

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Notable Accomplishments

- **Creation of a new Division of Public Health Policy and Practice and Renaming the Department of Public Health Sciences (formerly Health Evaluation Sciences)**

The new division and department name reflect the creative energy in the Health System that now focuses on population health, research, education, and policy. The Department of Public Health Sciences brings a unique, interdisciplinary perspective to the management and interpretation of healthcare information. Its expanded mission is to create new approaches and technologies for the generation, interpretation, and management of basic and applied health-related data so that individuals, clinicians, communities, and public policymakers can make informed, wise, and equitable choices.

- **Establishment of the MPH Degree and Significant MPH Program Growth**

The University of Virginia Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is an interdisciplinary program designed to prepare professionals for leadership roles in health care policy and management, population-based research, and the community practice of public health. The MPH degree is offered, along with the Master of Science in Health Evaluation Sciences, by the Department of Public Health Sciences, and the two graduate programs share a number of core courses (epidemiology and biostatistics) and electives.

- Since its approval in 2003 by the Board of Visitors and the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), the MPH program has grown dramatically in response to student demand, with more than twice the number of students (15) enrolled during the 2005-2006 academic year than was projected. In an effort to keep the program small, we have not actively recruited students. In spite of the lack of a marketing plan, MPH applications have risen from 5 in the first year to 51 in 2006. This impressive growth demonstrates the great demand and opportunities for a public health program at UVa.
 - New MPH courses on public health topics, such as Health Disparities, bring together graduate and professional students from across the university, e.g., Architecture, Nursing, Law, and GSAS.
 - Cross-school courses have led to the development of at least one interdisciplinary public health collaborative research proposal on Youth Tobacco Use in Virginia that brings together faculty from the medical, law, nursing, and business schools.
 - MPH program accomplishments also include community service initiatives, such as hosting and providing faculty for the Virginia Public Health Association meeting in fall 2005 for public health leaders from across the state.

- MPH faculty members are serving on numerous federal, state, and local public health committees, such as the Virginia Pandemic Advisory Committee, and the SOM Dean, who teaches the MPH health policy course, is working with government officials on state and federal legislation on health care for the uninsured and quality of care. The MPH program provides students to work on field placement and internship projects at major state, national, and international agencies, such as the Virginia Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Project HOPE, as well as at other international settings in China and Africa.
- **MPH Joint Programs:** The MPH program serves students from across the university. During its first two years, the program launched two joint professional degree programs, the MD-MPH and the JD-MPH programs, and developed a third joint program, the BA-MPH, with the College of Arts & Sciences that will begin as early as fall 2006.
- **BA-MPH Degree Program:** Third-year undergraduate students with distinguished academic records will be able to apply to the MPH degree program and begin taking graduate public health courses while still finishing their undergraduate degrees. This program will provide students with the opportunity to do significant public health field work and international research over a longer period of time that spans their undergraduate and MPH years. The program will begin in the near future.
- **New Public Health Opportunities Planned for UVa Undergraduates**
 - Global Public Health Minor: A new undergraduate minor in Global Public Health will be sponsored by the Department of Public Health Sciences in collaboration with the College of Arts & Sciences and the Center for Global Health. The minor, which is planned to begin in 2007, will provide courses that introduce global health frameworks, the interdisciplinary measurement of health and disease, and health policy, law and ethics.
- **New Public Health and Health Policy Opportunities for Medical Students**
 - DX-RX course for 4th year medical students: New required 4th year medical school course that introduces students to key health policy and public health issues that will shape their professional practice in the future and challenges them to critically analyze current policy, economic, and legal issues that are raised in journals, contemporary media, and court cases.
 - Medical student internship electives in health policy: Medical students have the opportunity to work with government policy makers through internships that focus on medical and health policy issues, such as Medicaid regulations, state obesity interventions, etc.

