

Is a Career in Public Health in Your Future?

Why Choose Public Health?

You can prepare for a rewarding career in public health by obtaining your Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at VCU. According to the Association of Schools of Public Health, "most experts agree that major advances in improvement of health over the next decades will not come from new medical findings or cures, but rather the broader development and application of population-based prevention programs." Public health professionals focus on populations at risk for disease, evaluating community health status and devising and implementing methods to reduce risk, prevent disease, and promote health.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) degree is a professional degree that prepares students for careers in public health, a multidisciplinary field dedicated to maintaining and improving the health of populations—in communities, regions, and countries worldwide.

Why pursue an MPH degree at Virginia Commonwealth University?

VCU's Department of Epidemiology and Community Health is the home of the first and oldest MPH degree program in the state of Virginia. More than 250 students have graduated from the program since its first degrees were awarded in 1991. In addition, VCU's MPH Program has been fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health since 1996.

Now is an exciting time to get involved in the study of public health, as VCU is developing the first School of Public Health in Virginia. Located in VCU's School of Medicine, the emerging School is expected to grow rapidly, adding three new departments to the existing departments of Epi-



demiology & Community Health and Biostatistics. This growth will mean expanded course offerings and academic options for students in the near future.

Tracks of Study in the MPH Program

VCU's MPH Program currently offers four tracks of study as well as dual degrees:

MPH degree tracks

- Epidemiology
- Environmental Health
- Addiction Studies
- Generalist (broad overview of public health)

MPH dual degree programs

- Nursing (MPH-MS in Nursing)
- Pharmacy (MPH-PharmD)
- Medicine (MD/MPH)

Additional curricula are being developed with the goal of offering tracks in general behavioral sciences, biostatistics, and public health management & policy in the next two years.

Students who wish to concentrate study in a discipline other than those listed may work with the Department of Epidemiology and Community Health to develop a "select track," which enables the student to fulfill the MPH degree requirements and focus on a particular discipline using VCU courses available outside the Department.

Careers in the Core Areas of Public Health

Public health professionals have challenging careers that may focus on health behaviors, public health policy, environmental health, or health trends and risk factors. Example careers include cancer registry administrator, emergency preparedness and bioterrorism response specialist, biostatistical analyst for a pharmaceutical company, prevention specialist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and federal health policy analyst.

The table below lists the five core areas of public health and types of careers available to students with MPH degrees in those areas.

Public Health Careers by MPH Degree Specialty Area

Area of concentration	Careers available
Behavioral Health Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State/local government—health educator, injury prevention• Non-profit organization—coordinator, community outreach for local office of American Cancer Society• Corporate/industry—health promotion/wellness specialist• Academic research—research coordinator and recruiter
Biostatistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic research—data manager and analyst• Corporate—clinical trials analyst• Federal/state government—program evaluation analyst
Environmental & Occupational Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State/local health department—public health preparedness and emergency response administrator• Industry—industrial hygienist• Federal government—Environmental Protection Agency analyst or administrator
Epidemiology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State/local health department—director, division of chronic diseases• Federal government—disease outbreak investigator, Centers for Disease Control• Academic research—research associate• Corporate—program evaluation
Public Health Management & Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State/local health department—program evaluation and planning; managed care specialist• Federal government—outcomes & evidence analyst, Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research• Non-profit organization—health policy lobbyist or grassroots advocacy manager• Corporate—quality assurance specialist

Interested in Preparing for a Career in Public Health?

Contact the Department of Epidemiology and Community Health for more on how an MPH degree can lay the foundation for a satisfying career.

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