THE GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Throughout the world, societies face emerging infectious diseases, climate change, poverty, and the growing impact of chronic diseases, among other public health threats. Building resilient communities and growing the capacity to prevent disease and promote health in vulnerable populations across the globe, near and far, is central to the mission of public health and urgently needed as the world faces 21st century challenges.

University of Maryland School of Public Health faculty and students are actively engaged in research, service and education activities aimed at improving health across the globe and partnering with communities to accomplish these goals. In 2018, School of Public Health Dean Boris Lushniak created the Global Health Initiative to elevate and expand the school’s impact in this area.

Research

The School of Public Health is conducting ground-breaking research studies in countries as far flung as Tanzania, Israel, India, China, Nepal and Brazil. Some involve conducting interventions using behavior change theories, others focus on preventing the impacts of climate change on human health, and others utilize large-scale population data sets to understand health outcomes.

SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

» Behavioral and Community Health Research Professor Dina Borzekowski, who serves as interim director of the Global Health Initiative, is working with media production companies in several countries. She advises groups such as Sesame Workshop, the BBC, and Ubongo in developing content using best practices in health communication. Her teams of UMD students and in-country researchers examine the impact of these programs on different populations.

» Environmental Health Associate Professor Paul Turner is investigating dietary toxins that are linked to cancer, immune suppression, growth retardation and reproductive toxicology in developing countries throughout the world where agricultural and food security is limited. The aim is to develop sustainable interventions to limit toxic exposure and improve child health.

» In collaboration with Behavioral and Community Health Professor Brad Boekeloo, a School of Public Health undergraduate student recently spent a semester in Pakistan to develop a training program for healthcare workers treating people in the country’s transgender community.
**Service**

Our flagship organization, Public Health Without Borders, provides hands-on experience for undergraduate and graduate students to identify health challenges and develop campaigns to improve health in partnership with communities in countries including Sierra Leone, India, Peru, and Ethiopia.

During two-week visits, students collaborate with local educators, health providers, and community leaders to deliver workshops to children and adults on topics such as hand-washing, nutrition, chronic diseases, traffic safety and first aid and gather information on community needs to inform future activities.

**Education**

**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The Global Public Health (GPH) Scholars program, sponsored by the School of Public Health, offers an interdisciplinary examination of the complex connections between health, culture, economic growth and development, and environmental sustainability. First and second-year College Park Scholars students gain an understanding of the conceptual and practical foundations of community health, explore global public health challenges and consider ways to improve population health within diverse contexts. Associate Clinical Professor Elisabeth Maring (Department of Family Science) directs the GPH Scholars program.

The Graduate Certificate in Global Health provides fundamental knowledge in global health delivery to enable individuals who may not have public health backgrounds to work effectively in agencies and programs providing global health services. This 12-credit post-baccalaureate program emphasizes translational health issues and combines population-based prevention methods with evidence-based, community-supported initiatives. The certificate may be taken alone or in conjunction with one of our graduate degree programs.

**New academic programs** with an emphasis on global health are in development at the undergraduate and graduate level. Beyond experiences in the classroom, the school also strongly encourages real world global experiences for all students which may be facilitated through Public Health Without Borders or a course through UMD’s Education Abroad program, among others.

**STUDY ABROAD**

The School of Public Health regularly leads signature study abroad courses including:

- **India**: East Meets West: Contrasting Public Health Priorities, Policies and Programs in the US and India
- **Cuba**: Law, Public Health and the Cuban Family
- **Australia**: Sport, Commerce, and Culture in the Global Marketplace
- **Bolivia**: Health in all policies: Global health lessons on ecotourism and community health

Visit [sph.umd.edu/ghi](http://sph.umd.edu/ghi) for more information.

**TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**UMD Global STEWARDS**

With funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Traineeship (NRT) the UMD Global STEWARDS (STEM Training at the Nexus of Energy, Water Reuse and Food Systems) program aims to create innovative and sustainable solutions for global food, energy and water systems. The program, led by Principal Investigator and Environmental Health Professor Amy R. Sapkota, will recruit and train more than 60 future leaders from doctoral programs in the life sciences, earth system sciences, engineering and computational sciences, natural resource management, and energy and environmental policy.

Visit [globalstewards.umd.edu](http://globalstewards.umd.edu) for more information.