

### Program Director

#### **Karen A. McDonnell, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor

Department of Prevention and Community Health

George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services

2175 K Street NW Suite 700

Washington, DC 20037

Phone: (202)994-6823

[kmcdonne@gwu.edu](mailto:kmcdonne@gwu.edu)

### Mission

The mission of the Department of Prevention and Community Health in graduating Doctoral-level professionals within this specialty field is to create a cadre of professionals who are uniquely equipped to provide leadership at the in the field of Health Behavior. The DrPH program in Health Behavior is based on the ecological model of health and well-being and is aimed at understanding and having an impact on the health of populations and cultures, with special emphasis upon underserved populations. Within the DrPH program in Health Behavior students can focus their coursework in **Health Behavior** or **Health Communications and Social Marketing**. Our graduates are prepared to apply their research and analytic skills to a range of implementation, evaluation, and advocacy needs of various cultural and socioeconomic groups and communities.

### Admissions Requirements

The Doctor of Public Health Program is designed for professionals seeking to become public health leaders. Applicants who have completed an MPH degree from a Council of Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited program are strongly preferred for admission to the DrPH Program. Alternatively, applicants with a master's degree in another field may indicate their relevant training, research experience, or educational background comparable to the MPH. Doctoral applicants admitted without an MPH will be required to take additional course work at the graduate level that does not apply toward the minimum 60 credits required. For the DrPH, qualified applicants with degrees from institutions in foreign countries are also eligible for admission. All applicants must submit scores from the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) taken within five years of the date of application. Because admission to this program is highly selective, successful applicants have competitive academic credentials and substantial prior public health professional work experience related to the specialty field to which they are applying.

### DrPH Competencies

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) Program prepares professionals to assume national and international leadership positions in environmental and occupational health, global health, health behavior, and health policy. The field of public health provides unique insights into the complex interrelationships between health, politics, and human development. It enables professionals to address public health issues by marshalling research and analytic skills to develop innovative approaches to understand health and to promote and advocate for improved health outcomes. Upon completion of the DrPH, students in all programs will demonstrate ability in the core competencies listed here: [http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/academicprograms/programs/doctor\\_public\\_health/Core%20Competencies.pdf](http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/academicprograms/programs/doctor_public_health/Core%20Competencies.pdf)

### Program-Specific Competencies

On completion of the DrPH Program, students will possess the following functional competencies and subject area knowledge:

- Evaluate research tools including research design, statistical analysis data collection instruments and measurement systems. Evaluation will be based on course requirements (PubH 8408, 8409, 8410, 8416, 8417, 8418, 8419, 8420, 8422), answers to comprehensive examination questions, and dissertation defense.
- Apply epidemiological and biostatistical techniques to studies designed to assure effective practice and policy decision-making in a field within public health. Students will possess epidemiological and biostatistical concepts/techniques necessary to successfully analyze and apply the results to epidemiological research to making and implementing complex decisions in a field within public health

and related to public health practice. Evaluation based on completion of courses (PubH 8408, 8416, 8418, 8420), comprehensive examination, and dissertation defense.

- Assess public health problems; analyze quantitative data; and design public health studies including sampling and hypothesis testing. Evaluation based on completion of courses (PubH 8408, 8409, 8416, 8418, 8420), comprehensive examination, and dissertation defense.
- Use the basic concepts of public health practice and the philosophy of social science to justify dissertation research. Evaluation will be based on completion of appropriate courses (PubH 8402, 8408, 8409, 8410, 8416, 8418, 8420, 8422), comprehensive examination, and dissertation defense.
- Identify an area of interest within public health and develop a level of knowledge that will allow use of appropriate conceptual or theoretical models and build on the current state of the art in that topic area. Develop research agendas and questions. Completion of individualized study courses, doctoral seminars, and the comprehensive examination will assess preparation in this area.
- Possess graduate-level competence in Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Environmental Health, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Health Administration. Preparation will be assessed based on completion of prior MPH degree, coursework at the graduate level (in the case of environmental health, health behavior, and health administration, these may need to be in addition to DrPH program requirements), or successfully pass an examination to assure MPH-level competence in these core public health areas.
- Attain the skills necessary to conduct doctoral level research that involves a problem-based inquiry in a real world setting in student's specialty area of public health. Evaluation will be based on successful defense of a dissertation proposal and final dissertation.
- In addition: those students who specialize in Public Health Communications and Marketing will demonstrate competence with state-of-the-art methods and technologies used in the specialty area of health communication and social marketing including, but not limited to: web-based research and program delivery; social media; handheld devices for research and program delivery.

