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**UAB School of Public Health**  
**Department of Health Behavior**  
**MSPH**  
**Student Handbook**  
**2018-19**

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# 1

## Introduction to the Program

The [Department of Health Behavior](#) trains students to conduct research, and to develop, evaluate, implement and disseminate programs that address the public's health. The Department offers Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees.

The MSPH degree in Health Behavior addresses the behavioral, social, and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities. Students in our program are able to apply social and behavioral science theories to public health problems, develop health promotion interventions and disease prevention programs, and evaluate health promotion interventions and disease prevention programs. We emphasize the importance of community-based participatory research and the application of research findings through a variety of behavioral and social science health promotion strategies. Classes are designed to be engaging, interactive, and relevant to current health behavior issues. Health behavior students have opportunities to become involved in faculty research projects on a broad range of health issues such as behavioral interventions, family and adolescent health, obesity prevention, prevention and control of addictive behaviors, sexual health risks including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, community based health promotion, health communication, program evaluation, and translation of research findings.

Graduates of our health behavior program are well positioned for career opportunities in local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit/community based organizations, private research foundations, as well as in the academic setting.

### **Mission of the UAB School of Public Health**

The mission of the School of Public Health is to lead in developing, disseminating and applying knowledge to prevent disease and promote health in the human population.

### **Goal of the Health Behavior MSPH Program**

This program is a post-medical or other health science degree training program, aimed primarily at fellows and faculty members interested in developing skills required for clinical research. A graduate of this program will have the academic training to develop and lead independent research programs and projects.

## **MPH/MSPH Programs offered by the Department of Health Behavior**

### **MPH**

The *MPH* program admits students having a bachelor's degree. Students in this track take 44 credit hours. The number of credit hours you are required to complete is determined before admission by examining your education and professional experiences. The MPH may be completed in as few as four semesters and is also offered online.

- **MPH Fifth Year Program**

The MPH Fifth-year program admits students who are juniors at UAB. Students in this track take 44 credit hours. It is possible to complete this program one year after you complete your undergraduate degree.

### **Coordinated MPH (Health Behavior)/PhD (Sociology or Psychology)**

The Coordinated MPH (Health Behavior)/PhD (Sociology or Psychology) degree program is offered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham Departments of Psychology and Sociology and the University of Alabama Department of Psychology. This program will enable you to obtain an MPH in Health Behavior simultaneously with a PhD in psychology or sociology. To be considered for this program, you must first be admitted to the PhD program in psychology or sociology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham or psychology at the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa). The MPH degree requires a minimum of 43 (Sociology) or 44 (Psychology at UAB) credit hours.

### **Coordinated MSN (School of Nursing)/MPH (Health Behavior)**

The Coordinated MSN (School of Nursing)/MPH (Health Behavior) degree program is offered with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing. This program enables you to obtain an MPH in Health Behavior simultaneously with a MSN from the School of Nursing. The MPH degree requires a minimum of 44 credit hours.

### **MSPH in Clinical Research (Health Behavior)**

The MSPH in Clinical Research degree program is a post-medical degree training program primarily aimed at fellows and faculty members interested in developing skills required for the conduct of clinical research. The MSPH degree requires a minimum of 42 credit hours.

## MSPH Program Objectives

The goal of the MPH program in Health Behavior is to prepare you with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess health behaviors and needs in specific populations and to develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion and disease prevention programs. The MPH Program is designed to prepare you for public health practice, research, or doctoral study.

The objectives of the MPH program in Health Behavior are to enable you to:

- Demonstrate the application of social and behavioral science theories in an area of specialization.
- Develop a social and behavioral science theory based intervention.
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct health behavior research under the guidance of a health behavior mentor.
- Write a health behavior study manuscript reporting appropriate research principles and methods in the design, conduct, analysis, and interpretation.
- Present health behavior study findings to health behavior mentor and faculty in a public forum.

