DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Dornsife
School of Public Health

2026

APPLIED PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

GUIDEBOOK FOR MPH STUDENTS: EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS AND DELIVERABLES

PREPARED BY:
DORNSIFE CAREER SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Requirements

02 Location

03 Industry

04 Departments

05 Next Steps

REQUIREMENTS

As part of the curriculum, DSPH MPH students must complete a 120-hour Applied Practical Experience (APE), a supervised, hands-on practice opportunity designed to help students apply public health skills in real-world settings. This experience typically occurs in the spring or summer of the first year.

Students may complete their APE within a DSPH community partner organization, their current workplace, or any other approved external site. MPH students may secure placements through independent networking, support from a faculty mentor, or opportunities posted on Symplicity or Handshake. Additional guidance on finding projects or internships can be found in the Internship and Job Search resources on DASH.

The APE must result in at least two deliverables that demonstrate attainment of five CEPH Foundational Competencies, with the option to address two additional Major Competencies.

The APE is distinct from the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) because it lasts only one term and does not need to relate to the student's major or primary program focus.

This project guide features examples of past student APE projects and is organized by location, industry, department, and topic. Students are encouraged to explore these examples for inspiration, to understand what may be feasible, and to spark conversations with faculty mentors. Please note that the availability of similar opportunities cannot be guaranteed each year.

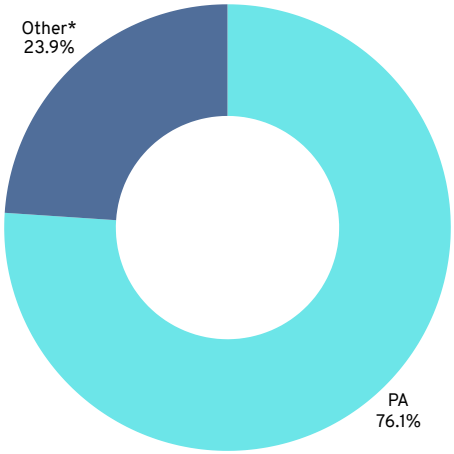
Students with questions about opportunities similar to those listed in the guide should consult their faculty mentor or academic advisor.



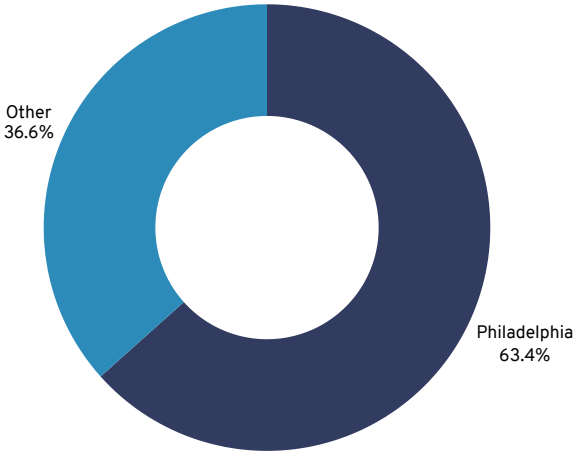
LOCATION

This section highlights where APEs were completed, showcasing geographic trends of placement settings.

