

Master of Public Health

Baylor University



Information Packet

Help

build

healthy communities.



Impact

lives



locally



and

globally.



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Why an MPH Degree in *Community Health*?

Eva I. Doyle, PhD, MCHES – Baylor University

The health status of populations around the globe is an integral component of the complex global condition. Economics, politics, and a wide array of social and environmental issues impact the health of individuals and whole communities.¹ Global warming and poverty are driving rural populations to already-crowded urban areas from which drug-resistant infections are spawning and spreading. Politically-driven trade agreements impact access to food, housing, sanitation, and health services; and acts of war and terrorism pose constant threats to global health and safety. Chronic diseases, influenced by behavioral choices and environmental exposures, are burdening health systems around the world with the need for complex and long-term care. As the global burden of disease continues to weaken healthcare systems, global health leaders¹⁻⁵ are calling for an intensified focus on primary health, humanitarian actions, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles as an essential part of long-term solutions.¹⁻³ This shift in focus has generated an intense need for health professionals who are trained in the multidisciplinary perspectives of public health and the ecological process and methods of community health education.^{3,6-8}



What is Public Health?

Public health is a diverse professional field that encompasses a wide variety of health-related disciplines. In general, public health professionals from these various disciplines work together to protect the health of entire populations through health promotion and disease prevention. More specifically, "Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or re-occurring through implementing educational programs, developing policies, administering services, and conducting research, in contrast to clinical professionals, such as doctors and nurses, who focus primarily on treating individuals after they become sick or injured. It is also a field that is concerned with limiting health disparities and a large part of public health is the fight for health care equity, quality, and accessibility."^{9(para3)}

The MPH Degree

The master of public health (MPH) degree is a widely-accepted, practice-oriented degree that:

- Usually includes required courses in five core areas: epidemiology, environmental health, biostatistics, health services administration, and behavioral science/health education.
- May also include an area of specialization in one of the five core areas or in another emerging public health area such as community health education, global health, or public health policy.
- *Can* be an accelerated public health degree (consisting of only the five core areas) as part of a dual degree program in such areas as medicine or dentistry.⁹

- ***Public Health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention.***
- ***Public Health helps improve the health and wellbeing of people in local communities and across our nation.***
- ***Public Health helps people who are less fortunate achieve a healthier lifestyle.***
- ***Public Health works to prevent health problems before they occur.***
- ***Public Health professionals achieve true job satisfaction by knowing they are making the world a better place.***

Source: *What is Public Health?* www.whatispublichealth.org/

For more information visit:
What is Public Health?
www.whatispublichealth.org

Community health education is “a theory-driven process that promotes health and prevents disease within populations.”¹¹ A “population” can be defined as residents of a neighborhood (city, county, country) or as groups of individuals who share common health issues or health-influencing factors. Health education specialists (public health educators) are experts in this process.

Health education specialists promote healthy lifestyles and environments that enhance health, wellness, and quality of life for individuals and communities.¹²

Health Education Specialists....

- **Promote, maintain, and improve individual and community health** by assisting individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors. Collect and analyze data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs designed to encourage healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments. May also serve as a resource to assist individuals, other professionals, or the community, and may administer fiscal resources for health education programs.¹³
- **Are trained in specific competencies** framed within the following *Areas of Responsibility*.¹⁴
 - Assess needs, assets and capacity for health education
 - Plan health education
 - Implement health education
 - Conduct evaluation and research related to health education
 - Administer and manage health education
 - Serve as a health education resource person
 - Communicate and advocate for health and health education
- Can take a national exam to become a **Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)**.¹⁴

Health education specialists work in:

- public health agencies
- health care facilities
- non-governmental organizations
- businesses
- universities and schools

Employment Outlook

The profession of health education has been identified by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics¹³ as one of the fastest growing occupations in the nation with employment rates expected to increase by 37% from 2010 to 2020. Future job prospects have been officially deemed *highly favorable*. Rising health care costs and an increased recognition of the need for qualified health education specialists in public and

community settings are driving significant employment growth in the areas of health care, social assistance, and public health.

