



College of Health and Social Services

Office of the Dean
MSC 3446
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 3001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
Tel: 575-646-3526
Fax: 575-646-6166

Careers in Community Health

Community and Public Health involves education and promoting healthy behaviors.

- health protection
- community health prevention

Public Health professionals work to promote healthy behaviors, protect health, strengthen community prevention and ensure access to quality health care for all.

Public Health helps improve the health and well being of people not only in this country but around the world. It's a field that is growing and thriving. Perhaps never before has there been a more exciting time to pursue a career in public health.

Why? Because...health services delivery systems are undergoing rapid change. Greater emphasis is being placed on health promotion and disease prevention as a means to reduce the costs of care by improving the health of our populations.

These changes and many other advances in development and application of population based safety and prevention programs create a broad array of opportunities for professionals with training in public health.

There are several public health career options in:

- health education/health and social behavior
- community health
- school health
- parental and child health
- patient educator
- epidemiology
- infectious disease
- environmental health/sanitation
- public health nutrition
- biostatistics

The Community Health Educator may work in programs such as:

- stress management
- fitness

- sexual health,
- substance abuse
- gerontology
- border health
- worksite health and safety promotion
- health administration

Public Health involves the coordination of knowledge and practice among all these disciplines to promote and protect the health of individuals and our population. Public Health professionals typically specialize and pursue career opportunities in one or more of these disciplines. They often obtain a masters in public health (MPH) degree, a joint degree with another field (public policy, social work, business) or a doctorate degree. Many physicians obtain an MPH either before, during or after medical school because they want to have a broader impact on the health of the population.

Public Health Professionals work in a wide variety of settings including:

- public health departments-local, state and federal government
- hospitals
- community clinics
- academic or research institutions
- tribal entities
- community based not-for-profit health organizations
- bio-technology firms
- Center for Disease Control

Public Health Professionals try to make a difference in critical public health issues such as HIV/AIDS, disease prevention, reduction in the incidence of major diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease, infant mortality, obesity, immunizations, health disparities and bio-terrorism preparedness. They may work on these and other critical issues both domestically and internationally.

What Skills are Important?

What skills does a health educator need to be effective?

In addition to being knowledgeable in their subject, health educators must have the ability to communicate, inspire trust and confidence, and the ability to motivate as well as understand their emotional needs. They must be able to recognize and respond to individual differences, and employ different teaching methods (know your audience, especially their literacy level and determine the best methods of instruction that will result in the highest achievement). They should be highly organized, dependable, patient, and creative.

You will be successful in Community Health (CHL) if you enjoy

- health education
- health maintenance

- health promotion
- disease prevention
- organizing and coordinating
- public speaking and teaching