- **Certificate Program for Hospital Residents:** The Department of Public Health Sciences is working with the Office of Graduate Medical Education to create courses and provide the administrative home for Certificates of Special Competencies for Residents. Certificates would be awarded for four Graduate School of Arts & Sciences courses in a track. Five tracks are now envisioned: Public Health/Health Policy; Clinical Research; Health Administration; Health Law and Ethics; and Health Education. Graduate course credit could later be applied to an MPH or MS degree. Pilot courses will begin in summer 2006 and J-Term 2007. The program officially is planned to begin in the academic year 2007-2008.
- **Establishment of Interdisciplinary Public Health Centers**
 - **Consumer Health Education Institute** In collaboration with the Curry School of Education, the Consumer Health Education Institute will develop tools to teach consumers how to choose health care and will deliver information in the way best suited to the individual patient. In a novel approach to training, education research will be applied to medical students and residents to develop individualized ways for our trainees to learn.
 - **Center on Health Disparities** The Center on Health Disparities will investigate ways to reeducate health professionals and eventually eliminate disparities in health care that are rooted in race, poverty, rural communities, and other factors such as being uninsured. The center has begun to develop ways to improve health locally such as by using programs promoting healthy vending machine and cafeteria choices for children.

In FY07 the Diversity Scholars Program will be launched. Each Scholar will enroll in the MD-MPH program on the “Disparities track.” Student placement for MPH field work will be directed to rural, underserved, or disadvantaged populations in Virginia. This program will replace the Generalist Scholars Program that was developed to address the dwindling supply of generalist physicians, particularly in the underserved areas of the Commonwealth. Over the 12 years of the program, the majority of the students have chosen to explore issues related to health disparities including service to the disadvantaged populations or in underserved locations. It has become apparent that both generalists and specialists are needed to address health disparities.

2. Two-Year Goals and Metrics for Success

- New population-based research opportunities for students and new research faculty members working on population and community health.

Model: The goal is to create a model that formally bridges many MPH tracks and courses with complementary, interdisciplinary UVa research centers and institutes. The MPH program and centers would share new faculty; seed new research opportunities; and jointly sponsor national and international speakers, conferences, and research symposia.

Metrics for success:

- Hire two new faculty members shared by the Center on Health Disparities and the MPH Program. This would allow the start of a new Health Disparities track in the MPH program and new opportunities in health disparities and community public health research and policy.
- Hire two new faculty members shared by the Center for Global Health. This would allow the start of a new Global Health track in the MPH program and new opportunities in global health and community public health research and policy.
- Hire two new faculty members in health policy, economics, or law shared by the Institute for Practical Ethics and Public Life and/or the Center for Biomedical Ethics and/or another University research institute. This would strengthen the research and policy opportunities for students and faculty in the MPH Health Policy, Law, and Ethics track.
- Relationships developed with at least two other University centers or institutes outside of the Health System, such as the Center for Risk Management (School of Engineering) and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (School of Architecture).
- Two annual international symposia: one on Global Public Health and one on Global Health Disparities.
- A year-long, pan-university speaker series on public health research and policy.
- Expand the number of MPH students.

Metric for success:

- The total number of MPH students would increase to 34, including an increase in the number of joint MD-MPH students and residents and fellows enrolled in the MPH program.
- Begin creating and strengthening programs for a School of Public Health.

Metrics for success:

- One or two doctoral programs in public health, e.g., epidemiology and biostatistics.
- Expanded course offerings and research in environmental health and in social and behavioral health (two of the five core areas of a public health program).
- Establish a UVa task force to develop the mission, university-wide support, and the mechanism for establishing a School of Public Health.
- Create a five-year time line and business plan to incrementally build the educational programs and raise the resources that will lead to an accredited School of Public Health.
- Board of Visitors approval to create a School of Public Health.

3. Five-Year Goals and Metrics for Success

- Three doctoral programs in five of the core areas of public health.
- 30 full-time faculty members in public health disciplines.
- Administrative infrastructure for a School of Public Health, i.e., registrar, admissions office, office of career planning, development office, etc.

Metric for success:

- Announce the opening date for a School of Public Health.

4. Resources Needed and Barriers to Success

Preliminary assessments suggest an endowment of at least \$75 million will be needed to support the annual expenses for a School of Public Health. This includes ongoing faculty expense of \$2.25 million (60 faculty at 50 percent time); administration, \$1 million; startup for 2 faculty per year @ \$250,000; and a School of Public Health building, 75,000 square feet, \$50 million.

In addition, establishing a new school will require significant buy-in from faculty, university administration, alumni, and others. Identifying stakeholders both from within and outside of the University (for instance, state public health and health policy leaders) and working with them to understand and address their needs and interests will require time and leadership.