



Public Health

Education

The minimal educational requirement is a baccalaureate degree from an accredited public health program. Many universities and colleges have a menu of options for individuals interested in public health: Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, Doctorate of Public Health (DrPH degree) and dual degrees such as MD/MPH, MSN/MPH, JD/MPH, OT/MPH, and MBA/MPH. Currently, there are 40 accredited schools and 69 public health programs. For more information, visit <http://www.ceph.org>.

Certifications

The certification exam in public health (CEPH) is administered to individuals awarded either a Masters or Doctoral degrees from schools and programs of public health accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) (<http://www.nbphe.org/FAQs.cfm#Required>). Interested practitioners with a special interest in health education may also receive a specialty certification in Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) established by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc. (NCHEC) (<http://www.nche.org/>).

Roles and functions

Public Health is one of the most diverse professions with a mission to improve the health communities and individuals. Through an interdisciplinary approach, public health practitioners address complex issues of population and communities concerns through the following areas:

- Monitor health status to identify community health problems

- Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
- Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
- Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

(The Ten Essential Public Health Services* Adopted: Fall 1994, Source: Public Health Functions Steering Committee, Members (July 1995).

- Administrator, researcher and educator are additional potential roles.

Practice settings

Graduated public health practitioners may choose to practice in various settings. This includes but not limited to: federal, state and/or local government, non-profit organizations, voluntary organizations, professional organizations, health insurance companies (public or

private), elementary/middle/high schools, academic institutions, work-sites, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies (www.asph.org/).

Some examples of practice settings (www.asph.org/):

- STDs prevention programs for high school students and adults to prevent the spread of diseases
- Regulation of prescription drugs for safety and effectiveness
- Safety standards and practices to protect worker health and safety
- Ensuring access to clean water and air
- Educational campaigns to reduce tobacco use among adults
- School nutrition programs to ensure kids have access to nutritious food
- Chronic disease prevention program (diabetes, stroke prevention, cardiovascular disease, healthy living) for adults and senior citizens
- Work-sites health promotion programs
- Developing public health policies

Association links:

American Public Health Association: www.apha.org

Council on Education for Public Health: www.ceph.org

Link to TJU education program

<http://www.jefferson.edu/mph/>