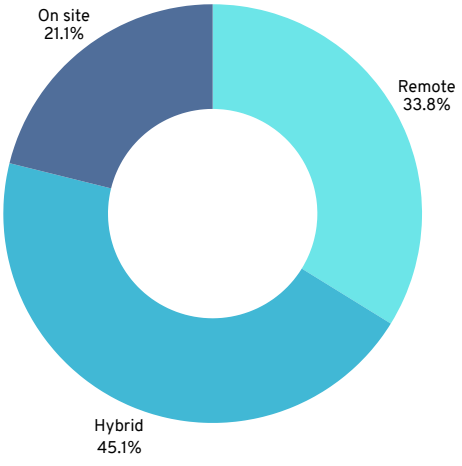
State



Philadelphia



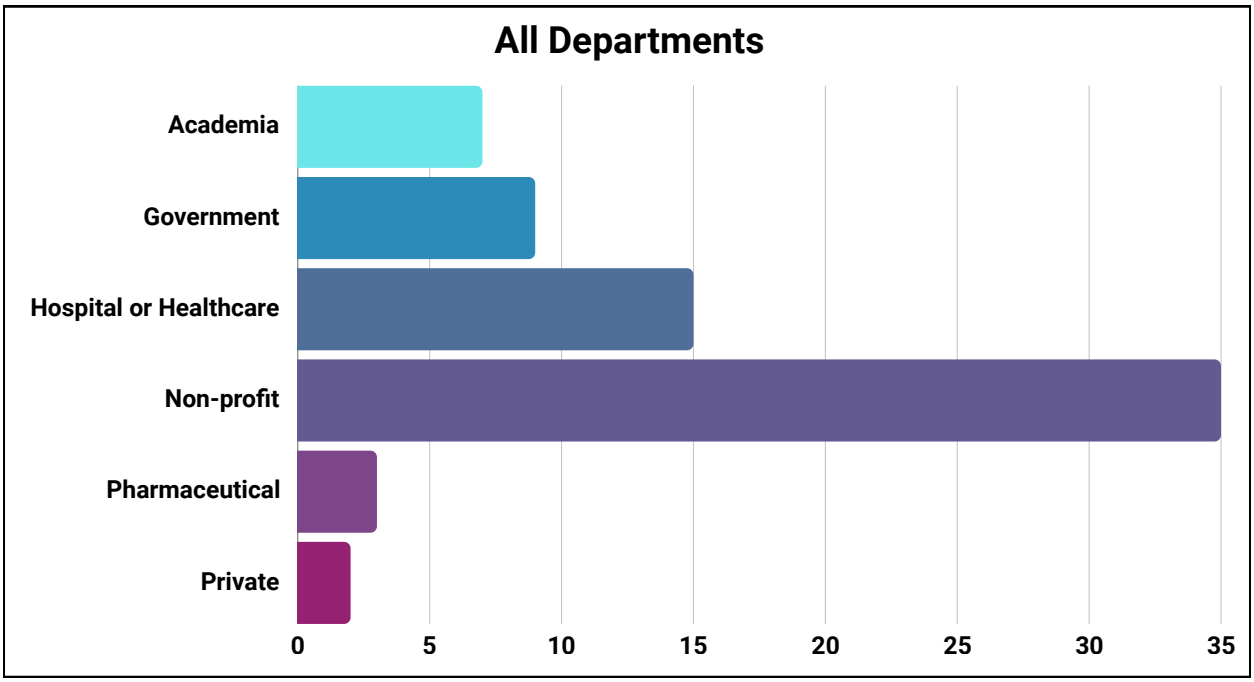
Modality

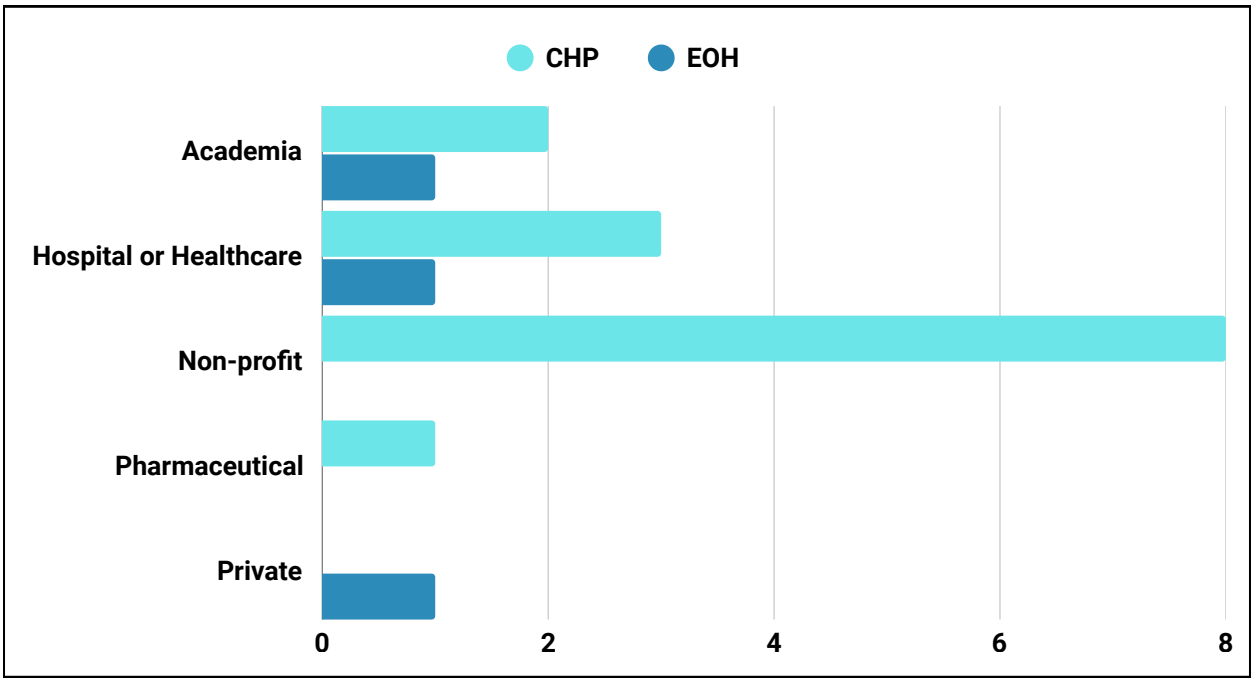


