

North Carolina Institute of Public Health Practicums

Hear about Amanda Kwong's Experience

"I am in the Leadership in Practice concentration as an MPH@UNC student. I work full-time as a Campaign Manager at the Ad Council in Washington D.C., a nonprofit organization that produces, distributes, and promotes public service announcements. When looking for a summer practicum, I had to make sure the opportunity provided me with a thorough understanding of public health best practices (since I am currently trained as a marketing and advertising professional) while also continuing to balance this opportunity with work and school.

I was lucky enough to be placed with the [North Carolina Institute of Public Health](#) (NCIPH), part of the Gillings school that leverages faculty to support best practices for health-adjacent institutions in North Carolina. It provides training and professional development courses, conducts community assessments, and provides leadership development courses. I had John Wallace as my preceptor throughout the duration of the program. I also got to interface with a few other folks on the team, a few whom also received their MPHs degrees from the Gillings School of Global Public Health. From my first meeting with the team, I knew this was the practicum site where I wanted to spend my summer.



During my practicum, I supported the development of a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for the Mahoning and Trumbull counties in Ohio. This CHNA aimed to identify underserved populations and unmet needs of these communities to guide stakeholders towards prioritizing available resources to meet these needs. I had the pleasure of working on two distinct projects. One was to assist with the development of CHA and CHIP reports. The other was to develop public facing fact sheets about the CHA/P findings. It was exciting to see processes I had been exposed to in my previous semesters, as well as my current semester (I was enrolled in SPGH 791: the Leadership in Practice course taught by Dr. Sharon Loza). For example, when we were working on the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in late-July, around that same time, I was learning about Turn the Curve thinking, a results-based accountability exercise. This activity serves as a natural step following the CHNA, to help ground key stakeholders and community members on the action plan following the CNHA. It was extremely gratifying to make connections between class and practicum, and seeing it play out in practice. Working as a student assistant this summer at NCIPH was a terrific experience and reinforced my growing passion and commitment to growing my leadership in the public health community."

Hear about Sara Moreno's Experience

"This summer I worked with the [North Carolina Institute for Public Health](#) to create a Community Health Assessment (CHA) Toolkit/Framework for their Community Assessment and Strategy Team. This toolkit helped serve as a knowledge sharing platform for NCIPH to conduct CHAs more efficiently by outlining the Institute's internal processes, best used practices, timelines, roles, responsibilities, and resources. During this process I worked with the different groups within the Community Assessment and Strategy Team to collect the forementioned data. I really enjoyed the process of working with the different teams to create the framework where everyone brought their ideas to the meetings, and we were able to collaborate. We were able to create a toolkit that was adaptable to different CHA's needs and that incorporated the team's ideas. By creating the CHA toolkit, I was able to draft a proposal for a Duke Endowment to be able to scale up part of the toolkit which would give local health departments access to knowledge and resources on how to collect, analyze and interpret primary data to be able to better identify priority populations in need of help, which tend to be historically excluded populations. By identifying these populations, the counties will be able to create a more effective and inclusive CHIP."



Hear about Emma Landau's Experience

"This summer, I worked with the community assessment strategy team for the New Hanover community health needs assessment for the [North Carolina Institute for Public Health](#) (NCIPH). With my preceptor, I attended and took notes for all of the community conversations, which happened in various places in New Hanover County and consisted of various groups of priority populations. From the notes, I created summary sheets which were reviewed and shared to the citizens of New Hanover County.

The second part of my practicum consisted of writing a section of the community health assessment report. I researched history, analyzed data, then created the district profile section of the report.

Overall, this was a great experience and really helped me advance in my public health knowledge. This practicum was integral in assisting me to find my place within the public health field."



Hear about Maggie Cremin's Experience

"I completed my practicum with the [North Carolina Institute for Public Health](#), which oversees the North Carolina Local Health Department (NCLHD) Accreditation Program. The NCLHD Accreditation Program seeks to assure and enhance the quality of local public health in North Carolina by promoting the implementation of activities for local public health departments and evaluating and accrediting local health departments on their ability to meet those activities. The NCLHD Accreditation Program staff provides resources and consulting to support all of North Carolina's local health departments in meeting the state's accreditation guidelines. Maintaining accreditation is an ongoing cycle with each department completing the reaccreditation process every four years. My practicum included two specific deliverables: a resource guide to inform phase 3 strategic plan objectives and next steps, and a communication plan to solicit local health departments' feedback on accreditation program revisions. The resource guide compiles phase 1 strategic plan feedback, Accreditation Administrator comments, and crosswalks with national public health frameworks. It also includes draft recommendations for phase 3 program revisions. The resource guide is used by NCLHD Accreditation Program staff and a Standards Workgroup composed of accreditation program participants and local health department staff. The purpose of the communication plan is to reach the largest number of accreditation program participants to receive the broadest input, and particularly target subgroups who may have had low response rates in the past. This information will be used to inform how the NCLHD Accreditation Program staff proceeds in implementing phase 3 of its strategic plan.

