

Examples of 2010 MPH Student Practicum Abstracts

The Capacity of a Statewide, Public Health, Non-Profit Organization to Reduce Preventable Illness and Early Death: Three Snapshots from NC Prevention Partners

NC Prevention Partners (Chapel Hill, NC)

Purpose: The NCPP Student Team will highlight ways that three different projects within one organization work together to effect health promotion in North Carolina, demonstrating the capacity of a statewide, public health, non-profit organization.

Partners: NC Prevention Partners (NCP) is a statewide, non-profit organization with a mission to reduce preventable illness and early death caused by tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity across North Carolina.

Description: The NCPP Student Team was involved in a wide-array of projects. For the purpose of this presentation, Team members will focus on the primary project of their practicum experiences.

- Worked with an assessment tool called WorkHealthy AmericaSM designed to help businesses assess their health promotion practices, to provide recommendations, and to create an action plan to improve wellness initiatives.
- Conducted qualitative interviews with school administrators about employee wellness to provide recommendations for Zone Health to create a school-specific WorkHealthy AmericaSM tool.
- Worked with the NC Healthy Hospitals initiative to create a tool similar to WorkHealthy AmericaSM to assist hospitals in developing a systems approach to tobacco cessation for patients.

Impact: Combined, the work of the NCPP Student Team impacted hospital patients; business owners; veterans; leaders of faith communities; teachers and students; and state, hospital, and business employees.

Lessons Learned: The NCPP Student Team learned that a culture of wellness is crucial to a productive and healthy work environment and can impact health outcomes on a broad scale. The Team learned the value of working on a multi-disciplinary team and that collaboration leads to high-quality outcomes. Most importantly, the Team observed how a statewide, non-profit organization can have substantial impacts on a range of health concerns.

Facilitating the Development of a Social Marketing Plan for Malaria Diagnosis and Treatment

Population Services International/Cambodia (Phnom Penh, Cambodia)

Purpose: Prompt diagnosis and effective treatment of malaria is crucial as multi-drug resistance is identified in more pockets of the country. The development of a comprehensive program plan will improve the quality and efficiency of project implementation of a social marketing program for early diagnosis and treatment.

Partners: Population Services International/Cambodia (PSI/C) provides high quality health products and services to the country's poor and vulnerable through social marketing programs.

Description: The malaria plan was developed collaboratively with local staff from many departments. Design was guided by PSI's "DELTA" process which provided the framework for the application of the "4 Ps" of marketing through the lens of situation analysis, audience identification and brand positioning exercises. Qualitative and quantitative data informed provider IUD tool designed within the framework of the Transtheoretical Model. Barriers and supporters of behavior were identified and addressed to provide maximum impact.

Impact: The malaria marketing plan process resulted in a practical one page summary of decisions made throughout the collaborative process. Additionally, departmental budgets and workplans were prepared to ensure adequately resourcing and monitoring of program activities.

Lessons Learned: A formalized process for program planning, allowed for input to the plan by all the relevant staff, ensuring higher ownership of the project. Critical analysis of the existing situation and program strengths and weaknesses resulted in repositioning of program focus.

Gender Equality and Organizational Change: Designing Gender Audit Tools and Evaluating Nursing Instructor Trainings.

IntraHealth International (Chapel Hill, NC)

Purpose: Gender disparities greatly contribute to international health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, and reproductive options. In response, IntraHealth International integrates gender equality into their programs. The purpose of my first project was to design gender audit tools that could be used by organizations to assess the state of gender equality within their policies, procedures, organizational culture, and programs. The purpose of my second project was to conduct an evaluation of family planning and gender trainings for nursing instructors in Malawi.

Partners: Julie Chiluwe, Nina Frankel, Virginia Hight, Alice Kudango, Catherine Murphy, Constance Newman, and the Malawi Team.

Description: To construct the gender audit protocol and tools, I reviewed literature and existing tools relating to gender audit methodology. I designed three tools to collect different types of data from an organization: an employee survey, document review and focus group interview guidelines. To conduct the nursing instructor training evaluation, I reviewed the training material; wrote evaluation protocol, interview guides and informed consents; and collaborated with my partners to edit and finalize evaluation materials. Malawi-based program staff collected the evaluation data and sent it to the Chapel Hill office. I analyzed the data and drafted a paper on the evaluation results with Virginia Hight and with input from other technical specialists and the Malawi program staff.

Impact: The gender audit tools will be adapted and used by IntraHealth partner organizations in Zambia and Uganda. Data from the training evaluations demonstrate that: 1) the information from both trainings was new, relevant, and, at times, transformative, 2) participants are using the material in teaching students and their colleagues, and 3) participants need further support.

Lessons Learned: I learned how to conduct an evaluation from beginning to end, how to work on international public health projects while being US-based, and how to integrate gender equality into different types of projects.