*Other Domestic: IL, MD, MN, MO, NJ, UT, WI
International: Canada, Ghana

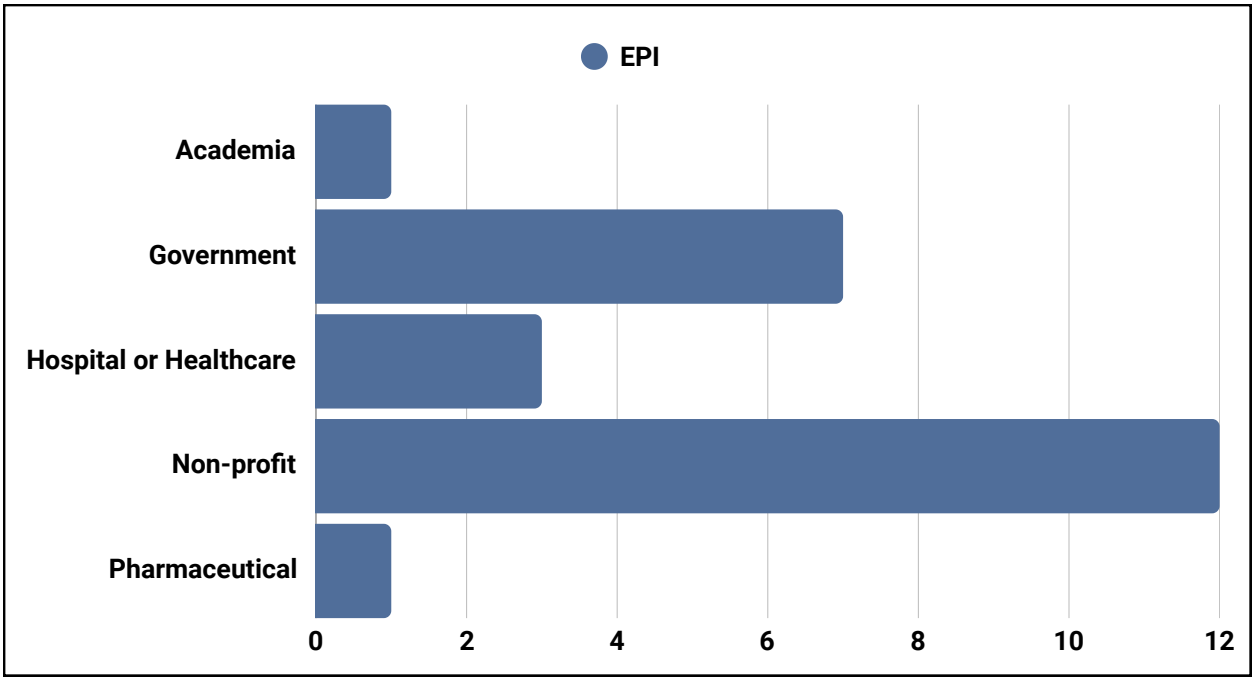
INDUSTRY

