The Community Health Track of the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program at Touro University California provides students with a broad-based foundation in the fundamentals of public health. This training prepares students to eventually take positions in a variety of organizations that support and promote public health, including: county health departments, hospitals, voluntary health agencies, and non-profit organizations. The main objectives of the Community Health Track are:

• Prepare individuals for careers in community and public health organizations, within the framework of legal, ethical, moral and professional standards.

• Prepare students to identify the environmental, psychological, social, biological, and public policy factors that shape the health of individuals and populations.

• Prepare students to take action to ameliorate the factors that negatively influence health status and promote those that are health-enhancing.

• Prepare students to respond to the health needs of communities, especially those communities that face unique vulnerabilities.

• Encourage the development of a life-long commitment to intellectual inquiry, self-directed learning, and professional growth.

Curriculum

A total of 42 units is required for the Community Health Track. The core public health curriculum is comprised of the following courses:

• Behavioral and Social Aspects of Public Health (3 units)
• Biostatistics (3 units)
• Epidemiology (3 units)
• Health Policy & Management (3 units)
• Environmental Health (3 units)

This base of knowledge in the core components of public health are complimented with the following courses that provide specialized tools for assessing and addressing the health needs of the public:

► Health Education and Promotion (3 Units):
An introductory understanding of the basic concepts, skills, models and resources currently utilized in the field of health education and promotion.

► Health Disparities & Community Organizing (3 Units):
Examination of the contextual factors of primary health care and health disparities within the US.

► Program Evaluation and Needs Assessment (3 Units):
An introduction to evaluation methodology and evaluation tools commonly used to assess programs.

► Research Methodology (1 Unit):
Interdisciplinary research methodologies widely used in the social sciences and public health prevention studies.
Culminating Experience

After completing an additional 10 units of elective courses, students proceed to the culminating experiences, comprised of the Public Health Field Study (400 hours) and the Capstone courses. Students in the Joint MSPAS/MPH and dual degree programs will be granted waivers that reduce the number of required hours for the field study from 400 to 200 field training hours.

During the Public Health Field Study, students participate in the application and integration of the skills and knowledge acquired during their graduate didactic coursework. Students in the Community Health Track are required to conduct their field studies under the guidance of site preceptors and course coordinators at affiliated public health organizations, hospitals, managed care organizations, government agencies, health departments, community organizations, and advocacy programs. Students not only have the opportunity to take their classroom learning to the “field,” but from the field experience gain an enhanced understanding about how ideas concerning the promotion of health and well-being are translated into programs of action that benefit communities.

The field study is followed by the Capstone Course -- the integration of coursework and field experience. Students may choose a singular applied project, consisting of a formal written manuscript and public presentation; or a comprehensive exam that demonstrates the student's mastery of and ability to integrate core public health principles and to apply this understanding to issues that may confront public health professionals.

Community Health Career Opportunities

A number of rewarding career opportunities will be available for graduates of the PH Program Community Health Track. Graduates complete the program with knowledge and skills that are adaptable to many settings including:

Government Agencies: Those with an MPH may find employment working in many different capacities addressing the health of populations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and State, County, and City Departments of Health. Depending on the level of the organization (national or local) graduates may work on a range of public health issues and have a variety of responsibilities, focusing in issues as diverse as funding for HIV/AIDS surveillance, education, and services; violence prevention, and nutrition-related policy.

Voluntary Health Agencies: Voluntary health agencies include such major organizations as the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association, but may also include smaller, community-based health advocacy organizations. The community health specialist may assume a wide variety of responsibilities in voluntary agencies, including collaborating with local health departments, hospitals, and other voluntary agencies to deliver educational programs.

Health Care Settings: These may include hospitals and community health clinics. Graduates may work in programs dealing with disorders, such as diabetes and heart disease and other programs such as weight reduction, smoking cessation, health screenings and to provide programs in health maintenance and disease prevention.

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