What is Public Health?

A complicated question that features a surprisingly simple answer: Community.

Those very things that bring us together, calling us to live together as one people, are critical components in what makes public health such a unique and extraordinary discipline. Community is the focus for a science that strives to protect, promote and improve the health of others through education, lifestyle changes and research.

While clinical medicine focuses on treating an individual who is sick, the goal of public health is to work with entire populations proactively to prevent health problems from happening. Public health strengthens whole communities, empowering households, neighborhoods, cities, nations and international regions with an approach dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all citizens.

The College of Public Health at the University of Georgia is preparing its students to join the next generation of leaders who will confront a wide range of perilous health challenges, including infectious diseases, environmental hazards, socially driven health disparities and mass casualty disasters.

"The field of public health provides avenues into many different careers. After getting my MPH, I'm equipped to pursue a wide variety of professional and academic goals."

Griffin Sheats (MPH '14)
Be Part of the Solution.

Georgia faces a plethora of public health challenges. In addition to a concern for preventing communicable diseases, public health professionals address many other problems that affect the wider population, including environmental threats, behavioral factors, chronic disease, the need for a skilled and healthy workforce, and even the operation of the health system itself. Heeding the call to service, the College aims not only to equip the next generation of public health workers, but also to tackle the biggest threats head-on through research, education and service.

The College places an emphasis on community-oriented problem solving, putting the theories and concepts explored in the classroom into practice in real-world settings. With an approach that centers on identifying the challenge, analyzing the environment and intervening to deliver the needed outcome, students and faculty from the College are making a difference in Georgia and beyond.

"Training Georgia’s future health leaders to answer real world public health challenges is central to our mission."

Dr. Phillip Williams, Dean of the College of Public Health
Educating and training the public health workforce

The most important role of the College is training Georgia’s next generation of public health practitioners and leaders to take on strategic population health challenges. Our graduates enter the workforce prepared to analyze and address public health issues, work with communities to understand their needs and resources, and provide training to empower others to contribute to the well-being of their community, state and nation.

A research culture of excellence

The College has established a committed research culture. Faculty conduct research of national and international significance funded by government entities such as NIH and USDA, as well as private foundations. Public health research, when applied appropriately, improves community health by identifying challenges, transforming public health systems and finding solutions.

Outreach as a translational mission

We enthusiastically embrace the land-grant practice of using outreach as a mechanism to educate the populace and deliver practical interventions to the people we serve. From anti-obesity efforts in South Georgia to cutting-edge tuberculosis transmission research in Uganda, the College is committed to applying the discoveries of its researchers to solve real problems.

A commitment to international collaboration

We live in a highly connected world, and health impacts often extend beyond national borders. International public health collaborations lead to a better understanding of the underlying problems and to outcomes that benefit not only the communities we study but our own. What we learn from research abroad about poverty, health disparities and disease prevention is often applicable in our own communities.

Equity and healthy lives

We are committed to being leaders in analyzing the social roots of health, understanding the various needs of specific populations and addressing health disparities and environmental justice issues. Through access to education, we also are able to empower a diverse public health leadership to take action on a wide range of challenges.

Public health and economic development

A healthier community means a more prosperous community. Low incidences of injury, low obesity rates and a physically active population can result in fewer missed days of work and invite additional economic investments into a community. With a leading role in research focused on workplace health, the College contributes directly to building a healthier economy in Georgia and beyond.

Our Core Values.
Learning Opportunities

The College offers a range of courses for undergraduates whether they simply want to explore the field with introductory coursework, earn a certificate alongside a degree based in another college, or seek a complete undergraduate degree in either Environmental Health or Health Promotion.

Graduate programs include the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, considered the heart and soul of any school of public health. The two-year MPH program allows students to study the field widely while focusing on a core discipline. After completing an internship in the field, MPH students are professionally prepared to begin working as public health practitioners. With opportunities for future researchers and working professionals, the College’s doctoral level degree programs prepare students for careers in public health scholarship, university teaching and leadership.

