Program Statement

The Graduate Program in Public Health
Muskie School of Public Service
University of Southern Maine

Mission: The Graduate Program in Public Health prepares students with the knowledge and skills to improve population health by delivering a competency-based education, by conducting and translating research, and by contributing to public service.

Goal #1: Prepare students to serve in a variety of roles addressing population health by delivering a competency-based education that includes the option of specializing in health management.
Goal #2: Conduct and disseminate applied research that informs the field and has direct implications for practice or population health.
Goal #3: Engage in service activities at the local, state and national level that benefit population health.

Our program aligns with the mission of the Muskie School of Public Service and the University of Southern Maine as vitally engaged with the economic and social well-being of our region and state by promoting and supporting student success, community engagement, and sustainability.

Vision: Our students are sought after as skilled public health professionals and our research and public service contribute to informed action to improve population health.

Values: As a public university program, located in the nationally recognized Muskie School of Public Service, we are driven by the goals of improving access, population health outcomes, and health system cost-efficiencies to advance the health of our communities. We bridge the cultures of public health and health care delivery systems to build integrated, high functioning health and public health systems that engage individuals, communities and providers in the development and management of a more effective and sustainable health infrastructure. We value the development and use of evidence to inform decision making at all levels of the health system, from health policy to the implementation and management of effective health programs and initiatives.

Who We Serve: Employers & Students
Our program offers the only MPH degree in the University of Maine System, and the only CAHME accredited Health Management program in Maine. The program addresses state and regional public health system workforce needs. We enroll students representing the array of professional and academic backgrounds, experience, and interests that comprise the field of public health. The program’s primary prospective student target market encompasses pre-career and mid-career health professionals living in Maine and New England. In keeping with
the value we place on inclusion and diversity, our prospective student target groups includes new residents of Maine and international students from countries with rural or poorly resourced health systems and public health infrastructure. As a refugee resettlement area, southern Maine has an increasingly rich experience-base to inform population health and health systems that are responsive to the needs of diverse communities.

Our Graduates: We seek to ensure that our graduates are recognized as consistently demonstrating mastery and competency in professional communications, facility with acquiring and assessing data and information for informed decision-making, and the ethics, skills and tools to facilitate (pre-career grads) and lead (mid-career grads) based on demonstrated management and leadership competencies. Our graduates work in diverse roles in public health and healthcare delivery systems as Community Liaison Consultants, Data Analysts, Access Program Directors, Network Contract Managers, Communications Managers, and Program Coordinators. They work in state and municipal health departments, children’s behavioral health programs, with public, non-profit and private medical centers, health systems and health plans, and with international programs of the USAID and for the United Nations.

Due to the paucity of professionally trained professionals in New England, our graduates likely will have the opportunity to work in multiple settings over the course of their careers. This underlies our program’s emphasis on flexibility to respond to student interests, while preparing nimble graduates who are prepared to manage and advance population health as members and leaders of health systems teams, managers, and as leaders of our evolving public health infrastructure.

Our Faculty: As a research and practice-based faculty, we are teachers, scholars, and practitioners engaged in applied research, evaluation, and policy and program development at the local, state and national level. This involvement contributes to assuring course currency and relevance. Our faculty are affiliated and co-located with the Muskie School’s, Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy and its programs in Population Health and Health Policy, Disability and Aging, and our nationally recognized Maine Rural Health Research Center, where we are engaged in a broad range of externally funded public health and health services projects. The work of our faculty and professional research staff on rural health, health care access and costs, Medicaid, state health policy, disability and aging, public health systems and other topics has gained statewide and national recognition, reputation and funding. Through these affiliations, faculty and professional staff engage students in research assistantships, provide mentoring, and facilitate access to local, state, and national professional networks.