Evaluation of Youth Physical Activity and Nutrition Programs: Safe Routes to School and “Drink Water!” Said the Otter

San Francisco Department of Health (San Francisco, CA)

Purpose: Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and “Drink Water!” Said the Otter (DWSTO) target physical activity and nutrition in early childhood. The SRTS campaign promotes walking and biking to and from school, and DWSTO seeks to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. This evaluation project was conducted in order to inform program development and dissemination.

Partners: Housed within the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the Shape Up San Francisco Coalition focuses on increasing physical activity and improving nutrition in order to reduce health disparities in chronic diseases.

Description: I conducted analysis of SRTS data to evaluate changes in student travel mode and parental attitudes towards walking/biking in the five participating public elementary schools during the 2009-10 academic year. To inform the development of a distribution and evaluation plan for the Spanish language version of DWSTO, I convened a group of stakeholders with experience working with Spanish-speaking children in San Francisco.

Impact: In the data analysis of SRTS parent questionnaires, more parents reported that schools were encouraging and children were enjoying walking/biking to and from school. While there was no change in students walking and biking, it may take longer for the program to affect travel behaviors. Stakeholder involvement ensured that the DWSTO Spanish materials were distributed to child care facilities, health clinics, and public schools that serve Spanish-speaking children. The evaluation plan involved development of surveys and focus group guides. These

tools will be used with providers and parents to assess how the books were received and to improve the DWSTO materials in the future.

Lessons Learned: During the practicum experience, I was able to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods in evaluation. I learned that it is essential to incorporate evaluation into the design of any program and to involve stakeholders in the process.

Trouble in Paradise: Stemming the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Belize

Belize Red Cross Society (Belize City, Belize)

Purpose: Belize's HIV/AIDS epidemic has seen an unprecedented rise over the past few decades, from an estimated 3 cases in 1986 to 4,131 cases by the end of 2007. Currently, the country is ranked first in Central America for rate of HIV/AIDS infection per capita, and being sparsely populated it is seriously vulnerable to loss of human and economic capital thus correct implementation and evaluation of existing programs is essential.

Partners: The Belize Red Cross Society (BRC) as the practicum site; Professor Eugenia Eng as Academic Adviser; and Center for Global Initiatives (CGI) as the main funding source.

Description: As part of my summer practicum experience, I facilitated regional HIV/AIDS workshops using the *Together We Can* (TWC) program—an evidence-based HIV/AIDS peer education program—and worked with members of the Belize Red Cross Society's HIV/AIDS taskforce to review and make recommendations to the TWC curricula and evaluation methods. I also developed, conducted, and analyzed three surveys in preparation for future projects of the Belize Red Cross Society (BRC):

- A Quality of Life (QoL) survey for attendees of an existing social assistance program (mostly homeless persons) in preparation for a pilot Wellness Center to be established at the BRC headquarters
- A Quality of Life survey for BRC staff in preparation for a future Worksite Wellness program at the BRC headquarters.
- A HIV/AIDS KAPB (Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Beliefs) assessment to taxi drivers in preparation for future workshops preparing them as lay health advisers.

Impact: The BRC got approved for another round of funding from the Global Fund, thus were able to afford hiring a consultant to 'Belizeanize' the TWC training material. Currently, the main office is using the questionnaire developed over the summer to survey not only taxi drivers from regions other than Belize City but also commercial sex workers, LGBTIQ populations, and out of school youth in preparation for lay health advisor trainings. A pilot of the Wellness Center is currently underway at the headquarters providing Diabetes and Blood Pressure check ups: staff are being trained and the BRC is trying to get local doctors to volunteer so as to expand services to include ear/eye checkups, substance abuse consultations, and other issues identified in the needs assessment.

Lessons Learned:

- Needs assessments are essential!
- Organizational culture may make or break program implementation activities
- Be flexible and never expect everything to run smoothly
- Explore! Meet new people! Have exotic meals! Have fun!

Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of Substance Abuse Services in Durham, NC

The Durham Center LME (Durham, NC)

Purpose: To design and conduct a multi-method evaluation of substance abuse services in Durham, NC, overseen by The Durham Center.

Partners: We worked with Dr. Lena Klumper, the Director of Quality, Research & Development at The Durham Center LME. Through the LME, we were able to engage the 5 major substance abuse agencies serving Durham in this voluntary evaluation, including Healing with CAARE; Triumph, LLC; BAART; The Freedom House; and TROSA.

Description: With Dr. Klumper, we developed the study design and data collection instruments and engaged the major substance abuse agencies in Durham. We then recruited participants and collected the quantitative and qualitative data, which was submitted to The Durham Center along with a brief report.

Impact: The Durham Center will use the collected data to improve their services to better fit the needs of consumers. The data will also be used as baseline data for future evaluations of agencies.

Lessons Learned: Over the course of the study, we learned a great deal about the substance abuse population and the barriers faced by both them and the agencies which serve them. Some skills we were able to refine include networking, engaging community partners, and practicing and refining our qualitative interviewing skills. We are both analyzing the data in the Advanced Qualitative Analysis class and are fortunate to be able to see the process of qualitative research through from design to paper. Finally, we learned a new appreciation for transcription.