## Department of Health Behavior Faculty and Staff

Kevin Fontaine, Ph.D.	Professor & Chair
David Coombs, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Associate Professor, retired
Susan Davies, Ph.D.	Professor
Faith Fletcher, Ph.D., M.A.	Assistant Professor
Frank Franklin, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.	Professor Emeritus
Melissa Galvin, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Professor Emerita
Peter Hendricks, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Kathryn Kaiser, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor
Connie Kohler, Dr.P.H.	Professor Emerita
Robin Gaines Lanzi, Ph.D., M.P.H.	Professor & Director of Academic Programs
Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, Ph.D., M.P.A., M.S.W.	Assistant Professor
Greg Pavela, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor
Dori Pekmezi, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Julie Brown, M.S., M.B.A.	Coordinator of Graduate Academic Programs

Faculty contact information and research interests can be found in [Appendix A](#).

# 2

## MSPH Coursework Requirements

*Students receiving a MSPH or PhD are required to complete a **37 hour**, self-paced online course entitled "Overview of Public Health" by the end of their second semester. Students with prior public health education (coursework in each of the public health core disciplines) or experience (5 years in public health) may be waived from this requirement by permission of the Associate Dean.*

Course Name	Term Course Available*			Credit Hours	Term /Year Taken	Grade
	Fall	Spr	Sum			
<b>MSPH Core Requirements: 15 hours</b>						
BST 611: Intermediate Statistical Analysis I	C	O		3		
BST 612: Intermediate Statistical Analysis II		C	O	3		
EPI 610: Principles of EPI. Research	CO			4		
BST 625: Design & Conduct of Clinical Trials			C	3		
**EPI 680: Topics in Clinical Research			C	2		
<b>Department Track Requirements: 12 hours</b>						
HB 624: Advanced Theory & Practice***	C		O	3		
HB 636: Intervention Development	C	O		3		
HB 641: Research Methods***	O	C		3		
HB 643: Health Program Evaluation	C	O		3		
<b>MSPH Directed Research: 9 hours</b>						
HB 681: MSPH Directed Research	C	C	C	3		
HB 682: MSPH Directed Research	C	C	C	3		
HB 683: MSPH Directed Research	C	C	C	3		
<b>Masters Research Electives: 6 hours should be selected by faculty advisor and student to complete total hours required for degree.</b>						
BST 619: Data Collection and Management		C		3		
BST 626/626L: Data Management with SAS & Lab	C			3		
ENH 650: Environmental & Occupational Toxicology & Diseases		C	O	3		
EPI 625: Quantitative Methods in Epi		CO		3		
EPI 703: Grant Writing			O	3		
EPI 704: Advanced Epi Methods	C			3		
<b>Total Credit Hours Earned for Degree</b>				<b>42</b>		
C= In class; O= Online; CO = Either Option Available; I = On Preceptor site						

\* Please note that course availability is subject to change.

\*\*EPI 680 is a two credit hour class in which students attend and participate in lectures provided through the K30 Clinical Studies Program at the School of Medicine. The grading is on a Pass/No Pass basis. To earn a grade of Pass, students must attend a minimum of 80% of the lectures over two semesters and participate in all discussions during which they are present.

\*\*\*HB 624 is a pre-requisite for HB 636, and HB 641 is a pre-requisite for HB 643.

## Academic Advising

Upon admission to the program, you are assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors provide guidance about course selection, course substitutions, internships, research opportunities, and possible employment opportunities. You will need to consult with your advisor for the Department prior to registering for classes.

Should you wish to change advisors, consent must be obtained from the new advisor before the change can be completed. Please see the Coordinator of Graduate Academic Programs for the required paperwork. The *School of Public Health Change of Advisor* form can be obtained from [the School of Public Health Website](#). You must complete this form, obtain the appropriate signatures and submit it to the Office of Student Affairs for processing in order to change advisors.

## Program Completion

**You are responsible for meeting deadlines for graduation.** Graduation deadlines are available on the School of Public Health Academic Calendar. You must submit an Application for Degree through Blazer Net. It must be completed online no later than two weeks into the expected semester of graduation. You must be enrolled in graduate course work in your final semester prior to graduation

## Degree Completion Time

As a master's student you are generally expected to complete all degree requirements within *five* years of matriculation. **Only one extension of this time limit can be requested when circumstances preclude completion of requirements within five years.** The recommendation for an extension should include a plan and timeline for completion. Courses taken more than five years before graduation may not be applied toward a degree without the approval of the Director of Graduate Academic Programs for the Department and the Graduate School Dean.