Through my practicum experience, I applied leadership, governance, and management principles by organizing our twice monthly meetings, preparing materials for the workgroup's review, facilitating meetings, and tracking and revising recommendations in a resource guide. In addition, I gained more insight into the daily operations, public health programming, and opportunities for improvement in local health departments in North Carolina. I also learned best practices and methods for broad survey distribution and high survey response rates and how to adapt those methods to the local health department setting.

I will continue supporting the NCLHD Accreditation Program's phase 3 strategic planning through the 2022-2023 academic year. I look forward to continuing my work with the Standards Workgroup to implement meaningful change in the NCLHD Accreditation Program, so it provides more value to local health departments and helps them be better prepared to respond to public health needs in their communities."



Governor's Crime Commission Practicum

Hear about Mikayla Welch's Experience

"For the duration of my practicum I had the privilege to work with [Dr. VanDeinse](#) as my preceptor, a Research Associate Professor at UNC-CH School of Social Work, on an interdisciplinary team from the UNC-CH School of Social Work and the UNC-CH Gillings School of Global Public Health contracted by the [Governor's Crime Commission](#) (GCC) to complete a comprehensive assessment of service needs for victims of crime in North Carolina. This needs assessment focuses on services needed by and available to victims of crime in the state with the ultimate goal of providing recommendations to the GCC on how best to improve services and service access. For this study the GCC is specifically focusing on victims of crime in underserved populations. The data collection for this assessment will include an organizational survey of crime victim services providers and culturally specific organizations, a web-based resource inventory, semi-structure interview of victim service providers and advocates, and a survey of victims of crime. I had the opportunity to assist with the data collection and analyses on the interviews with service providers and advocates and draft a preliminary report to effectively communicate the key findings back to the team, and eventually to the GCC.



During my time on the team, I had the opportunity to expand on my current skills and gain new ones that will be essential in my future success in the Public Health Field. I had the opportunity to explore different rapid qualitative analysis approaches to determine the best option for the project and gain new skills in creating the qualitative analysis tools necessary to complete data collection and analysis. I was also able to focus on growing my leadership and program management skills through making decisions on the qualitative data process, delegating tasks amongst the team, and assisting with facilitating meetings. Through completing these tasks, I had the opportunity to learn different program management software and techniques in order to ensure the project remained on track with the timeline I created. My practicum experience did not go without challenges as my team, and I were forced to change and adapt approaches, timelines, and deliverables multiple times in order to be more effective in our assessment. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial skills for Public Health professionals as we must be ready to face challenges and constant change, and this practicum has provided me with experience in just that.

Since completing my practicum with this team over the summer I have been asked to remain on the team as a Research Assistant for the GCC project. This has granted me the opportunity to continue to expand my leadership skills with more project management responsibilities while also continuing to assist with the qualitative analysis and creation of different deliverables for the GCC and distribution to the community."

Smart Start and North Carolina Partnership for Children Practicum

Hear about Madeline Stutz's Experience

"My practicum experience was hosted by [Smart Start and North Carolina Partnership for Children](#) based out of Raleigh, NC. Smart Start is a non-profit organization that works to increase the quality of education, support families, advance child health, and expand literacy in counties across North Carolina using public health skills and practices. During the onboarding period, my preceptor and I discussed that my practicum products would focus on nutrition, outdoor learning, physical activity, and Technical Assistance Providers (TAs) capacity. The TAs of Smart Start partake in a wide variety of responsibilities, such as implementation, communication, teaching, and connecting the organization, stakeholders, and resources.

My first practicum product focused on the importance of framing public health issues appropriately to stakeholders and recommendations for integrating nutrition and outdoor learning into early childhood care settings. Since Smart Start employees come from diverse educational backgrounds, this product aimed to explain the significance of framing and to put context to public health problems.