This growing demand for health education specialists comes at a time when the size of the public health workforce has significantly decreased due to a high number of retirements.¹⁴ These workforce shortages are even more critical in international settings where public health workers are scarce and the burden of disease is high.^{15,16}

Public health is community health. This statement is widely used in public health to indicate that public health practice encompasses the broad ecological approach needed to address global health issues. Though public health has accomplished much to develop a broader approach to addressing health needs, a call for public health training in community health education has become a focal point.^{3,6,8} This emerging focus has driven a growing demand for master degree programs that combine the time-honored master of public health (MPH) degree with specialized training in the process of community health education.⁶ The emerging *MPH in Community Health Education* is one of the fastest growing types of public health-accredited programs in the U.S.^{6,17}

Watch SOPHE's health education specialist video:

<http://www.sophe.org/healthedspecialist.cfm>

Weblinks

Professional Associations

- Society for Public Health Education
<http://www.sophe.org>
- American Public Health Association
<http://www.apha.org>
- American Academy of Health Behavior
<http://aahb.org>
- American College Health Association
<http://www.acha.org/>
- American School Health Association
<http://www.ashaweb.org>

The Job Market and Professional Development

- National Commission for Health Education Credentialing
www.nchec.org
 - *Health Education Profession*
 - *Responsibilities and Competencies of Health Education Specialists*
 - *How to become a Certified Health Education Specialist*
- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
 - Health Educators: Working for Wellness.
<http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2007/summer/art03.pdf>
 - Health Educators . *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/health-educators.htm>
- What Is Public Health? <http://www.whatispublichealth.org/>
- Association of Schools of Public Health <http://www.asph.org>
 - Public Health Workforce Crisis FAQs
<http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=1040>

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Baylor University

Master of Public Health Program

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



Program Goals



Professional Preparation

Equip students with professional competencies needed to effectively serve as public health professionals.



Community Service

Engage students and faculty in community-based partnerships that can impact the health of communities.



Research/Scholarship

Engage students and faculty members in public health research and scholarship.



Workforce Development

Engage students and faculty members in public health workforce development.



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Program Overview

Baylor University offers a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with specialization in Community Health (*MPH 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 and competencies of *health educators*.

Opportunities for practical, community-based experience are strongly emphasized and embedded within the 42 credit hour requirements. Through our *Community Health Partners* program, students work with real community partners in course projects and complete a mid-program practicum (200 contact hours). For the final *graduate project*, students complete 400 contact hours in a community-based internship or research thesis with a public health focus.

Students may elect to complete an optional *Global Health Emphasis* within the degree program by devoting their two required elective courses, the mid-program practicum, and graduate project to global health topics, issues, and settings. Baylor University's strong study abroad programs serve as exciting opportunities for students interested and willing to invest in this international training experience.

Program graduates are eligible and strongly encouraged to take a national exam to become a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). The CHES credential, combined with the MPH degree with specialty training in community health education, prepares our graduates for one of the fastest growing job markets in the health professions (see *Why an MPH in Community Health Education?*).

Unique to our Baylor program...

- ❑ Opportunities to explore vocational aspects of a service-oriented health career.
- ❑ Requirements & opportunities for community-based experiences among the highest in the country.
- ❑ Graduate assistantships with full tuition remission (*See Graduate Assistantships*).
- ❑ Faculty members as national leaders /active in community service & research.
- ❑ Small faculty-student ratios.
- ❑ Global health emphasis and study abroad opportunities.
- ❑ 100% pass-rate success on national exam to become Certified Health Education Specialist.
- ❑ Strong success rate among graduates entering variety of employment settings, doctoral degree programs, medical schools, and other health-related programs.



Baylor in Brazil Summer Study Abroad



An optional international study abroad opportunity...

- Be part of a faith-centered health ministry team.
- Earn 6 credit hours in international health, cross-cultural health communication, environmental health, or health practicum/internship.
- Practice health promotion in an international setting.
- Impact lives in Brazilian communities.