# 3

## MSPH Directed Research

As a student in the MSPH program, you are required to complete nine credit hours of directed research. This is a series of three courses, HB 681, 682, & 683 which will be completed under faculty supervision. These three courses will culminate with you presenting your research finding to your faculty mentor and other faculty and students in a public forum.

### Course Purposes

**HB 681: MSPH Directed Research I:** This course focuses on the development of a health behavior intervention in an area of your expertise, including consideration of the PRECEDE/PROCEED model, study population, data collection methods, IRB approval, study registration, and previous research.

**HB 682: MSPH Directed Research II:** This course focuses on collection and analysis of data, interpretation of results, and significant progress in the drafting of a scientific manuscript reporting the research project and preliminary results.

**HB 683: MSPH Directed Research III:** This course focuses on analysis of data, interpretation of results, completion of a scientific manuscript, reporting the research project and preliminary results, and the presentation of results in a public forum.

### Grading

MSPH Directed Research courses are graded as pass/no pass. Your grade will be assigned by your faculty advisor.

### Final Product

You will be expected to present your research findings in a public forum based on your manuscript that describes the results of your scientific research project or health intervention.



# 4

## Useful Information

Departmental Office Policies and the names of key personnel and places are outlined below. Other helpful documents include the [UAB Academic Calendar](#) and the [UAB Graduate School Catalog](#).

### Office Policies

**Phones:**

Phones are available for student use in the Ryals Building first floor lobby near the elevators.

**Mail:**

Faculty mailboxes are in the departmental reception area. You may leave material for faculty in these boxes.

***Reserving Conference and Classrooms and Equipment (e.g., pointer, laptop):***

Conference\* and classrooms are to be reserved through [25 Live](#). Equipment is to be reserved for use and will be addressed by the MITS Department. Contact information for MITS: Phone: (205) 934 -7731; Location: Ryals 127

\*The Health Behavior Conference Room can be reserved through the HB office staff.

### People and Places

***Dean's Office:***

Paul Erwin, M.D., Dr.P.H. is Dean of the School of Public Health.

Ela Austin, Ph.D., M.P.H. is the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

April Carson, Ph.D., M.S.P.H. is the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

***Office of Public Health Practice***

Lisa McCormick, Ph.D., is the Associate Dean for Public Health Practice.

[Meena Nabavi, M.P.H.](#) is the internship coordinator for the Departments of Environmental Health Sciences and **Health Behavior**.

Elena Kidd, M.P.H. is the internship coordinator for the Departments of Epidemiology and Health Care Organization and Policy.

**Financial Aid:**

The UAB Office of [Student Financial Aid](#) number is (205) 934-8223.

**Registration:**

You will register by computer through [BlazerNet](#). Before registering, you should meet with the Coordinator of Graduate Academic Programs.

**Office of Disability Support Services:**

The UAB Office of [Disability Support Services](#) is located at the Hill University Center, Suite 409. The number is (205) 934-4205.

**Other Useful Phone numbers:**

Barnes & Noble Blazer Bookstore	(205) 996-2665
International Scholar and Student Services	(205) 934-3328
Graduate School	(205) 934-8227
Lister Hill Library	(205) 934-2230
Mervyn Sterne Library	(205) 934-6364
Student Health Services	(205) 934-3580
Student Housing	(205) 996-0400
UAB Parking	(205) 934-3513
UAB Police	(205) 934-4434
Emergency	911
Safety Escort Service	(205) 934-8772

**Public Health Student Association:**

Since its creation in 1978, the Public Health Student Association (PHSA) has supported the growth of the student experience. With its roots in the foundation of encouraging student involvement, advocacy, and leadership, PHSA has made many powerful strides in promoting the student voice and facilitating interactions between students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Through connecting students, faculty, staff and administrators, PHSA works to promote the School of Public Health, achievements of those in our community, and work that is being done in the field of public health. Students from each department elect one representative to serve for one year.