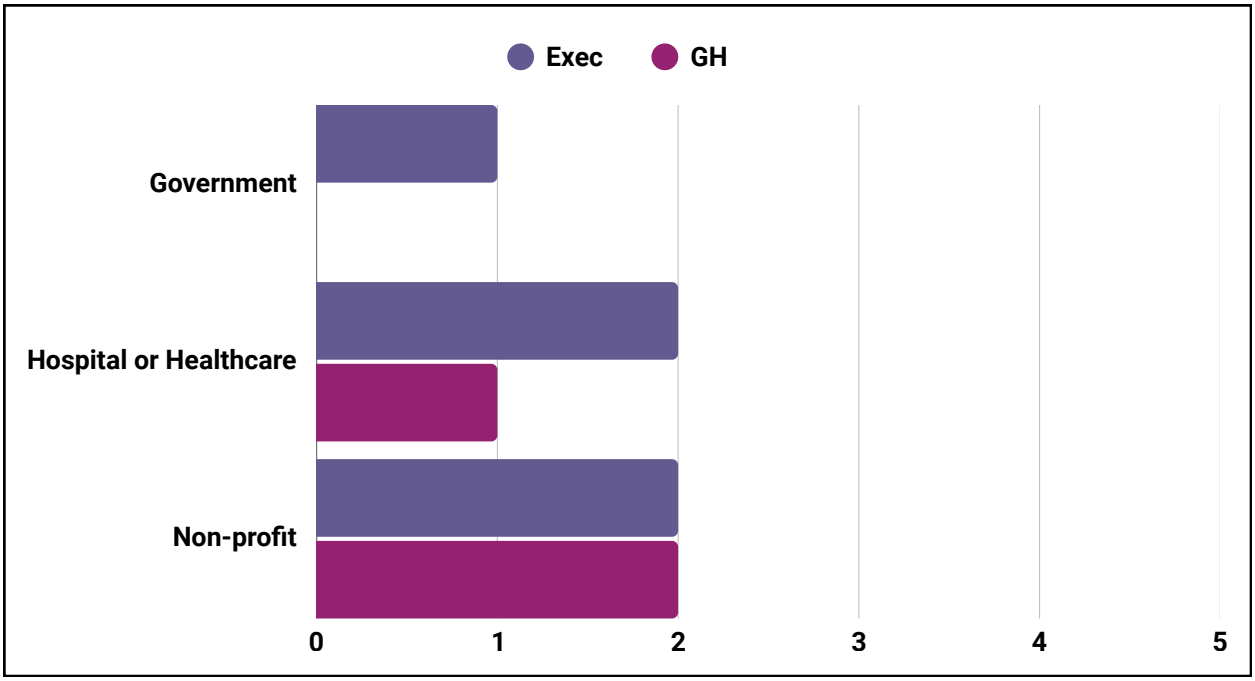
This section categorizes host organizations by industry to illustrate the range of public health sectors students engaged with.



