

Guiding our Master of Public Health (MPH) Program: The Value of a Community Advisory Board

Since the inception of JSPH in 2008, the MPH program has worked closely with a Community Advisory Board (CAB). The growth of the MPH over time has created a need to broaden the scope of the CAB. The purpose of this change is to expand the focus of the MPH program through greater community voice from a wide range of health and social service professionals representing numerous organizations and initiatives in the greater Philadelphia region. This input will help guide our MPH program over the next several years and contribute greatly to the development of self-study as we prepare for the [Council of Education for Public Health \(CEPH\)](#) re-accreditation site visit in May 2016.

The MPH CAB will review key documents and provide recommendations on major components of our self-study. This review will include an evaluation of the program's goals and objectives, the quality of our program, faculty and student achievements, program infrastructure and sustainability, workforce development, and diversity.

Eighteen public and community health and social service professionals have agreed to serve on our program's CAB. Representatives from federal and local public health agencies, non-profit community health coalitions and organizations, private foundations, health insurance organizations, public health programs from other universities, and MPH program alumni participate in our MPH CAB, chaired by Mahak Nayyar, MPA, FCPP, Deputy Regional Health Administrator for the Region III Office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

At each meeting, representatives share their highlights of current programs and focus on opportunities for our MPH program and students to become directly engaged in important initiatives that impact on public health directly or indirectly via key social determinants of health. Examples of such future initiatives include:

- A collaboration with Pathways to Housing and the Bryn Mawr School of Social Work and Social Research for public health and social work students to be trained to work with homeless populations;

- Working with populations and service organizations on a re-entry from prison coalition; and
- Community health assessments, programs and policies engaging planning agencies and public health. These initiatives were originated through representatives on our MPH CAB from the Center City District, the Federation of Neighborhood Centers, and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and Department of Public Health.

We look forward to the continued engagement, and support from members of our MPH Community Advisory Board in the years ahead to accomplish our MPH Program Mission to: "Develop future public health leaders through multidisciplinary and experiential education, research, practice and service in order to improve and sustain the health and well-being of populations."

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