

# PUBLIC HEALTH AREA OF CONCENTRATION

An Area of Concentration (AOC) is designed to augment the existing curriculum in order to provide students with an additional academic experience that will enhance their physician training. An Area of Concentration in Public Health (AOC-PH) will offer students a longitudinal educational experience centered on Public and Population Health. This is an area of particular interest to our students.

## GOALS

Each student, under faculty supervision, will strive to engage in activities that broaden and deepen their understanding of public and population health, both practice and research aspects. Students are encouraged to pursue a scholarly project in public or population health, consistent with the UPSOM's scholarly project goals, timelines, and expectations.

In addition, students are encouraged to choose from a menu of other activities—research, education, and public health practice—that will expand their knowledge and skills in areas of their greatest interest. Students will have great flexibility in personalizing their plan and path, under the assumption that this learner-centered approach will enhance participation and interest. Students will meet individually with the AOC Director to develop a personalized course of study to complete the program. Participation in activities and a commitment and interest in the program, will determine remaining in good standing and being able to graduate with an AOC-PH certificate.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Students can choose activities from three primary domains—research, education, and public health practice. However they choose, students are expected to achieve 150 credits over 4 years to complete the program, earning at least some hours during each year within the program.

Specific activities include workshops, grand rounds, mini-electives, clinical practice activities, and participation in the Schweitzer Fellowship.

Activities would be weighted by time, so a full-day's experience might count for 40 points. Other activities could be considered for credit following discussion with the AOC Director, with the weight individualized.

The AOC-PH will allow students to have a mixture of these experiences during their four-year attendance at UPSOM, providing a unique longitudinal exposure to the discipline. A faculty mentor and the AOC Director will individually design these experiences for each student; the Director will assist students to connect with mentors and preceptors. In addition to these individual experiences, there will be annual meetings for all students participating in the program, opportunities to attend conferences both locally and nationally, and opportunities for advising from faculty and peers. Overall, this program will create a sense of “community” for our students interested in public and population health. This “community of scholars” will allow students to network with peers, faculty, and individuals here and at other institutions.

Here are the activity domains, with objectives and activities in more detail:

**Research Experience:** Students will choose a scholarly project based on their interest in public/population health. A project may be based on qualitative or quantitative research techniques, and should be one in which a specific hypothesis is tested in some way.

- Understand the research methodologies used to produce the current state of knowledge in public/population health
- Understand the role of collaboration in public/population health.

**Educational Experience:** Each student will have the opportunity to attend a variety of educational events designed to broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills in public/population health.

- *Workshop, Film Night, or Reading Group* - These discussions will focus around a specific workshop topic, film, or book with an important public health theme. Discussions will be inclusive and involve faculty, students, members of populations served, and public health professionals.
- *Mini-elective* – A case-based mini-elective will be offered in the winter. The cases will be drawn from previously well-developed case studies and or important topical issues related to either public health epidemics or prevention. An alternative is the mini-elective “Introduction to the real world of public health”. AOC students will also be encouraged to participate in an intensive experience such as MSELECT 5858 Public Health Field Practicum. Enrollment in the mini-elective will not be required for the certificate.
- *Conferences* – There are a variety of public health conferences that occur throughout the year.

**Public Health Practice:** Each student will participate in a broad range of activities that will enrich their understanding of public health practice. These experiences will be broad-based.

- *Public Health Grand Rounds* – These discussions will present interdisciplinary approaches to complex public health problems with lectures, symposia, and conferences outside of the classroom.
- *Community Social Gatherings* – The program will have frequent informal social gatherings to allow students to form relationships with other students, mentors, and invited guests.
- *Meeting Visiting Faculty* – Arrangements will be made for students to have group discussions with visiting faculty in public/population health to further learn about the faculty member’s research, career etc.
- *Grand Rounds, Post Discussion Groups* – Discussion groups following selected grand rounds will assist Scholars in their understanding of the topic and how it relates to their own interest and to the field as a whole.
- *Workshops* – Students will be exposed through workshops to essential skills such as research methodology, ethics topics, and practical skill development. This information will assist students as they pursue their scholarly project and clinical work.
- *Regional and National Conferences* – Students will have the opportunity to attend regional and national meetings to present their work, meet with faculty outside of our institution, and establish relationships with peers from other institutions. Mentors can arrange informal meetings between Scholars and prominent individuals at these events.

## TIMELINE

Students will participate in AOC-PH throughout their four years of medical school. Students may enter at any point during their matriculation, but most would be expected to start by the end of first year or beginning of second year. The key elements being developed are individual and community scholarship. The following outline highlights potential milestones relevant to the AOC-PH:

YEAR	TYPICAL ACTIVITIES
MS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend AOC activities before joining</li><li>• Meet with AOC Director</li><li>• Identify a faculty mentor for a scholarly project</li><li>• Consider summer research in public/population health</li><li>• Identify a faculty preceptor for the AOC experience, and begin participating</li></ul>
MS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet with faculty mentor quarterly</li><li>• Finalize scholarly area of interest and submit SP proposal</li><li>• Begin conducting research as proposed</li><li>• Continue to attend AOC-PH experiences</li></ul>
MS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet with faculty mentor quarterly</li><li>• Attend workshops and experiences as time allows</li><li>• Attend humanistic experiences</li></ul>
MS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete work on scholarly project and submit final report by February</li><li>• Participate in educational activities as time allows, especially in spring semester</li></ul>

## FACULTY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Scholars will complete a yearly evaluation form for the program that will be reviewed by the AOC Steering Committee and the Office of Medical Student Education at UPSOM.

## AOC DIRECTOR

David Finegold, MD