Development of a Department of Health Services (DHS) Website Addressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Health Disparities and Health Resources in Wisconsin

AIDS/HIV Program, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (Madison, Wisconsin)

Purpose: Following improvements in the ability to collect population-level data on LGBT health, researchers have been able to conclude more definitively that LGBT individuals experience adverse health outcomes in comparison to their non-LGBT counterparts. However, few state health departments have central offices through which to disseminate LGBT health data, and many publicly funded disease prevention and health promotion programs do not successfully reach and serve LGBT people. One of the primary purposes of this practicum was to assist the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) in developing a website designed to increase public knowledge about the state's LGBT health disparities and LGBT health resources.

Partners: Partners include the Wisconsin HIV Outreach Project (University of Wisconsin, Madison) and Wisconsin AIDS/HIV Program (Wisconsin State Division of Public Health). Six local Wisconsin LGBT community centers also provided project input.

Description: Creating the content and design for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services LGBT Health website was a multi-part process that included: familiarizing myself with local and national data on LGBT health disparities; benchmarking existing LGBT health resources in Wisconsin and the United States; assessing how governmental and non-governmental entities in Wisconsin and other jurisdictions use websites to address health issues for LGBT and racial and ethnic minority populations; soliciting input on website content from Wisconsin LGBT community centers; assimilating findings to devise content for the DHS LGBT health website; using website design principles to devise a website structure; collaborating with a biomedical information specialist to create the website in FrontPage; and initializing an institutional review process to gain authorization for website deployment.

Lessons Learned: As a result of completing this practicum, I increased my knowledge about LGBT health disparities and health resources and gained technical experience in creating a health-related website. Additionally, I learned how to incorporate stakeholders' disparate ideas and opinions into one coherent project. I also had the opportunity to observe the process through which a large governmental public health organization was able to navigate institutional and political barriers to provide important health information to the public. Finally, I gained insight into the benefits of working in public health at the government level, which will inform my career path.

Growing Healthy Kids: Using Community Gardens to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Low-Income, Latino and Burmese Immigrant Children and Their Families

Growing Healthy Kids Project, Orange County Partnership for Young Children (Carrboro, NC)

Purpose: The Growing Healthy Kids project has developed three model community gardens in Carrboro. These community gardens provide predominantly low-income, Latino and Burmese immigrant children and their families the opportunity to grow and eat healthy produce and to participate in nutritional education activities. The overall project goal is to reverse the trend of childhood obesity, particularly for low-income, minority children, through increasing knowledge and changing families' food environments. The 300 hour practicum was targeted at providing theory-driven children's activities to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity.

Partners: The project, Growing Healthy Kids, is administered by the Orange County Partnership for Young Children and currently funded by a Robert Wood Johnson Salud America grant.

Description: The practicum activities expanded programming by providing nutritional and physical activity lessons for children, creating and distributing garden and health information to parents through a newsletter, coordinating family events, and creating a resource manual for project staff.

Impact: The practicum activities are on-going, though focus groups with parents revealed that they felt the program improved family diets, physical activity, and helped save money.

Lessons Learned: Throughout the summer there were several important lessons learned including: Flexibility is the most important skill to have in a garden-based project; Children's programming in the garden should take advantage of the setting and be interactive; Weather does not always cooperate. 100 degree weather is not good for the plants or physical activity lesson plans; Working on a multi-lingual project poses a unique set of challenges; Program goals and expectations need to be clearly defined and communicated to garden families.

Developing a Public Health Approach to Preventing the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education (Chapel Hill, NC)

Purpose: Internet child exploitation (ICE) is a widespread global problem, affecting thousands of children, resulting in emotional distress, depression, decreased self-esteem and greater likelihood of sexual violence later in life. Public health principles provide new ways of thinking about the prevention of ICE, an issue that has been addressed primarily through psychology and law enforcement strategies. This project, presenting a public health approach to ICE prevention, can be integrated into current practice in order to develop a more comprehensive approach than has previously been implemented.

Partners: I worked with Dr. Kurt Ribisl, Dr. Des Runyan, Dr. Carol Runyan, and J'Ingrid Mathis, representing the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, the Department of Social Medicine at the UNC School of Medicine, and the UNC Injury Prevention Research Center.

Description: A public health approach to ICE prevention was developed through the use of fundamental public health frameworks and models. We conducted a literature review in order to gain a greater understanding of ICE, current prevention strategies in the field, and how public health approaches have been utilized to address similar health issues. We developed models to show how public health principles can be implemented to address this issue. This information will be included in a book chapter to be included in an interdisciplinary book about the prevention of online child abuse. (Quayle, E. & Ribisl, K.M. (Eds.). *Internet Child Pornography: understanding and preventing on-line child abuse*. Devon, United Kingdom: Willan Publishing.)

Impact: Public health principles, such as population approaches, primary prevention, and addressing environmental determinants of health are an important addition to the field of ICE prevention. These concepts can guide practitioners to strategies preventing exploitation by working to ensure a safer environment for all children.