Organizational Assessment of Trauma-Informed Care at Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. (HCH)

Ariella Zbar partnered with Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. (HCH) in her practicum to conduct an organizational assessment of trauma-informed care (TIC) at HCH. TIC is care that is sensitive to the manifestations of prior trauma (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder) and works to avoid re-traumatization. It also aims to prevent secondary trauma (i.e., burn-out) in those caring for individuals with a history of trauma. TIC is integral to providing care for persons experiencing homelessness, as it is in itself a traumatic experience. During her practicum, she worked with a team at HCH and a PhD candidate from Hopkins to conduct client interviews and staff surveys to assess whether HCH provides TIC. The results from these interviews and surveys will be analyzed to find areas in need of improvement as they relate to providing TIC (for example, if clients feel safe while attending HCH). Focus groups will be conducted to develop solutions and these will be presented to the organization’s leadership. The overall goal of this project is to ensure HCH is providing TIC to best care for some of the city’s most vulnerable populations.

As a primary care physician and a resident in public health and preventive medicine, an understanding of trauma-informed care will enhance Ariella’s future interactions with patients experiencing homelessness. Additionally, as community-academic relationships are becoming increasingly important in building strong public health involvement in communities, this work will advance her abilities to forge partnerships as a community-based public health physician. This practicum experience was a definite highlight of Ariella’s MPH studies and she is continuing to work with HCH to see the project through to completion.

About the JHSPH Student Practicum

All professional degree students complete a practicum experience to apply classroom knowledge and theory to real world public health practice problems.

A practicum experience involves a minimum of 100 hours, is supervised and evaluated by a faculty or field supervisor, and involves a population-level project framed and carried out within a public health practice context. Practicum placements can be in a variety of organizations, including local and state public health agencies, community-based organizations, as well as international non-governmental organizations and agencies.

“We are delighted to honor these inaugural Student Practicum Recognition Awarders for their outstanding public health practice contributions through partnership with community organizations and public health agencies. The practicum has been a wonderful addition to the MPH program. We look forward to the continued creation of practicum opportunities that benefit our students and the work of our School.”

— Marie Diener-West, PhD
Chair of the Master of Public Health Program

For more information, please visit http://www.jhsph.edu/offices-and-services/practice-and-training/practicum
Assessing the Impact of Home-Delivered Meals on Health Outcomes and Healthcare Costs

Student: Phillip Gross, MPH ’14
Partner: Moveable Feast
Course: Baltimore Community Practicum (BCP)

Phillip Gross’s practicum was completed with Moveable Feast, a non-profit organization that prepares and delivers nutritious meals at no cost for people living with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening chronic diseases. He conducted a cross-sectional survey to assess the impact of the home-delivered meals on both the health outcomes and healthcare costs of its clients. Findings from this endeavor informed the development of a white paper and advocacy efforts.

Systematic Improvement Recommendations for Baltimore City’s Summer Food Service Program

Student: Sara McClean, MPH ’14
Partner: Baltimore City Food Policy and Baltimore Partnership to End Childhood Hunger

Sara McClean partnered with the Baltimore City Food Policy Director and the Program Director of the Baltimore Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in her practicum to create a policy document regarding meal quality and food procurement practices for Baltimore City’s federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The practicum goal was to create a document to serve as a starting point for making systematic improvements to Baltimore City’s SFSP implementation, as well as to provide assistance directly how the policy process works in this area. The students hope that their work will have an impact on public health policy related to the addition of caffeine to foods.

Post-conflict Reconciliation and Health Delivery in Kigutu, Burundi

Student: Cathryn Christensen, MPH ’14
Partner: Village Health Works (VHW)

Cathryn’s practicum was completed in partnership with the NGO Village Health Works (VHW), a community-based organization founded in 2006 in Kigutu, Burundi. The aim of the practicum was to understand, document, and maximize VHW’s role in promoting post-conflict reconciliation. The practicum included both a literature review and an on-site component. The literature review examined existing research on how health care organizations have impacted the ongoing role with the organization.

Toolkit Development to Inform Current Landscape of HIV/AIDS among Key Populations in High Impact Africa

Student: Kim Dam, MPH ’14

Kim Dam’s practicum involved working with The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria to develop a funding toolkit for in-country managers and funding portfolio managers. The toolkit consists of summaries of data (such as size estimates, coverage indicators, etc.) to inform the current landscape of HIV/AIDS among key populations based on existing evidence and identify gaps in country-specific HIV/AIDS program areas. Kim worked closely with staff, students and fellows from both the Center and The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) to create concise, yet rigorous, evidence-based summaries and tools based on the latest science on HIV/AIDS of key populations. The team summarized findings such as size estimates, prevalence, current coverage, indicators and targets to over 13 countries considered to be part of “High Impact Africa.” The Global Fund will utilize the data from the toolkit to inform their funding allocations to countries.

Understanding funding mechanisms can have tremendous impact on the ability to allocate resources efficiently and equitably. Thus, this practicum experience enabled Kim to get a reach of the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in key populations, and address larger structural inequalities that continue to criminalize and ostracize such communities. Kim’s passions lie in ensuring that the most marginalized populations, particularly those in low-resource or rural areas, have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The practicum has given Kim the experience and perspective, along with qualitative and qualitative skills, to gather the evidence to begin addressing these complex issues. Kim aims to apply skills gained in this experience to her future goals to create public health interventions to address gender, migration and labor inequalities.

Yvonne Kingon partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) in her practicum to develop the first multimedia education program for people living with HIV/AIDS entitled, “Positively!”. Positively! is a computer-based set of learning modules combining animation, live-action sequences, voiceover narration, and hyperlinks to deliver educational messages to people with HIV/AIDS, particularly those with limited literacy about their diagnosis, treatment and prevention. As an HIV provider for over a decade, Yvonne provided expert consultation in the script development and production, as well as identifying resources and performing in an on-camera HIV provider speaking role.

The project provided Yvonne with new perspectives on population health, illuminating the concept that caring for a community as a whole, rather than for individual patients, requires a different level of fortitude and patience. Although the concept of community health is discussed in classes and addressed in assignments, it cannot be fully understood until immersed into such an effort, such as Yvonne’s work on Positively! This work gave Yvonne a first-hand perspective of a resource-limited but dedicated-rich municipal health department. Upon graduation, Yvonne plans to build on the relationships she developed in her practicum to become a permanent member of Baltimore’s HIV care community.

Phillip Gross’s practicum was completed with Moveable Feast, a non-profit organization that prepares and delivers nutritious meals at no cost for people living with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening chronic diseases. He conducted a cross-sectional survey to assess the impact of the home-delivered meals on both the health outcomes and healthcare costs of its clients. Findings from this endeavor informed the development of a white paper and advocacy efforts.

Phillip initiated his practicum with a literature review of food insecurity and food security interventions, as well as an assessment of initiatives of similar non-profit organizations around the country and consultation in the script development and production, as well as identifying resources and performing in an on-camera HIV provider speaking role.

The project provided Yvonne with new perspectives on population health, illuminating the concept that caring for a community as a whole, rather than for individual patients, requires a different level of fortitude and patience. Although the concept of community health is discussed in classes and addressed in assignments, it cannot be fully understood until immersed into such an effort, such as Yvonne’s work on Positively! This work gave Yvonne a first-hand perspective of a resource-limited but dedicated-rich municipal health department. Upon graduation, Yvonne plans to build on the relationships she developed in her practicum to become a permanent member of Baltimore’s HIV care community.