

# 2014-2015 MPH Practicum Award Recipients

The 2014-2015 awardees are:



**Marissa A. Boeck**

**Project Title:** The Implementation and Assessment of a Trauma Registry in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia

**Partner Organization:** Clinica Foianini

Marissa completed her practicum in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia where she addressed the widespread lack of injury data and fragmented emergency medical and trauma services that are common in low- and middle-income countries. She completed trauma and surgical capacity assessments at three main hospitals in the city, investigated a current emergency response system through focused interviews, and implemented the pilot phase of a hospital-based trauma registry at Clinica Foianini, a private, 50-bed facility that is locally recognized as a top institution for trauma and critical care. The pilot trauma registry was centered in the Emergency Department, using the Panamerican Trauma Society's 25 data point essential elements software. Through discussions with key healthcare and emergency response personnel, Marissa uncovered an unmet need for accessible, affordable first responder training. This led her team to expand their objectives to include the development of a sustainable, low-cost or free training course for laypeople and healthcare workers through partnerships with local stakeholders. There are plans to expand the program to additional facilities in the coming year, with the long-term goal of a national registry. Through these and additional important interventions, the goal is to bring sustainable improvements to an area that urgently needs it, with projected positive impacts across Bolivia for improved care of the injured patient.



### **Ayla Ann Erzurum Cash**

**Project Title:** Defining the Epidemiologic and Biologic Landscape of HIV-Infected Deceased Donors in the United States

**Partner Organizations:** Epidemiology Research Group in Organ Transplantation at JHU, The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland, The Association of Organ Procurement Organizations, the United Network for Organ Sharing

Ayla's practicum project worked toward implementation of the landmark HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act, which was unanimously passed by congress and signed into law on November 21, 2013. The HOPE Act repeals the prohibition of acquisition of HIV+ organs at a congressional level; calling for clinical research on HIV infected deceased donors (HIVDD) and HIV-to-HIV transplantation. Organs from HIVDD represent a unique potential resource for HIV+ individuals on the transplant waitlist. In addition, every HIV+ recipient that receives an organ from a HIVDD would, in turn, decrease the wait time for HIV- individuals as well. Therefore, HIVDD could attenuate the organ shortage for both HIV+ and HIV- individuals, resulting in a far-reaching public health impact. For Ayla's practicum, she developed a comprehensive survey that assessed the number of HIV+ referrals each of the 60 national Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) receives. She also collaborated with these OPOs to introduce each OPO CEO and medical director to the public health impact of the HOPE Act. She also led several meetings across the country to enroll these OPOs onto a multi-center national study entitled "*HOPE in Action*", which aims to define the biological and epidemiological landscape of HIVDD. The ultimate aim of these efforts is to attenuate the organ shortage in this country, which could have a far-reaching public health impact for such patients and their families.



### **Jerome B. Chelliah**

**Project Title:** Achieving Domestic Violence and Bullying Prevention through Academic Public Partnerships

**Partner Organization:** Maryland Network against Domestic Violence

Jerome's practicum work focused on violence prevention in Maryland through partnerships with local, community, and state organizations. First he conducted an evaluation of six hospital-based domestic violence programs in the Baltimore-Metropolitan area. Jerome collected quantitative data from the six hospitals, compiled a master dataset, ran analysis, and wrote and presented the findings along with recommendations to the six-hospital directors. Next, Jerome evaluated a domestic violence counseling program in Frederick County; he conducted qualitative interviews with the counselors, collected, recorded, and analyzed primary data, wrote and presented findings to the program directors. He is now in the process of writing the manuscript and final report to be submitted to the executive board of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Lastly, Jerome evaluated a bullying prevention campaign in Howard County. Jerome helped formulate pre and post campaign surveys, managed and collected survey results via an online platform, and ran preliminary data analysis. Jerome's energy, hard work and enthusiasm have enhanced Maryland's capacity to better protect victims of domestic violence.



**Sunny Lai**

**Project Title:** Moving In, Moving Up, Moving Forward: Developing an Assessment Tool for Identifying People Ready to Transition from Permanent Supportive Housing into Independent Housing

**Partner Organization:** AIDS Interfaith Residential Services (AIRS)

**Johns Hopkins Course:** Baltimore Community Practicum (BCP)

Sunny completed her practicum with the AIDS Interfaith Residential Services (AIRS), a permanent supportive housing agency in Baltimore, to launch the formative stage of a “Moving On” program. This program has potential to help tenants achieve self-sufficiency through independent housing, with the added benefit of enabling AIRS to open units to chronically homeless individuals. Sunny completed a literature review of best practices, identified numerous metrics for self-sufficiency and networked with permanent supportive housing agencies around the country doing similar work. She also created an assessment tool for case managers to use to identify tenants who are well suited to transition to independent living as well as an executive summary synthesizing all of the “Moving On” programs across the nation. Sunny’s work not only supported the development of a “Moving On” program in Baltimore, but will also guide the way she takes care of patients as a future urban family medicine physician and her work as a community health advocate.



**Ivan Pynshngain Marbaniang**

**Project Title:** Assessing Methodologies to Improve Linkage to HIV/STI Testing and Health Promotion among Indian MSM

**Partner Organization:** YRGCARE Chennai, India

Ivan completed his practicum in Chennai, India proposing new methods to increase the volume at specialized MSM counseling and testing centers in three Indian cities. Ivan conducted multiple focus group discussions with the men who attended the centers, outreach workers who helped in recruiting these men, and the staff employed at these centers (e.g., site manager, counselor, nurse, laboratory technician). These findings were then used to cultivate promotional campaigns that were in line with city-specific demographics, create health promotional material for the centers, and develop a formal feedback evaluation form to be used across other MSM centers. In collaboration with YRGCARE, new services were introduced at these centers based on the Ivan’s work to enhance disease prevention in this community including counseling services for alcohol dependence and sexual abuse.