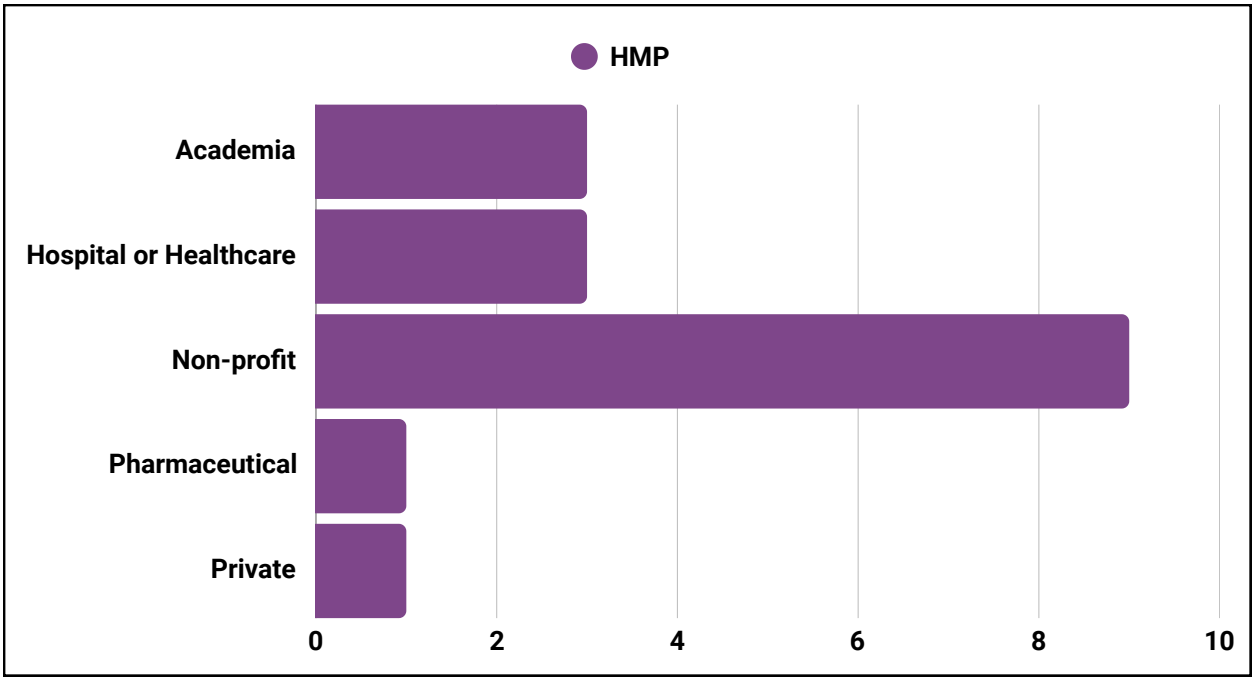


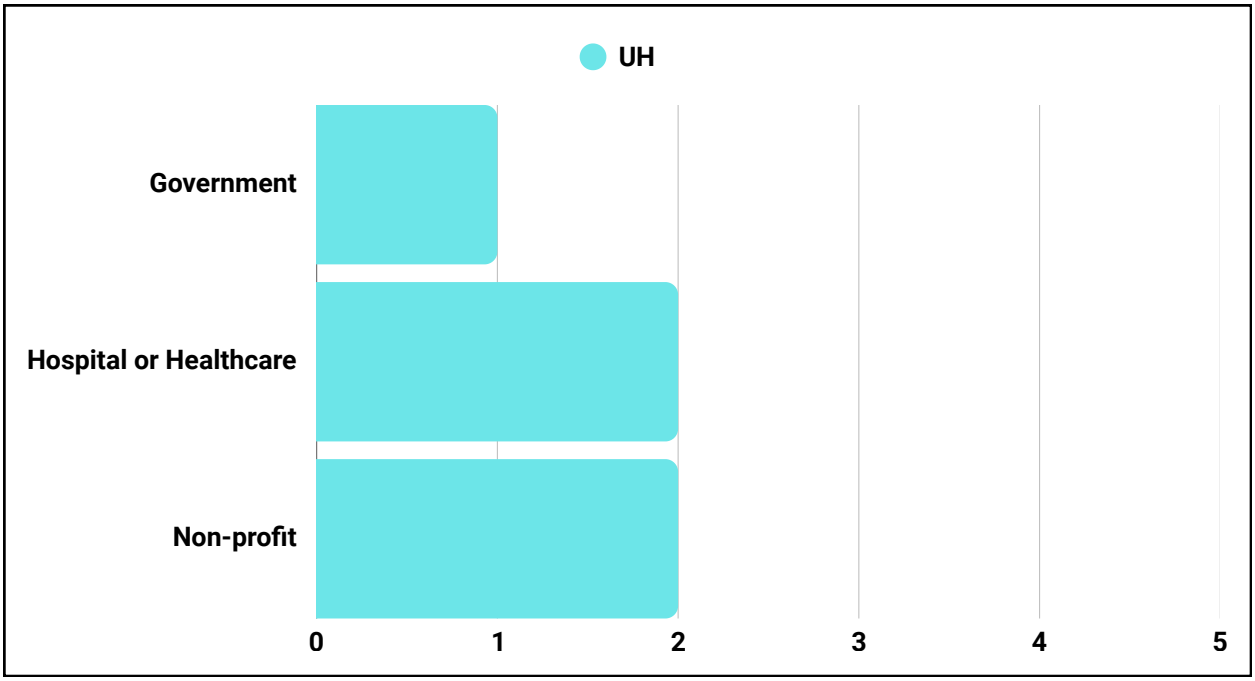
INDUSTRY


EPI
Academia
Government
Hospital or Healthcare
Non-profit
Pharmaceutical
0
2
4
6
8
10
12


Exec
GH
Government
Hospital or Healthcare
Non-profit
0
1
2
3
4
5

INDUSTRY


HMP
Academia
Hospital or Healthcare
Non-profit
Pharmaceutical
Private
0
2
4
6
8
10


UH
Government
Hospital or Healthcare
Non-profit
0
1
2
3
4
5

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND PREVENTION

Listed below are APE sites, deliverables, competencies, and topics, organized across the seven MPH concentrations. An overview of deliverable categories are listed on the last page of the department section. A full description of the competencies is available on the requirement page.

Organizations

Art-Reach, Delaware Valley Community Health, Drexel Health Equity Advancement Lab - Prevention Point Philadelphia, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health, Hepatitis B Foundation, Inglis House, Lutheran Settlement House, March of Dimes, Multicultural Community Family Services (MCFS), Philly Joy Bank, Pine Street Family Practice, Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC)

Deliverables

- Educational and Communication
- Media and Outreach Products
- Policy and Advocacy Documents
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Proposals and Plans
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Public Health & Health Care Systems: 5, 6
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 11
- Policy in Public Health: 12, 13, 14
- Leadership: 17