My second practicum product concentrated on building the capacity and growth of all TAs in the organization, specifically regarding nutrition, physical activity, and outdoor learning, by creating a data collection tool to interview TAs. TAs have a wide range of responsibilities; therefore, the data collection tool is diverse in its application and can be used as a foundational tool to build on."



NC State's SNAP Education Program Practicum

Hear about Alexa Moberley's Experience

"I worked with [NC State's SNAP Education program](#) called [Steps to Health](#), which promotes healthy eating behaviors and food resource management strategies to youth, adults, and communities. The program collaborates with organizations in the community to expand access to healthy food and physical activity in the community. The goal of SNAP Ed is to improve the likelihood that a person eligible for SNAP will make informed healthy food choices and choose a physically active lifestyle on a limited budget. I worked on two projects this summer: one was the creation of a toolkit for NC State Cooperative Extension agents across the state of North Carolina can use for individuals in their community that are in a transitional living situation, whether that be sheltered or unsheltered. Sheltered homeless is when someone lives in an emergency shelter, domestic abuse housing, RV, etc. Unsheltered homeless is when someone is seeking shelter in a place that is not ordinarily used for shelter, such as a park bench or in a tent under a bridge. The goal of this toolkit is to provide NC State Family and Consumer Science Program Agents with accessible information and evidence-based resources to enhance the lives of individuals in transitional living. The information here addresses best practices, common challenges for this population, frequently asked questions, and additional resources. Secondly, I worked on another project at The Galley food store in Raleigh, NC. The Galley grocery store was created by the Ship of Zion church in 2014 to provide low-cost groceries in the South Park, Raleigh area. This area was considered a food desert due to the lack of transportation and that the closest grocery store at the time was 6.7 miles away. This food store initially started as a 'corner food store' and served hot dogs and sodas. When Steps to Health partnered with The Galley a few years ago, the goal was to put healthier food and beverage options in the store. Over the summer, I helped The Galley move their items to their new location, assisted with the implementation of an on-site garden, improved their nutrition inventory, organized shelving, and set up nutrition education materials."

NC TRANSITIONAL LIVING RESOURCES

Resources for sheltered and unsheltered individuals living in North Carolina.

Education: 

North Carolina Homeless Education Program
Website: <https://hepnc.uncg.edu>

- The North Carolina Homeless Education Program provides technical assistance to North Carolina's local homeless education liaisons. The program also provides informational and awareness materials to educators and other interested community members throughout North Carolina.

General: 

NC Coalition to End Homelessness

- Housing/shelter, food, healthcare

The Salvation Army

- Food pantry, shelter, domestic abuse, rehabilitation, & job training

Transportation: 

Public Transportation Local Transit
<https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/public-transit/Pages/local-transit-search.aspx>

Resource Locator: <https://resources.hud.gov>

- Locates
- Affordable Housing Opportunities
- HUD Offices
- Local Public Housing Authority/Agency
- Homeless Resources, Homeless Referral Contacts
- Affordable Elderly and Special Needs Housing

Food: 

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (NC-CACFP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Food Banks

Scan here! 

NC STATE EXTENSION This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. 

Chatham Health Alliance Practicum

Hear about Maddie Roberts' Experience

"This summer, I had the opportunity to work as a public health intern with the [Chatham Health Alliance](#). The Chatham Health Alliance (the Alliance) is a collaborative of local professionals and community members working together to improve health and well-being in Chatham County. The mission of the Alliance is to bring together traditional and nontraditional partners to work on issues affecting health in Chatham County, with a primary focus on the health priorities identified every three years in the Community Health Assessment. Per the 2021 Chatham County Community Assessment, Alliance members are currently focusing on the following health priorities: mental health and substance abuse, transportation, and employment. The vision of the Alliance is an active, thriving community for Chatham County where all residents achieve optimal health. Throughout my practicum, I was glad to work with the Alliance to complete the following tasks:



- Developed an NCCARE360 pilot program implementation plan for Chatham County.
 - Launched in 2020, NCCARE360 is the first statewide network in North Carolina linking health care and human services providers to one another with a shared technology platform. When properly implemented and utilized within a community, NCCARE360 connects health care providers, social services, and patients on a platform that prioritizes whole person-centered care. As of June 2022, Chatham County is one of the lowest performing counties utilizing the Unite Us NCCARE360 platform within an 18-county region. Recognizing the potential for greater utilization of NCCARE360, Alliance leadership asked me to develop a pilot program implementation plan to increase the utilization of the NCCARE360 throughout Chatham County. Developing the implementation plan required me to talk with partners who are integral to the success of NCCARE360 in Chatham County, research and understand existing barriers to NCCARE360 within Chatham County, and analyze county- and regional-level data. The implementation plan compiles all that I learned this summer and provides Alliance staff with the information and resources needed to successfully implement the pilot program. Some primary goals of the implementation plan are to inform Alliance staff on the purpose of NCCARE360, identify why NCCARE360 is underutilized in Chatham, establish realistic outcomes for the pilot program, communicate with pilot program participants, provide recommendations for program success, and more.
- Identified grant opportunities and submitted grant proposals related to Chatham Health Alliance capacity building and Resource Hub growth.
 - In May of 2022, the Alliance became an independent nonprofit, allowing them to seek out grant opportunities. Throughout the summer, I researched and compiled 20 viable grant applications and applied to two. If funded, the two grants will support internal strategic development and the Alliance's Community Resource Hub.
- Supported administrative tasks within the Alliance, such as membership engagement, meeting facilitation, and strategic development.
 - Finally, this summer I was able to provide administrative support to the Alliance. Primarily, I was able to work closely with each Alliance subcommittee as they established their action plans based on the top three health priorities identified within the Chatham County Community Assessment.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to have worked with the Alliance this summer, and I'm eager to remain involved in the work they're accomplishing throughout Chatham County. Finally, thank you to the PField Innovation Lab team for the role they played in providing funding for my practicum experience!"

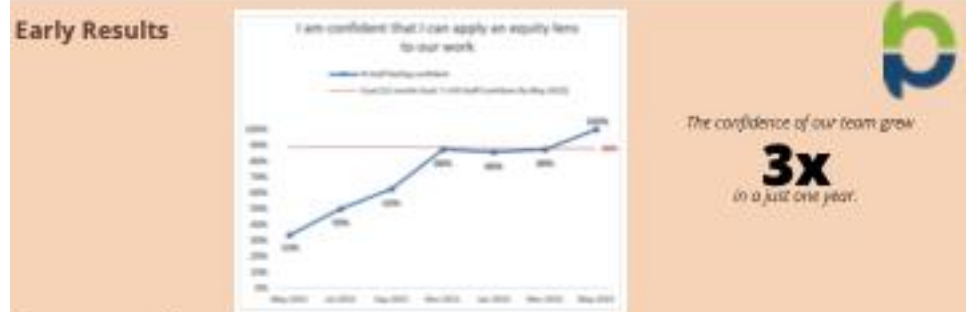
Population Health Improvement Partners Practicum

Hear about Ashleigh Olin's Experience

"My practicum was completed with [Population Health Improvement Partners](#). I spent about 3 months working with my preceptor, Trissa, and the rest of the team. The work they focus on is using quality improvement tools to help other organizations reach bigger goals. I was able to complete two products while conducting my practicum: an infographic that included the facilitators the partners used to not only get their work done, but to deal with the stress that comes with their work, both in their field and in their personal lives, also, a PowerPoint that included a compilation of common quality improvement tools used often in their work.

I truly appreciated and was so grateful to have a preceptor like Trissa. We met every week and kept a consistent and effective line of communication going when it came to the meetings, deadlines, and the products. She was very hands-on and super involved with the work I had to do in addition to her work. She made this practicum feel more like a pleasure rather than "work," from the conversations we had to the grace she gave me with getting the work done and just being understanding to whatever I had going on. The rest of the team were very cooperative and receptive to me and the work I was trying to do, and they made the time to meet with me when it came down to me conducting interviews for my products and we had very good conversations as well and I appreciate them for providing me with a comfortable, free space to ask the questions I needed to ask.

Throughout my practicum, I was able to see how close and tightknit of a team Population Health Improvement Partners are and how I think any other organization can learn from them, but also allow them to help with their goals and issues are and I truly enjoyed completing my practicum there."



- How we got there**
The team met a minimum of twice a month engaging in activities and conversations that utilized both our heads and hearts.
- Met in pairs to grow relationships across difference using guided discussion questions.
 - Explored our experiences in our various dominant and non-dominant identities.
 - Committed to grace with self and grace with others.
 - Reviewed definitions.
 - Conducted organizational equity assessment.
 - Revised our strategy, identity, and website language.
 - Identified measures to track progress.
 - Committed to a learning lens.
 - Sought new work and integrated existing work with explicit equity focus.
 - Continually upgraded our tools and methods to infuse equitable approaches.