MPH in Community Health

Baylor University

Requirements (42 credit hours)

Public Health Core (15 credit hours)

- HED 5001 Professional Seminars in Public Health*
- HED 5315 Foundations of Health Behavior & Public Health
- HED 5378 Administration & Leadership in Public Health
- STA 5300 Biostatistics
- HED 5337 Health Concepts in Epidemiology
- ENV 5302 Foundations of Environmental Health Science

Additional Community Health Courses (12 credit hours)

- HED 5334 Community Health Education
- HED 5350 Assessment and Planning in Health Education
- HED 5360 Evaluation in Health Education
- HED 5379 Research Methods

Choose One (3 credit hours)

- HED 5329 Current Health Issues
- HED 4340 Global Health (GHE option)**

Choose One (3 credit hours, other options are possible with permission)

- HED 4331 Health Interventions
- HED 4321 Human Sexuality
- HED 4327 Dying and Death
- HED 4341 Cross-Cultural Health Communication (GHE option)**

Practicum Experience** (3 credit hours/200 contact hours)

- HED 5V94 Practicum

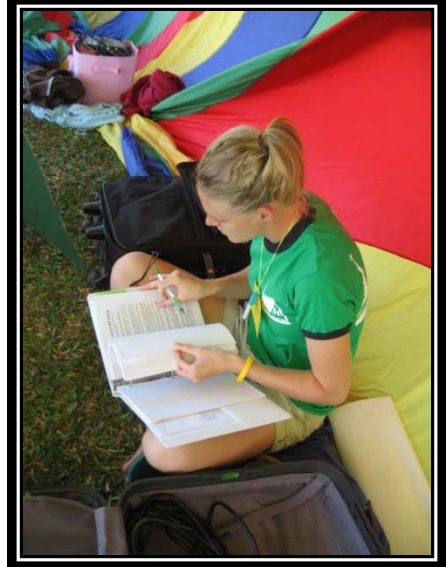
Graduate Project*** (6 credit hours/400 contact hours)

- HED 5V90 Internship or HED 5V99 Thesis

*Required seminar for all first-year MPH students (credit/no credit)

**Permission & supervision required. Ask director for details.

***Students must also pass a comprehensive exam in 2nd fall semester to advance to graduate project. Ask director for details.



Global Health Emphasis (GHE)

- HED 4340 Global Health
- HED 4341 Cross-Cultural Health Communication
- Global health focus in:
 - HED 5V94 Practicum
 - Graduate Project (HED 5V90 Internship or 5V99 Thesis)

Optional 15-credit hour emphasis within degree program. Electives, practicum, and culminating experience must have approved global health focus. Some international travel at student expense required. Visit with director prior to degree program entry.

Course sequence for 2-year program

Fall #1

- HED 5001*
- HED 5315
- HED 5334
- ENV 5302**

9 credit hours

Spring #1

- HED 5337
- HED 5350
- STA 5300

9 hours

Summer

- HED 5V94 Practicum**
- Elective
- HED 5379

9 hours

Fall #2

- HED 5360
- HED 5378
- Elective*

9 hours

Required comprehensive exam***

Spring #2

Graduate Project***
(HED 5V90 or HED 5V99;
6 credit /400 contact hours)

6 hours (less than full-time)***

*HED 5001 is a required professional seminar (credit/no credit). **ENV 5302 is offered every other year in the fall. Take elective in "off" year; ***Permission & supervision required; ***Students must pass a comprehensive exam in 2nd fall semester to advance to graduate project

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

MPH GTA Positions

Our program supports eight graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) who teach *HED 1145 Health and Human Behavior*, a personal health and wellness course. These MPH GTAs attend pre-semester orientations; teach four sections of HED 1145 per semester (fall/spring); maintain weekly office hours; attend instructor meetings; and work with other instructors to ensure quality and consistency in teaching, exams, and grading. MPH GTAs receive a monthly stipend for the fall/spring semesters during which they teach (no stipend for summers/non-teaching semesters). Full tuition remission for the master of public health degree in community health education is provided for GTAs who teach for at least three semesters during the 2-year program. (Tuition remission does *not* include student insurance, university fees, etc.) Teaching/stipends may NOT be available for the student's final spring semester, but tuition remission will still be awarded for the 6-credit hour graduate project.*

MPH GA Position

Our program supports one program graduate assistant (GA) who is responsible for a variety of program coordination and research responsibilities. The MPH GA works 20 hours per week under the supervision of the program director and faculty researchers in the program. Responsibilities include assistance with research-related tasks, document development, program evaluation, special program events, equipment inventory and maintenance, etc. The MPH GA position is a year-round position with a 12-month stipend and full tuition remission. This GA usually enters the degree program and completes HED 5329 the summer prior to her/his first fall semester (and only completes 6 credit hours in the following summer).*

* See *Course Sequence for 2-Year Program*.

