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Practicum Site:
Tennessee Department of Health
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Primary Prevention: Physical Activity Education for Providers at the Tennessee Department of Health

Background: I completed my practicum at the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), specifically in the Office of Primary Prevention. The Office of Primary Prevention (OPP) is focused on upstream solutions to prevent disease in Tennessee through parks and greenways, the built environment, smoking prevention, and many more. I participated in a variety of meetings and projects and got to explore many aspects of public health. I attended weekly meetings with the Office of Primary Prevention staff, as well as Executive Leadership, and was able to attend a variety of intern seminars, including a tour of Williamson County Health Department. I attended a luncheon at the State Residence, along with various informational sessions about other departments within TDH. One of the main areas that TDH is focusing its efforts on is physical activity. My primary project was to help develop a physical activity resource guide for TDH clinicians and work with University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (UTC) MPH faculty on the planning process for a physical activity course for TDH staff.

Methods: I reviewed and provided input on a physical activity resource guide that would disseminated among TDH clinics across the state. I communicated weekly with an UTC MPH faculty member who had previously created and presented physical activity education courses to providers. We discussed how to improve and build upon the work he had already done and how best to cater the content for TDH clinicians. I traveled to Chattanooga to meet with the UTC MPH faculty to collaborate and to discuss the project in person.

Results: The physical activity resource guide was reviewed and edited by OPP staff and will be going through the TDH approval process for printing and dissemination. The physical activity course meeting in Chattanooga resulted in an exchange of ideas and information, the physical activity course content was outlined along with the development of a project timeline.

Conclusion: I assisted in the development of a physical activity resource guide for TDH clinics and worked on the planning process for a physical activity course for TDH clinicians. I also assisted with a variety of other small projects and met many public health professionals who are working to improve the health of Tennesseans. I was fortunate to have exposure to many areas within TDH and to see public health in action at the state level. It was a great experience and I would definitely encourage future MPH students to take advantage of interning at TDH.