PHSA Responsibilities Include:

- Fostering an academic, professional, and social environment for students of the School.
- Facilitating an interactive relationship between faculty, staff, alumni, and students of the School.
- Promoting student involvement in the School, university, and community through service, programming, and special events.
- Presenting the suggestions and concerns of the student body to School officials.
- Contributing to the education and welfare of public health students in cooperation with public health organizations on a local, state, and national level.

To learn more about PHSA, please visit their Facebook page or contact the staff advisor, Ms. Meena Nabavi.

## Computer and Network Access

Computers are available for your use in the Computer Resource Lab (CRL) located on the first floor in the Ryals Building. **You need to obtain an access account and an e-mail address (Blazer ID) by contacting the CRL staff at (205) 934-7731.** Hardware and software support for the CRL is provided by the CRL staff. **It is your responsibility to ensure that the department has your current UAB e-mail address and telephone number.** This will enable you to receive important information from the Department regarding School and University deadlines as well as research, internship, and employment opportunities.

## Professional Meetings

Student involvement in national public health organizations, as well as attendance at national professional meetings, is encouraged. Below is a list of recommended organizations in which you are encouraged to participate.

- Academy Health.....[www.academyhealth.org](http://www.academyhealth.org)
- Alabama Public Health Association .....[www.alphassoc.org](http://www.alphassoc.org)
- American Association of Cancer Education ..... [www.aaceonline.com](http://www.aaceonline.com)
- American College of Preventive Medicine .....[www.acpm.org](http://www.acpm.org)
- American Diabetes Association .....[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- American Evaluation Association ..... [www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org)
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children ..... [www.apsac.org](http://www.apsac.org)
- American Psychological Association ..... [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)
- American Public Health Association ..... [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)
- Association for Prevention Teaching & Research ..... [www.aptrweb.org](http://www.aptrweb.org)
- Association for Psychological Science..... [www.psychologicalscience.org](http://www.psychologicalscience.org)
- International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect..... [www.ispcan.org](http://www.ispcan.org)
- Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine ..... [www.adolescenthealth.org](http://www.adolescenthealth.org)
- Society for Research in Child Development ..... [www.srcd.org](http://www.srcd.org)
- Society of Behavioral Medicine ..... [www.sbm.org](http://www.sbm.org)
- Society of Public Health Educators ..... [www.sophe.org](http://www.sophe.org)
- The Obesity Society..... [www.obesity.org](http://www.obesity.org)

## Local Non-Profits

Student involvement in local nonprofits is encouraged. Below is a list of some of the Birmingham area nonprofit organizations. You can also contact the Office of Public Health Practice for more information.

- AIDS Alabama..... [www.aidsalabama.org](http://www.aidsalabama.org)
- Birmingham AIDS Outreach ..... [www.birminghamaidsoutreach.org](http://www.birminghamaidsoutreach.org)
- Crisis Center, Birmingham ..... [www.crisiscenterbham.org](http://www.crisiscenterbham.org)
- First Light ..... [www.firstlightshelter.org](http://www.firstlightshelter.org)

- GASP..... [www.gaspgroup.org](http://www.gaspgroup.org)
- JBS Mental Health Authority..... [www.jbsmha.com](http://www.jbsmha.com)
- One Roof ..... [www.oneroofonline.org](http://www.oneroofonline.org)
- Pathways ..... [www.pathwayshome.org](http://www.pathwayshome.org)

Here is a [link](#) to other community partners. Contact Ms. Meena Nabavi for more information.

## **Seminars**

There are a variety of seminars that take place on campus. In the department, we offer monthly seminars. Please look for announcements on the bulletin boards in the student lounge, outside the department suite, and via emails from faculty and the Coordinator of Graduate Academic Programs.