**Shayanne Noelle Martin**

**Project Title:** Development and Delivery of a Health Curriculum for Students at The Door, Grades 1-5

**Partner Organization:** The Door

**Johns Hopkins Course:** Baltimore Community Practicum (BCP)

Shayanne completed her practicum in partnership with The Door, a faith-based organization serving East Baltimore, to develop and deliver a health curriculum for the students enrolled in The Door's Generation E4 after-school program. The project aimed to create a fun, comprehensive health curriculum promoting healthy behaviors and attitudes. Shayanne created a series of interactive lessons to address youth health-risk behaviors identified by the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. The curriculum covers nutrition, physical activity, social and emotional health, hygiene and wellness, safety, and tobacco and alcohol use. Each week, she delivered separate age-specific lessons to the 1st-2nd graders and 3rd-5th graders. To enhance use of the program in future years, she redesigned each lesson based on student and teacher feedback. Shayanne's work aimed to offer lasting opportunities to empower students to improve their health.



**Nicky Mehtani**

**Project Title:** Program Evaluation of Maiti Nepal's NAANI Program: Shifting Perspectives from Experiential to Data-Driven Outreach Activities that Combat Human Trafficking

**Partner Organization:** Maiti Nepal

Nicky completed her practicum in Nepal with an evaluation of the NAANI program, a program engaging pairs of young women—termed NAANIs—who serve as full-time advocates against sex trafficking for their rural villages by utilizing a variety of outreach activities. Nicky used the CHW Assessment & Improvement Matrix (CHW AIM), a validated toolkit published by USAID, as a way to assess NAANI program impacts and develop an evidence base of best practices. In addition to observing NAANIs from two rural districts in action through field visits, her team conducted interviews with eight NAANIs and discussed their findings with the NAANI Program Coordinator upon returning to Kathmandu. After conducting the evaluation, the team designed interventions—including the addition of a mobile data collection tool—for the NAANI programs to enhance their ability to promote community awareness of human trafficking, safe migration, gender violence and women's rights.

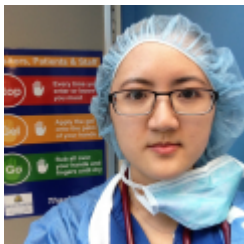


**Abhirami Rajagopal**

**Project Title:** Tools and Process Map for Cultural and Linguistic Competency Assessment of Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services

**Partner Organization:** Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services

Abhirami completed her practicum project with the Harris County, Texas Public Health and Environmental Services Department (HCPHES). Abhirami designed a process to assess HCPHES's organizational cultural and linguistic competence to use during their local public health department accreditation process by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). HCPHES serves Harris County, one of the most diverse counties in the US, encompassing the Houston-Woodlands-Sugarland metropolitan area. With a population of over 5 million, it is the largest county in Texas and the third largest county in the US. Abhirami identified cultural and linguistic competence assessment tools designed for the local health department setting and appropriate for systems-level assessment. She also met with internal subject matter experts on the application of potential tools and created a process map for the assessment. In addition to enhancing the department's public health accreditation readiness, her work allowed for long-term improvements to the department's cultural and linguistic competence and efforts toward health equity by promoting the health of all county residents.



**Rebecca Yuen Shi Wong**

**Project Title:** Opening of a New Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Zorzor, Liberia

**Partner Organization:** Aspen Medical USA

Rebecca's practicum focused on opening a new USAID-funded Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Zorzor to address the Ebola epidemic that claimed the lives of over 4,000 Liberians. Previously, the closest ETU to Zorzor was located 3 hours' drive away in the next county. Its proximity to Guinea made it a strategic location in the preparation to respond to any potential cross-border Ebola transmission. Upon arrival in Liberia, Rebecca was assigned as the senior medical officer of an ETU and became heavily involved in the process of setting up the new ETU; this consisted of collaborating with representatives of the Liberian Ministry of Health as well as other NGOs and hiring and training local staff. This work was a crucial component of the public health response to the Ebola epidemic.



**Group Award: Will Hebert, Elyse Lasser,  
Mahendra Naidoo, Andrew Seiden**

**Project Title:** Mental Health Services and  
Baltimore City Schools

**Partner Organization:** The Baltimore Curriculum  
Project

**Johns Hopkins Course:** Formulating Policy:  
Strategies and Systems of Policymaking in the  
21st Century

William, Elyse, Mahendra, and Andrew collectively worked with the Baltimore Curriculum Project (BCP) to understand the school system and make recommendations as to how to optimize mental health service provision to students in the BCP charter school network. The team conducted a needs assessment and gap analysis on schools supported by BCP to better identify gaps in mental health service provision. Additionally, they reviewed the available literature and history of mental health services in Baltimore City Schools. The team interviewed key stakeholders, including principals, psychologists, and district managers, to gain their perspective on mental health policy, provider issues, funding structures, and legal liability. In conducting the interviews, the team was able to clarify the complex system of hierarchies, contracting, and funding schemes, as well as serve as a communication link among the stakeholders and provide contact information for the key players. The team presented their findings and resource information to all the BCP directors who are now able to disseminate and act on this information. The team's constructive input has enhanced communications and laid the groundwork for sustainable improvements in mental health service provision.

For information about the nomination process for the Practicum Awards, please [visit here](#).  
For more information about the Office of Public Health Practice and Training, please [visit here](#).