**Environmental Health Science**

Environmental health science is the study of biological, chemical or physical agents in the environment and their impact on human health and ecological systems. Scientists trained in EHS serve the public good by determining which substances or processes lead to adverse health effects and how these effects occur. They work actively to safeguard and improve the quality of our air, water, natural resources, food and shelter.

**Areas of Specialty:**
- Environment Risk Assessment and Abatement
- Industrial and Occupational Health
- Air Quality
- Food Safety
- Water Pollution and Water-Borne Disease

**Epidemiology and Biostatistics**

Epidemiology is the original science of public health and is focused on epidemics. Epidemiologists study the distribution of disease, health events and health-related behavior in populations, with an emphasis on patterns of risk and preventive measures. Biostatistics focuses on the development and application of qualitative methods for collecting, summarizing and analyzing health-related data.

**Areas of Specialty:**
- Infectious Disease Epidemiology
- International Public Health
- Evidence-Based Medicine
- Survival Analysis
- Spatial Statistics

**DEGREE PROGRAMS**

**Master of Public Health (MPH) with concentrations in:**
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health
- Epidemiology
- Health Policy and Management
- Health Promotion and Behavior

**Bachelor of Science in:**
- Environmental Health
- Health Promotion

**Master of Science in:**
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health
- Toxicology

**Ph.D. in:**
- Biostatistics
- Environmental Health Science
- Epidemiology
- Health Promotion and Behavior
- Toxicology

**CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

- Disaster Management
- Gerontology
- Global Health (undergraduate, graduate)

**DUAL DEGREES**

- Business Administration and Public Health (MBA/MPH)
- Medicine and Public Health (MD/MPH)
- Pharmacy and Public Health (PharmD/MPH)
- Social Work and Public Health (MSW/MPH)
- Veterinary Medicine and Public Health (DVM/MPH)
- Law and Public Health (JSD/MPH - COMING SOON)

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706.542.2454
www.publichealth.uga.edu/ehs

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706.542.9394
www.publichealth.uga.edu/epibio
Health Policy and Management
The study of health policy and management introduces the student to the primary structures and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health care and public health systems. It explores the policy process for improving the health status of a population, providing knowledge about the principles of program planning, development and evaluation for various public health initiatives.
Areas of Specialty:
• Health Economics and Policy
• Health Outcomes in Vulnerable Populations
• Obesity Policy and Prevention
• Treatment of Substance Use Disorders
• Healthcare Administration
706.713.2692
www.publichealth.uga.edu/hpam

Health Promotion and Behavior
Training in this field enables health professionals to focus on the social and behavioral aspects of public health to reduce disease risk by modifying behaviors in the target population. Considering about half of all deaths are caused by preventable behaviors and exposures, there are significant opportunities for direct impact in this field. Health behavior researchers and practitioners develop interventions which lead to healthier lives.
Areas of Specialty:
• Health Risk Communication
• Injury and Violence Prevention
• Obesity Prevention
• Substance Abuse Prevention and Sexual Health
• Workplace Health
706.542.3313
www.publichealth.uga.edu/hpb

Center for Global Health
The Center for Global Health provides a platform and support infrastructure for international public health research initiatives of the College of Public Health and other health-oriented units at UGA. Global research and engagement is an essential component of the CPH mission. The Center looks beyond traditional study abroad and faculty exchange programs to support collaborative research and direct student participation in vital international projects.
706.542.2300
www.publichealth.uga.edu/cgh

Institute of Gerontology
The Institute of Gerontology is UGA’s hub for students and more than 25 faculty to foster innovation in education, research and outreach for older populations. The Institute focuses on interventions and policies to alleviate health disparities, improve housing, and promote psychological, physical, nutritional and financial well-being.
706.542.2539
www.publichealth.uga.edu/geron