**Appendix A: Department of Health Behavior Faculty Research Interests and Contact Information**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Research Interests</b>	<b>Campus Address</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>UAB E-Mail</b>
<b>David Coombs, Ph.D. (Retired)</b>	Mental Health Issues/Suicide Prevention; Community-Based Interventions	RPHB 227 H	(205) 305-9210	<a href="mailto:dcoombs@uab.edu">dcoombs@uab.edu</a>
<b>Susan Davies, Ph.D., Professor</b>	Using community-engaged research, qualitative methods and comprehensive evaluation strategies to develop theoretically guided behavioral interventions to influence risk and resilience among youth, families and vulnerable populations	RPHB 227 F	(205) 975-8049	<a href="mailto:sdavies@uab.edu">sdavies@uab.edu</a>
<b>Faith Fletcher, Ph.D. Assistant Professor</b>	Health Disparities/Health Equity, Improving Health Outcomes Among Women Living with HIV/AIDS (WLWHA), Reproductive Health, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (Prep), HIV Research Ethics, Community-Engaged Research	RPHB 227	(205)934-7067	<a href="mailto:Fletch95@uab.edu">Fletch95@uab.edu</a>
<b>Kevin Fontaine, Ph.D., Professor &amp; Chair</b>	Obesity; Placebo Effects; Ketogenic Diets	RPHB 241C	(205) 975-8397	<a href="mailto:kfontai1@uab.edu">kfontai1@uab.edu</a>
<b>Frank A. Franklin, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., (Emeritus)</b>	Nutrition Problems and Policies, Pediatrics, School Nutrition Promotion Programs, International Nutrition	RPHB 227	No office phone	<a href="mailto:frankln@uab.edu">frankln@uab.edu</a>
<b>Melissa Galvin, Ph.D., M.P.H. (Emerita)</b>	Community-Based Participatory Research, Hepatitis; Senior Citizens, Health Communications	RPHB 227	(205) 934-6020	<a href="mailto:mgalvin@uab.edu">mgalvin@uab.edu</a>
<b>Peter Hendricks, Ph.D., Associate Professor</b>	Addiction, Novel Interventions, Clinical Trials, Expectancies, Motivation, Positive Psychology	RPHB 434E	(205) 934-6020	<a href="mailto:phendricks@uab.edu">phendricks@uab.edu</a>
<b>Kathryn Kaiser, Ph.D. Assistant Professor</b>	Hunger and Appetite Regulation; Racial, Sex, and Social Status Disparities in Obesity; Systematic Review Methods; Metaresearch; Agent-based Modeling	RPHB 227 J	(205) 975-9212	<a href="mailto:kakaiser@uab.edu">kakaiser@uab.edu</a>
<b>Connie Kohler, Dr.P.H. (Emerita)</b>	Tobacco, Chronic Disease, Health Communication, Entertainment-education	RPHB 227 H	(205) 975-6020	<a href="mailto:ckohler@uab.edu">ckohler@uab.edu</a>
<b>Robin Gaines Lanzi, Ph.D., M.P.H., Professor, Graduate Program Director</b>	Reducing Family and Child Health Disparities and Promoting Positive Youth Development; HIV/STI; Mhealth; Community Engaged Research; Parenting and Home Visiting Programs; Faith and Spirituality; Mental Health Needs of Women and Children	RPHB 227 D	(205) 975-8071	<a href="mailto:rlanzi@uab.edu">rlanzi@uab.edu</a>
<b>Ann Elizabeth Montgomery, PhD, MPA, MSW, Assistant Professor</b>	Homelessness and housing; Veterans; universal screening to identify individuals experiencing homelessness and risk; interventions to prevent and end homelessness; vulnerable populations and related health disparities	RPHB 227M	(205) 934-0505	<a href="mailto:aemontgo@uab.edu">aemontgo@uab.edu</a>
<b>Greg Pavela, Ph.D. Assistant Professor</b>	Environmental and early life determinants of health and adiposity; methods for causal inferences about the effects of social determinants on adiposity; socioeconomic status and health	RPHB 227 K	(205) 934-6020	<a href="mailto:pavela@uab.edu">pavela@uab.edu</a>
<b>Dori Pekmezi, Ph.D., Associate Professor</b>	Chronic Disease Prevention, Health Communication, Physical Activity, Health Disparities	RPHB 227 Q	(205) 934-6020	<a href="mailto:dpekmezi@uab.edu">dpekmezi@uab.edu</a>