** Access program application guidelines through the Baylor MPH program website: www.baylor.edu/hhpr/mph

***Assistantship applications are competitive. Take the GRE early! Apply early!

Hiring Schedules and Procedures

Our GTAs/GA move through our 2-year program in cohorts. A new cohort of four Health GTAs is employed every fall semester. A new Health GA is employed every other summer. A pool of eligible assistantship candidates is invited to interview in February/March for available summer (GA) and fall (GTA) positions. *Apply early!* All positions are usually filled by early April.**

Assistantship applicants are considered eligible for an interview if they:

- Have been officially and fully accepted by the Baylor Graduate School *and* the HHPR Department (home of the MPH program).***
- Have fully completed departmental assistantship application requirements.
- Are committed to the *full* 2-year program as a *full-time* student.

Applicants are *more likely* to be selected if they have:

- Completed an undergraduate degree in community health education or a related field.
- Experience in teaching and/or working with individuals or groups to promote learning and skills development.
- Demonstrated professional leadership, skills, and characteristics.
- Have a working knowledge of health and wellness concepts.
- Demonstrated strong academic abilities in undergraduate degree programs and through standardized tests (GRE).

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

1-Do I have to take the GRE?

Yes. We do not accept the MCAT.

2-Do I have to apply for the program through SOPHAS?

No. You only need to apply through the Baylor Graduate School and Department of Health, Human Performance, and Recreation (see page 7).

3-Are there any prerequisites for the MPH program?

No. Students receive all training needed to practice in the field within the program. Depending on your undergraduate training and previous experiences, your advisor *may* recommend a specific HED course for your one elective.

4-Is previous public health experience a requirement?

No. Students from a variety of backgrounds are welcome and have successfully completed the program.

5-Can I complete the program as a part-time student?

Yes. Part-time students are welcome. However, only full-time students are eligible for assistantships. Contact the program director for more details about part-time study.

6-Can I enter the program in the spring instead of the fall?

No. The required course sequence (page 6) is carefully designed to guide students through a developmental progression of study and practice experience. For this reason, students are only accepted for entry in the fall semester.

7-What is the difference between the practicum and internship?

They largely differ in credit/contact hours and when they are completed. The practicum (3 credit hours/200 contact hours) is completed the summer after *year 1* in the program (see page 6). The internship (6 credit hours/400 contact hours), is one of two options for the *graduate project*, which is completed in the final semester (spring of *year 2*). The practicum experience often helps students better design and prepare for their graduate project experience.

8-Do I have to do my practicum in Waco?

No. Many of our students engage in practicum experiences outside of the Waco area. However, you must be in Waco for the Summer I session to complete *HED 5379 Research Methods*. Students who participate in the optional *Baylor in Brazil* (BiB) summer study abroad program stay in Waco for the first summer session to complete research methods and preparatory work for the BiB program. They then travel to Brazil for the second summer session to complete their practicum and *HED 4340 Global Health* (restricted summer elective). Ask our program director about the exciting and innovative ways in which students have completed their practicum in various local, national, and international settings.

9-Do I have to do my internship in Waco?

No. Because it occurs in the final semester of the degree program, some students elect to complete the final culminating internship in another location. In fact, students electing to complete the optional global health emphasis within the degree program are expected to complete their internship in an international setting.

10-Is the program accredited?

Yes. The program is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH, www.ceph.org).

11-Why should I choose this degree program?

There are many reasons why students choose our Baylor MPH degree program. We've highlighted a few below.

- The public health profession and, particularly, our specialization in community health education is one of the fastest growing health-related professions in the country.
- Our faculty members serve as national leaders in professional certification, program accreditation, research, and professional practice. They are also highly committed to our students and program goals (see page 4).
- Our low faculty:student ratio, extensive practice opportunities, and assistantship support (with tuition remission) are exceptional by national standards.
- These benefits, and the unique opportunity to explore one's career as a vocation at Baylor University, render our degree program an invaluable opportunity.