- Communication: 18, 19
- Interprofessional Practice: 21
- Systems Thinking: 22

Topics

- Cannabis Use
- Community Health Needs
- Disability Arts Access
- Disability Health
- Food Insecurity
- Health Screening
- Hepatitis B Advocacy
- HIV Prevention
- LGBTQIA+ Health
- Maternal Health
- Midwifery Integration
- Overdose Prevention
- Patient Coordination
- Program Evaluation

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Organizations

Drexel University Ubuntu Center, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice, Hawkins Inc.

Deliverables

- Policy and Advocacy Documents
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 2
- Public Health & Health Care Systems: 5, 6
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 9
- Leadership: 16
- Communication: 18, 20
- Interprofessional Practice: 21
- Systems Thinking: 22

Topics

- Caregiver Resources
- Occupational Safety
- Prison Heat Exposure
- Tigrinya Maternal Health

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Organizations

Broad Street Institute, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Habitat for Humanity, Hepatitis B Foundation, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, Lutheran Settlement House, Mayor's Commission on LGBTQ+ Affairs, National Kidney Foundation, Penn Medicine Dermatology, Pennsylvania Department of Health, PharmaACE, Philabundance, Philadelphia Department of Public Health (Division of HIV Health and Substance Use Prevention & Harm Reduction,) Rising UP Together, Transit Forward Philly, YOU at Heart Foundation