**Course Distribution Summary**

- Total Credits = Minimum 60
- Transfer Credit Maximum = 12
- Required Foundation Courses and Research Methods = 20 credits
- Required Specialty Field Courses = 6 credits
- Specialty Field Electives = 14 to 20 credits
- Professional Leadership = 6 credits
- Dissertation Preparation and Dissertation = 8 to 14 credits

**REQUIRED FOUNDATIONAL COURSES AND RESEARCH METHODS  
 20 CREDITS**

Course	Title	Credits	Semester Taken/ Proposed	Grade	Waive	Transferred
PubH 8401	Foundations of Public Health Leadership and Practice– Doctoral Seminar	3	Fall Year 1			
PubH 8402	Leadership in Public Health Practice and Policy	2	Spring Year 2			
PubH 8416	Doctoral Research Methods I: Study Design and Evaluation	3	Fall Year 1			
PubH 8417	Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis Prereq: PubH 8416	3	Summer Year 1			
PubH 8418	Doctoral Research Methods II: Applications Prereq: PubH 8416	3	Spring Year 1			
PubH 8419	Measurement in Public Health and Health Services Research – Doctoral Seminar Prereq: PubH 8418	3	Spring Year 2			
PubH 8420	Doctoral Research Methods III: Analysis and Dissemination Prereq: PubH 8417, PubH 8418	3	Fall Year 2			

**REQUIRED SPECIALTY FIELD COURSES  
 CHOOSE 6 CREDITS**

**SAMPLE COURSES BELOW – OTHER COURSES MAY BE TAKEN WITH ADVISOR’S APPROVAL**

Course	Title	Credits	Semester Taken/ Proposed	Grade
PubH 8408	Advanced Topics – Health Behavior Research and Practice Application – Doctoral Seminar	3	Year 1 or Year 2	
PubH 8409	Advanced Topics – Health Communications Research – Doctoral Seminar Prereq: PubH 8408	3	Year 1 or Year 2	
PubH 8410	Advanced Topics – Social Marketing Research and Practice Application – Doctoral Seminar Prereq: PubH 6572, PubH 6571	3	Year 1 or Year 2	

**REQUIRED SPECIALTY FIELD ELECTIVE COURSES**

**14 CREDITS\***

\*(TAKE UP TO 6 ADDITIONAL ELECTIVE CREDITS IF DISSERTATION CREDITS TOTAL LESS THAN 12)

**SAMPLE COURSES BELOW – OTHER COURSES MAY BE TAKEN WITH ADVISOR'S APPROVAL**

Course	Title	Credits	Semester Taken/ Proposed	Grade	Waived	Transferred
PubH 6500	Planning and Administration of Health Promotion/ Disease Prevention Programs	2				
PubH 6531	Health Promotion in Healthcare Settings	2				
PubH 6532	Community Organization, Development and Advocacy	3				
PubH 6533	Design & Conduct of Community Health Surveys	2				
PubH 6534	Community Based Participatory Research	1				
PubH 6570	Advanced Public Health Communication: Theory and Practice	3				
PubH 6571	Social Marketing: Theory and Practice	3				
EDUC 8131	Case Study Research Methods	3				
EDUC 8140	Ethnographic Research Methods	3				
EDUC 8172	Multivariate Analysis	3				
PSYC 8204	Biological Basis of Behavior	3				
PSYC 8231	Development of Psychometric Instruments	3				
PSYC 8277	Health Psychology	3				
PSYC 8278	Behavioral Medicine	3				
PSYC 8287	Cross Cultural Psychology	3				

**PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP COURSES**

**6 CREDITS**

Course	Title	Credits	Semester Taken / Proposed	Waived	Grade
PubH 8413	Research Leadership	Varies			
PubH 8414	Policy/Management Leadership	Varies			
PubH 8415	Instructional Leadership	Varies			

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

**DISSERTATION PREPARATION AND DISSERTATION**

**8 TO 14 CREDITS\***

Course	Title	Credits	Semester Taken/ Proposed	Grade
PubH 8422	Advanced Health Care and Public Health Research Design Prerequisites: Passing Comprehensive Exams, Approval of the Program Director, and a page- long abstract that includes the following: Student Name, Program Director, Faculty Advisor if different from the Program Director, Title, Objective (including population), Research Methods and Analysis Methods, Anticipated Results/Hypotheses.	2		
PubH 8423	Dissertation Research DrPH Degree Dissertation Research Prereq: PubH 8422	6 to 12 credits required	Multiple – may be taken in increments of 1 to 12 credits	