Institute for Disaster Management
The Institute for Disaster Management seeks to reduce the casualties and social disruptions that occur because of natural disasters and man-made events, including the potential use of weapons of mass destruction. The Institute engages in risk analysis, long-term disaster planning to mitigate negative outcomes, training of emergency management professionals and the development of response capabilities and disaster management infrastructure.
706.542.2443
www.publichealth.uga.edu/dman

Working Groups
In addition to its departments, centers and institutes, the College is home to teams that combine expertise and work collaboratively in their research efforts. A few of these include:
• Biostatistics Collaborative Unit
• Cancer Epidemiology Working Group
• Economic Evaluation Research Group
• Traffic Safety Research and Evaluation Group
• Workplace Health Group
The UGA Health Sciences Campus

The Health Sciences Campus (HSC), which has become a central location and historic home for the College of Public Health, is a 58-acre property located between Prince and Oglethorpe Avenues near downtown Athens. It has a rich legacy in the Athens community. For more than 120 years, it has served students of various ages, levels and disciplines.

From 1891 to 1932, the campus served as the State Normal School, Georgia’s first teachers’ college and the historical center of what is now known as Athens’ Normaltown district. The oldest surviving buildings were built during this period, including the Carnegie Library Learning Center (CLLC). Built in 1910 with a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, the building now serves as a student center and digital library.

The campus served as the site for the U.S. Navy Supply Corps School from 1953 until 2005, when a series of federally mandated base closures paved the way for UGA to convert the historic site into the UGA Health Sciences Campus. In 2012, the College of Public Health officially held its first classes there while the College’s department of epidemiology and biostatistics became the first UGA unit to call the new campus home.

Now with more than 200 faculty and staff, 900 students and more than $30 million in active research funding, the College is the cornerstone of the campus in terms of enrollment and research funding.

The College, which shares the campus with Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership, continues to contribute to the HSC’s evolution as a primary hub of activity in the Athens medical services corridor along Prince Avenue. A fully functioning academic environment, the Health Sciences Campus offers housing, food services, library resources and recreational activities in addition to facilities for teaching and research.

“The campus has a rich legacy of education in the Athens community.”
Why Public Health?

A career in public health positions you at the cutting edge of health science, public policy, research and business. Public health is, by its nature, a field rooted in service, and our students and graduates are on the front lines of the greatest public health challenges of the day.

Each semester our students contribute more than 30,000 hours to communities, businesses and non-profit and government entities across our state and nation through experiential learning. Each graduate gains hands-on experience, ready to make an impact as they join more than 4,000 CPH alumni already at work being part of the solution.

Public health enacts positive change to better community health, improve economic outcomes and lays the foundation for a stronger tomorrow.

Whether you are interested in crunching numbers, conducting research or working with people, there is a place for you in the field of public health.

Public health is ideal for those who gain satisfaction knowing that they are working to improve the lives of others.

Where Our Students and Graduates Work

World Health Organization
Ministry of Health (Zambia, Africa)
American Red Cross
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institutes of Health
Environmental Protection Agency
National Cancer Institute
Cancer Treatment Centers of America
Athens Regional Health System
Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
Care Medical Savannah
Presbyterian Homes of Georgia
St. Mary’s Healthcare System
Blue Cross Blue Shield/Medpoint
Cigna Health Spring
Georgia Department of Public Health
Georgia Department of Human Services
North Carolina Department of Public Health
Boca Atlee Hamilton
Emert and Young
Grant Thornton, LLP
HealthMEDX
KPMG, LLC
Northips, Cowman

“I chose a degree in public health because I wanted to learn more about how policies bring about change and affect the system on a large scale.”

Brooke Douglas (MPH ’17)

Begin the Journey

For details about our programs and admission criteria, contact the College of Public Health or visit www.publichealth.uga.edu/admission.

To apply to the MPH program, submit your application through the Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS) at www.sophas.org.