, implements and evaluates the wellness programs and services for students. Patterson also conducts research on the health of students, she said.

Over the course of a semester she will deliver educational presentations and programs to thousands of students on various health related topics such as stress management, sexual assault and physical activity; lead and participate on university-wide committees, advisory boards and work teams devoted to the health and wellness of Baylor students; coordinate support groups for various projects; teach classes; conduct research; and invest in and work with dozens of students on a one-on-one basis.



Kaitlin Ashmore

By: Meagan Thompson

Kaitlin Ashmore graduated from Baylor with a degree in Community Health Education and a Master of Public Health. She is currently working at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Ashmore is serving as the Coordinator for HRSA Grant Projects in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health. Her job entails coordinating with the local health departments and community to place medical students in the rotations they need to complete their degree.

Ashmore was introduced to the Master of Public Health program at Baylor during her undergraduate years at Baylor. She chose to continue her education at Baylor because she was impressed with the faculty and the opportunities the department offered.

“I loved my experience at Baylor. I can’t say enough about the faculty, they made the MPH program not only professionally stretching but personally growing,” Ashmore said. “The courses are challenging but extremely well planned and focus on group interaction and building all of the public health competencies necessary to function effectively as a public health professional.”

One of her favorite memories from her time at Baylor is having dinner at a professor’s house with the entire MPH program. Connecting with the students and faculty outside of school is one of the things that sets the MPH program at Baylor apart.

“We really knew the faculty cared about us and wanted to form relationships,” Ashmore said. “That makes a huge difference, feeling supported in graduate school.”



meet the editors:



Megan E. Rollow

Meagan Thompson

Megan Rollow & Meagan Thompson

meet the crew:



From left to right: Riki Lee Burhans, Chelsea Sanford, Erin Mitchell, Meagan Thompson, Hannah Pittman, Maria Dillman, Ashlyn Thompson and Megan Rollow