Deliverables

- Educational and Communication
- Media and Outreach Products
- Policy and Advocacy Documents
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Proposals and Plans
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Public Health & Health Care Systems: 5, 6
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- Policy in Public Health: 12, 13, 14, 15
- Leadership: 16, 17
- Communication: 18, 19, 20
- Interprofessional Practice: 21
- Systems Thinking: 22

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Topics

- Autism and Brain Injury
- Biostatistics and Epidemiology
- Child Health Behaviors
- Community Health Evaluation
- Dermatology Epidemiology
- Diabetes Mortality
- Firearm Trafficking
- Food Insecurity
- Healthcare Policy Analysis
- Hepatitis B Advocacy
- HIV Surveillance
- Housing and Health
- Housing and Well-Being
- Immigrant Opioid Prevention
- Infection Prevention
- Kidney Disease Prevention
- Kidney Health
- LGBTQ+ Health Equity
- Maternal and Child Health
- Menstrual Equity
- Staff Wellness
- Substance Use Surveillance
- Youth Health Education

EXECUTIVE

Organizations

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Division of Endocrinology & Diabetes, Elmwood Eastwick Empowerment - The Black Farmers Co-Op, Penn Medicine, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Transit Forward Philly

Deliverables

- Educational and Communication
- Media and Outreach Products
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Public Health & Health Care Systems: 5, 6
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 9, 11
- Policy in Public Health: 13, 14, 15
- Leadership: 16
- Communication: 18, 19
- Interprofessional Practice: 21
- Systems Thinking: 22

Topics

- Food Justice and Sustainability
- Infrastructure and Health
- Kidney Care Referrals
- Perinatal Bereavement Care

GLOBAL HEALTH

Organizations

American Heart Association - Greater Philadelphia, Cooper University Hospital, Neighborhood Bike Works

Deliverables

- Media and Outreach Products
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 1, 3, 4
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 9, 11
- Communication: 18, 19

Topics

- Cardiovascular Health Education
- Cycling Access and Sustainability
- Hospital Mobility and Recovery

HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

Organizations

A.J. Drexel Autism Institute, Abt Global, American Dental Hygienist Association, Birth Justice Philly, Children's First PA, Delaware Valley Community Health, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health, Empower Missouri, Health Promotion Council, Independence Blue Cross, Neighborhood Bike Works, Pfizer, Philly Joy Bank, Stanford School of Medicine, Surgical Institute of Reading

Deliverables

- Educational and Communication
- Media and Outreach Products
- Policy and Advocacy Documents
- Presentations and Training Resources
- Proposals and Plans
- Reports and Assessments
- Research and Data Projects

Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 2, 3, 4
- Public Health & Health Care Systems: 5, 6
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 8, 10, 11
- Policy in Public Health: 12, 13, 14, 15
- Leadership: 16
- Communication: 18, 19, 20
- Interprofessional Practice: 21

Topics

- 340B Drug Pricing Policy
- AI and Clinical Trial Policy
- Autism Policy and Access
- Children’s Mental Health Advocacy
- Dental Workforce Policy
- Guaranteed Income and Maternal Health
- Guaranteed Income Evaluation
- Healthcare Equity and Growth
- Infrastructure and Health
- Lifestyle Medicine Implementation
- Medicaid and Medicare Programs
- Nutrition Policy Research
- Pregnancy Care Access
- Program Feasibility Evaluation
- Program Participation Analysis
- Public Health Communications
- Social Justice Advocacy

URBAN HEALTH

Organizations

CBS Food Program, HOPE at St. Luke's University Health Network, Newborns and Neighbors, Penn Medicine, Philadelphia Department of Public Health - Division of Reproductive, Adolescent, and Child Health

