BEHAVIORAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

School of Public Health
1234 School of Public Health Building
Phone: 301-405-2463
behavioralandcommunityhealth@umd.edu

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Tracy Zeeger, Ph.D.
(tzeeger@umd.edu)

The Bachelor of Science in Public Health Practice prepares students to
effectively plan, develop, implement and evaluate community health
education programs. Students in this program are exposed to material in
health behavior, community health research, biostatistics, epidemiology,
grant writing, health communication and professional development.

Behavioral and community health uses an ecological framework to
identify the causes of and solutions for inequalities in the health of
individuals, groups, and communities. The process of promoting health
for all individuals is viewed as complex and multidimensional, thus it
requires the perspectives of many stakeholder groups. Practitioners
and researchers in this public health field use theory, evidence-based
practices, and community-based strategies to improve health and
well-being. By understanding the different aspects of behavioral and
community health, students are able to actively engage with communities
to develop approaches and solutions to everyday health issues.

Behavioral and community health also seeks to improve the public’s
health through the application of social and behavioral sciences. Through
studying behavior, graduates are able to not just understand disease, but
are also able to modify the incidence, prevalence, and mortality rates of
many diseases that affect the communities in which we live. Additionally,
community health specialists promote more efficient uses of health
services, adopt self-care practices, and participate actively in the design
and implementation of health programs.

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health works to establish
community relationships in order to develop community interventions.
The faculty and students of this department promote and foster active
collaboration with researchers and community partners from many
different specialties and institutions. By working with the University of
Maryland, the department has established several partnerships and
research and service centers that work to actively engage the community
in a variety of capacities.

PROGRAMS

Major
• Public Health Practice Major (https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/
  undergraduate/colleges-schools/public-health/behavioral-
  community-health/public-health-practice-major/)

ADVISING

In the Public Health Practice major academic advising is mandatory
in your first semester and in your senior year. It is recommended that
students meet with an academic advisor once per semester at a
minimum. To schedule an academic advising appointment with a BCH
Academic Advisor or a BCH Academic Advising Graduate Assistant, go
to our website (https://sph.umd.edu/academics/departments-units/
department-behavioral-and-community-health/student-resources-and-
programs-behavioral-and-community-health/undergraduate-student-
resources-community-health/undergraduate-advising-behavioral-and-
community-health/).

OPPORTUNITIES

Internships
HLTH491: Public Health Practice/Community Health Internship

HLTH491: Public Health Practice/Community Health Internship is a
unique and rewarding experience that provides the Department of
Behavioral and Community Health undergraduates with the opportunity
to work in a mentored, professional, public/community health setting
prior to graduation. This required internship is completed during the
student’s final semester after all other academic requirements have been
successfully completed. HLTH491 is a 12 credit, 36 hours per week (15
weeks) requirement, and should be considered a full-time commitment.
Students may not enroll in other classes during the internship semester.

HLTH491 may be completed during the fall, spring, or summer semesters;
for planning purposes, summer internships require an application.
Questions related to HLTH491: Public Health Practice/Community Health
Internship may be directed to Tracy Kennedy, Undergraduate Internship
Program Manager, at kennedyt@umd.edu.

Public Health Practice Honors Program

The Department of Behavioral and Community Health Honors Program
offers undergraduates the opportunity to engage in challenging
educational experiences related to social and behavioral aspects of
public health. Rising juniors with strong academic records and significant
interest in intellectual pursuits are invited to apply for this opportunity to
partake in independent, mentored, scholarly work.

Students interested in the Public Health Practice Honors Program must
meet the following requirements:
• Student in the Public Health Practice major
• Overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
• Have successfully completed at least 3 HLTH courses (9 credits) with
  a major GPA of 3.5 or higher
• Must have taken HLTH200 by the start of the program
• Have completed 45 total credits before applying to the program
  (students should be of junior standing [approximately 60 credits] by
  the first semester in the program)
• Ideally, have at least 2 semesters left of coursework before the BCH
  internship

Program highlights include:
• Working one on one with a Department of Behavioral and Community
  Health faculty member on a thesis/project
• Graduating with the distinction of departmental honors
• Ability to take HONR seminars and be a part of the UMD Honors
  College
• Access to HLTH410, a small, seminar-style Honors Program course to
develop personal interests and professional skills

Interested students may learn more about the Public Health Practice
Honors Program by going to: http://sph.umd.edu/undergraduate-
Behavioral and Community Health

degrees/bs-public-health-practice/ or contacting Dr. Kerry Green, Honors Program Director, at greenkm@umd.edu.

**Eta Sigma Gamma**

Eta Sigma Gamma is the only National Professional Honorary in Health Education. Since being revitalized in 2017, the Epsilon Chapter of Eta Sigma Gamma (ESG) has proudly excelled in the areas of service, academics, and membership growth. Through our philanthropy and social activities, members find lifetime friendships and valuable connections for the future.

All community health majors (graduate and undergraduate) are welcome to join. Initiation of members occurs once per year. To be eligible for initiation members must:

- Attend meetings regularly
- Participate in at least 2 events per semester
- Maintain a GPA of 2.7 or higher

For more information visit: http://terplink.umd.edu/organization/etasigmagamma/.

**Badge Specializations**

Students can take a cluster of courses in a specific area while earning health elective credit to earn a badge in one of three areas: special populations, health communications, or health risk behavior. Students strengthen their knowledge in a specific area of interest and can cite their badge specialization area on their resume, cover letter, or graduate school application.

**Scholarships and Financial Assistance**

The Office of Student Financial Aid administers all types of federal, state, and institutional financial assistance programs, and in cooperation with other university offices, participates in the awarding of scholarships to deserving students. For information, go to: http://financialaid.umd.edu.

The School of Public Health also provides some scholarships for undergraduate students in need, including the Jerry P. Wrenn Endowed Scholarship, the School of Public Health Student Emergency Scholarship, the SPH Scholarship Fund, and TerpStart Scholarships. To learn more about School of Public Health scholarships, go to: http://sph.umd.edu/content/financing-your-degree/.

Additional information on UMD-related financial resources can be found at http://sph.umd.edu/content/student-resources-and-services/, by clicking the “Financial/Resource Assistance” link.

**Awards and Recognition**

Each spring, the Department of Behavioral and Community Health recognizes a select few exceptional BCH undergraduates and graduates by honoring them with awards in recognition of their achievements at the annual School of Public Health Convocation.