

South Carolina Public Health Training Center

University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health



Overview

- Over the last decade, numerous studies report that the South Carolina public health workforce has virtually no academic training in public health and little opportunity for professional development. These studies also suggest the need for locally accessible, competency-based continuing education programs. The South Carolina Public Health Training Center (PHTC) addresses these needs with its mission to strengthen the public health infrastructure through a comprehensive educational and experiential approach to workforce development.
- Located in Columbia, the Center primarily serves SC's public health workforce, partnering with the state's lead governmental public health organization, the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Key Activities

The anticipated long-term outcomes of the PHTC are a stronger, more competent workforce and greater organizational capacity of academic and practice partners to jointly address public health problems in SC. The PHTC will be informed by state-wide assessments and collaborative practice-based research targeting local populations and providing the foundation for public health workforce training in a state with crippling health challenges and severe health disparities. These challenges are highlighted by a unique combination of medical, behavioral, economic, and social barriers to public health. Through the following goals, the PHTC will emerge as a critical component of efforts to improve public health in SC:

- Develop a sustainable infrastructure for public health workforce development.
- Assure equal access of Center resources to rural, underserved populations.
- Share expertise and resources to contribute to National PHTC Network objectives for public health workforce development.
- Assess the learning needs and assets of the public health workforce.
- Provide competency-based training programs.
- Expand practice-based research, service, and education through collaborative projects and field placements.
- Contribute to the scholarship of workforce development through evaluation, dissemination, and translation.

Public Health in Action



2011 Field Placement Cohort of ASPH Graduate Students

Impact on Public Health Workforce

- MySPH, the Center's web portal, is a one-stop clearinghouse for academic/practice partnerships, including student placements, training opportunities, news and events, and other collaborative opportunities. By directing interaction through MySPH, the Center also aims to increase technology skills among students, faculty/staff, and practitioners.
- The Continuing Education component includes the Continuing Education Program in Public Health Practice certification, with the pre-requisite, Introduction to Public Health, and five completely online courses: Public Health Data 101, Financial Management, Community Assessment, Policy & Advocacy, and EBPH: Planning & Evaluation. To further serve the eight DHEC regions that cover South Carolina, the Center is developing and will maintain a Virtual Campus, administered through MySPH, to allow equitable access to all SC public health practitioners, regardless of location. This Virtual Campus will contain Center- developed trainings (on-demand and scheduled), resources, tutorials, etc.
- The Graduate Student Field Placement Program began in May with the 2011 cohort of 11 graduate students placed in underserved regions throughout SC. The field placements were advertised, facilitated, and monitored through MySPH. The field placement program will build on the existing placement program and provide students with training opportunities within DHEC in rural areas throughout SC; this will contribute to the development of Communities of Practice.
- Workforce Development Program has created a partnership with DHEC to assess its workforce. This has included cross walking Council on Linkages' Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals with 11 DHEC discipline area competency sets, vetting these cross walked sets with discipline subject matter experts, and developing a Skills-Gap Assessment instrument. Currently, a competency management system is being developed that will house the online workforce assessment survey (to be administered in August, 2011) where workers will have access to their results linked to development resources.

Key Partners

- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)
 - DHEC Health Services
 - DHEC Central Office
 - DHEC Health Regions
- USC Arnold School of Public Health
- South Carolina Public Health Consortium
- Diabetes Today Advisory Council
- South Carolina Public Health Association
- South Carolina Public Health Institute
- The Institute for Partnerships to Eliminate Health Disparities
- USC University Technology Services
- USC Office of Continuing Education and Credits

Leadership

Principal Investigator: Gregory Hand, PhD, MPH

Co-Principal Investigator: Lillian U. Smith, DrPH, MPH

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HRSA Public Health Training Centers



The Health Resources and Services Administration funded Public Health Training Centers (PHTC) are partnerships between accredited schools of public health, related academic institutions, and public health agencies and organizations. The PHTC Network improves the Nation's public health system by strengthening the technical, scientific, managerial, and leadership competence of current and future public health professionals. Public Health Training Centers assess the learning needs of the public health workforce, provide accessible training, and work with organizations to meet other strategic planning, education, and resource needs.

<http://www.publichealthtrainingcenters.org>



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