Deliverables

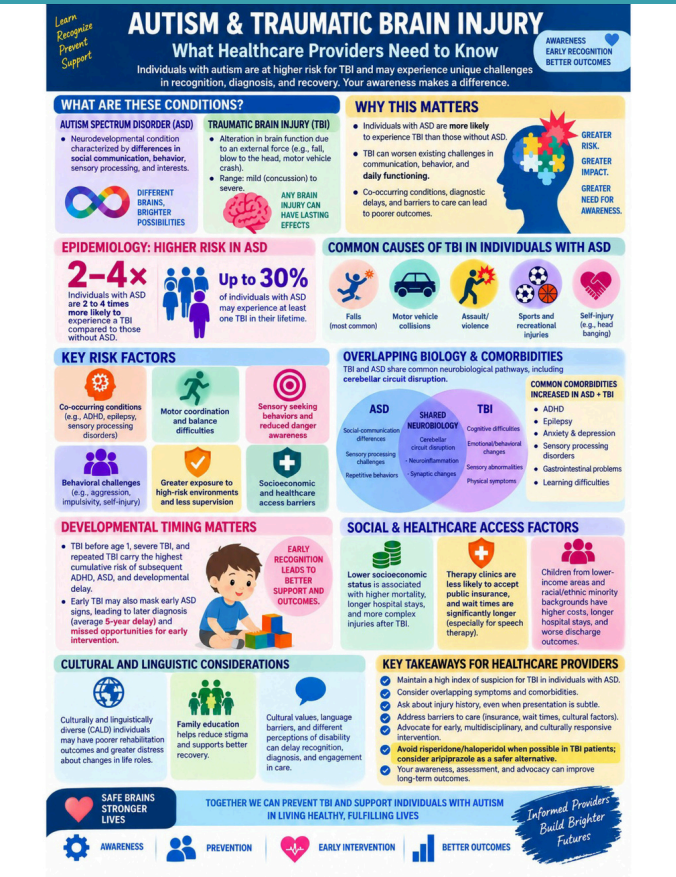
- Educational and Communication
- Presentations and Training Resources
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Competencies

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 2, 3, 4
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- Policy in Public Health: 14
- Leadership: 16
- Communication: 18, 19, 20
- Interprofessional Practice: 21
- Systems Thinking: 22

Topics

- Chemotherapy Authorization Education
- Child Nutrition Program Expansion
- Family Referral Evaluation
- Housing and Health Equity
- Maternal Mental Health Support



EXAMPLE

Isaac Okoye, MPH Epidemiology

Okoye completed the APE at the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The project focused on identifying areas of intersection in symptoms/presentation and areas of intersection related to treatment with a goal of developing a conceptual framework describing how Autism Spectrum Disorder and traumatic brain injury interact.

Deliverables:

- Presentations and Training Resources (slide deck, posters, webinars, lesson plans, curricula, logic models, facilitator guides): PowerPoint
- Media and Outreach Products (infographic, flyer, newsletter, social media, website, video): Infographic

Foundational Competencies:

- Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health: 1, 4
- Planning & Management to Promote Health: 7, 9
- Communication: 19

NEXT STEPS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES (PDS)
The PDS consists of career-themed workshops designed to aid in your career preparation journey by allowing time for you to improve components of your professional life.

In order to complete the APE, it is required that all first year MPH students* complete the Professional Development Series workshops. To learn more about this requirement, please visit the DASH PDS page.

*The following programs are excluded from this requirement: BA/MPH, BS/MPH, MD/MPH, JD/MPH, and EMPH.

TIMELINE
The APE fulfills the PBHL 500 course requirement (after the successful completion of PBHL 510 & 511) and should be completed before starting. Students should review this document for important deadlines and due dates in order to secure approval for the APE.

Note: International Students must complete and submit Curricular Practical Training (CPT) paperwork by the end of the current term before the term they would like to complete their APE in. See form.

For additional information, please visit the DASH APE page or contact Tariem Burroughs, Executive Director of External Partnerships.

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