**Health Behavior Doctoral students interested in electives offered by other departments within SPHHS should access the Program Guides for those department doctoral programs, or the Schedule of Classes, to identify other electives offered.**

DrPH Course Descriptions Health Behavior				
PubH (402)	8401	Foundations of Public Health Leadership and Practice- Doctoral Seminar	3	This interactive seminar course provides doctoral students a fundamental understanding of the history and current issues associated with the four principal program areas: Health Policy, Health Behavior, Global Health & Environmental & Occupational Health. Fall
PubH (401)	8402	Leadership in Public Health Practice and Policy	2	Principles of public health practice and policy with a focus on the interdisciplinary and strategic application of skills, knowledge and competencies necessary both to perform public health core functions and to enhance the capacity to perform these functions. Spring
PubH (405)	8408	Advanced Topics – Health Behavior Research and Practice Application	3	Advanced topics relating theory to practice in areas of health education and behavioral change. Application of qualitative and quantitative research to health related behavior at individual and community levels. Spring
PubH (409)	8409	Advanced Topics – Health Communications Research	3	Examines the methods of communications research designated to alter health behavior. Emphasis placed on critical analysis of communications research aimed at the mass public, groups, and interpersonal level. Prerequisite: PubH 8408
PubH (421)	8410	Advanced Topics- Social Marketing Research and Practice Application- Doctoral Seminar	3	Advanced topics relating social marketing research in areas of health education and behavioral change. Application of social marketing practice to health related behavior at individual and community levels. Prerequisites: PubH 6572 & 6571.
PubH (413)	8413	Research Leadership	1 to 6	Students participate in a range of activities designed to develop and enhance their research methods and analytic skills. These activities include participating in the development and submission of sponsored research proposals; being formally affiliated with a research project, assuming responsibility for completing a real-world research project; engaging in empirical data collection and analysis efforts.
PubH (414)	8414	Policy/Management Leadership	1 to 6	Students participate in a range of activities designed to develop and enhance their management, leadership and policymaking skills as applied to problem solving in real-world settings, such as public health departments, community health centers, legislative settings, and public or teaching hospitals.
PubH (412)	8415	Instructional Leadership	1 to 6	Students participate in a range of activities designed to develop and enhance their teaching skills. These activities include course development, teaching master's level courses, acting as TA for undergraduate courses, advising students about their class performance, evaluating student performance, and developing remedial programs for students.
PubH (416)	8416	Doctoral Research Methods I: Study Design and Evaluation Research	3	Prepares doctoral students to design and conduct program and policy evaluation in public health. Intensive introduction to the principles of study program design and evaluation research emphasizing the ability to synthesize the population-based intervention literature, apply planning and management methods, describe and apply research methods from a range of disciplines, and prepare a program research proposal. Fall
PubH (415)	8417	Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis	3	Techniques for designing and conducting qualitative research and for analyzing and reporting qualitative data relevant to program development and implementation, community assessment, and policy analysis. Prerequisite: PubH 8416. Summer
PubH (419)	8418	Doctoral Research Methods II: Statistical Methods	3	Intensive course in data management and data analysis using STATA®. Database management system techniques and data analytical strategies for the appropriate analysis of data sets obtained from a variety of studies will be presented. The student will manipulate national data sets from epidemiological studies as well as Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data. Prereq: PubH 8416. Spring
PubH (403)	8419	Measurement in Public Health and Health Services Research	3	In this course students review principles of measurement and assessment as they apply to public health and health services research constructs, review existing state-of-the-art measures of individual and population health status (e.g., morbidity, mortality, functioning and health-related quality of life) and of individual and community health behavior, and explores current measurement issues in health research. Prerequisite: PubH 8418. Spring

PubH (420)	8420	Doctoral Research Methods III: Advanced Analysis and Dissemination	3	Advanced multivariate data analyses of complex datasets and programs, including advanced cross-sectional techniques, time-series analysis, and the use of panel data. Evaluation of results, and dissemination of findings to relevant stakeholders. Prereq: PubH 8417, 8418. Fall
PubH (417)	8422	Advanced Health Care and Public Health Research Design	2	Design of protocol suitable for implementation as part of Doctor of Public Health dissertation requirement. Prerequisites: Passing Comprehensive Exams, Approval of the Program Director, and a page-long abstract that includes the following: Student Name, Program Director, Faculty Advisor if different from the Program Director, Title, Objective (including population), Research Methods and Analysis Methods, Anticipated Results/Hypotheses. Grade = Credit/No Credit. Fall, Spring
PubH (418)	8423	Dissertation Research	1 to 12	Dissertation Research for DrPH. Prereq: PubH 8422.