



GWSPH Public Health Scholars Program

Cohort 2

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Milken Institute School of Public Health

George Washington University

950 New Hampshire Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20052

Table of Contents

Maria Camila Acevedo-Valencia

Lauren Chatfield

Christana Chittenden

David Michael Hernandez

John McClure

Sonja Moore

Leticia Nketiah

Adeline Rosales

Hailey Wilson



Maria Camila Acevedo-Valencia

Maria Camila was born in Cali, Colombia and raised by her hard-working mother. Once she turned 12 years-old, they moved to the U.S. where she completed middle school and high school in the state of Virginia. After graduating, Maria Camila chose to go back to her hometown and study medicine at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, where she declared a Public Health concentration. During her medical intern year, Maria Camila worked at the Hospital Universitario La Samaritana and Hospital Universitario San Ignacio in Bogotá, Colombia, where she witnessed first-hand the importance of recognizing and bettering the social determinants of health within a marginalized population. She earned her MD in January of 2023 and has since moved back home to Virginia; she is now enrolled at the MPH program at Milken Institute School

of Public Health and hopes to focus on health policy advocacy and social justice within Public Health. During her free time, Maria Camila loves to read fiction (mainly fantasy books), she has a cat, and is a fan of Taylor Swift.



Lauren Chatfield

Lauren Chatfield, a dedicated student at George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health, is on a journey towards making a significant impact in the field of public health. Pursuing her Master of Public Health with a specialization in health promotion, Lauren's ultimate goal is to collaborate with state and local health departments in underserved rural areas, where health disparities are pronounced.

Hailing from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, Lauren's academic background is rooted in Behavioral Neuroscience, providing her with a solid foundation in understanding the intricate relationship between human behavior and health outcomes. This foundation has been a driving force behind her passionate commitment to addressing health disparities and improving the overall well-being of underserved populations.

Lauren's professional experiences have been instrumental in shaping her path. She has actively engaged in addressing critical issues such as sexual health among college-aged students and substance abuse in rural Kentucky and Appalachian communities. These hands-on experiences have solidified her understanding of the need for customized public health interventions to tackle the unique challenges faced by these communities.

Lauren is enthusiastic to be a member of the second cohort of the Human Resources and Services Administration's Public Health Scholarship Program (HRSA PHSP) and continue to shape and contribute to the field of public health at local and state levels.



Christiana Chittenden

Christiana Chittenden is pursuing a master's degree in Environmental Health Science and Policy within the department of Environmental and Occupational Health. Christiana holds a bachelor's degree in Public Health with a specialization in Health Services and a minor in Global Health from the University of Georgia. While at the University of Georgia, she conducted research in the field of environmental health, particularly from a health justice perspective. Her research examined the structural mechanisms responsible for environmental health disparities in the United States. She further investigated inequities in greenspace utilization impacting the health of Black women. With an interest in community level health disparities, Christiana took part in research evaluating the health inequities experienced by those with HIV in Northeast Georgia. This research further explored how those with HIV were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Christiana is specifically interested in working with medically underserved communities to address environmental health disparities. She has developed this interest through working within her community on a variety of initiatives. With the State Botanical Gardens of Georgia, Christiana worked to address disparities in environmental access and education through an outreach position. In a role with the Northeast Georgia Department of Public Health, she worked to address chronic disease disparities among older adults in rural areas of the region through an education initiative on chronic disease management. Also with the Northeast Georgia Health District, she worked to organize, promote, and administer HIV testing events and connected individuals living with HIV to essential resources such as housing, food, and medical care.

Christiana's current research interests are focused on disaster management within the context of environmental health justice. She is particularly interested in how climate change and environmental degradation exacerbate the impact of climate disasters on community health. She further aims to investigate the political frameworks that perpetuate disparities in environmental health and explore strategies for restructuring policies to promote environmental health equity.



David Michael Hernandez

David Michael Hernández was born and raised in El Centro, CA. Living in a border-town to Mexicali B.C., David took interest in the many public health issues that surrounded and impacted his community. In 2022, he graduated from UC San Diego with a B.S. in Public Health and a concentration in Epidemiology. Being raised with technology and social media, he immersed himself in all things creative which would later lead to an extensive background in social media management. Using this experience, he assisted underserved communities targeting COVID-19 vaccine uptake with Project 2VIDA. This allowed David to picture how his passion for public health can benefit from a creative, innovative lens. Simultaneously, he dedicated time to designing a mobile app for adolescents in Southern San Diego for sexual health education and promotion.

He now is pursuing his MPH in Health Communication and Marketing at the George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health. David is the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) for Let's Talk Public Health, where he uses a creative approach to implement advertising and marketing strategies, while supervising a group of interns, to promote resources, products and services for public health students, professionals and organizations. He also assumes the role as the Communication and Marketing Specialist of the R.W. Turner Lab at GWU School of Medicine and Health Science. Here, he oversees all media and marketing efforts of the lab including the annual Black Men's Brain Health Conference, The Athlete Brain Health & Aging Study, Black Male Caregiver Burden Study and more.

He is excited to be living in Washington D.C. where he hopes to continue exploring coffee shops, expanding his discography of concerts and road-trip along the east coast.



John McClure

John McClure grew up in Gaithersburg, Maryland and always had an interest in biomedical sciences. He went on to attend Tulane University for his undergraduate degree, originally as a pre-med biology major. John could not have anticipated what a singular public health elective would do for him. The big picture, prevention-focused methodology in public health was what he had always been looking for. John switched his major to public health and began taking as many public health classes, and research opportunities, as he could. After studying abroad in Thailand and interning abroad in Zambia, John McClure was on a global health track and set to deploy as a Peace Corps Volunteer back in Zambia...in August 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic cancelled his departure and John ultimately landed at the Louisiana Department of Health. It was here that

John McClure led some of Louisiana's most critical COVID-19 vaccine response initiatives and realized his passion for State Health Department work. John served as the lead for Louisiana's COVID-19 Operations and Logistics workgroup. He led COVID-19 vaccine allocation, distribution and redistribution for the State of Louisiana. John launched the state's contract mobile vaccination program, directed the state's Youth Vaccine Taskforce and has managed over \$100 million dollars in state contracts. John McClure and his team have been recognized nationally for their equity and innovation. After 7 incredible years in Louisiana, John is excited to return closer to home and obtain his MPH in Health Promotion at GW through the Public Health Scholars Program. He is eager to sharpen his skills and return to Local Health Department work after graduation.



Sonja Moore

Sonja Moore grew up in rural northeast Washington State. During high school, she joined the student-led organization HOSA-Future Health Professionals. As both a member and state officer, she competed in health-related events and participated in leadership conferences across the country. In the process, Sonja learned about the field of public health. Upon graduation alongside 75 classmates, Sonja moved to Seattle to attend Seattle University. While living in Seattle, she continued to learn about public health both directly and indirectly; she volunteered at community-based organizations and as a HOSA alumna, Sonja was selected to participate in the HOSA Public Health Leadership Scholars program, hosted in Washington, DC. While talking with and learning from dedicated federal public health officials, Sonja determined she, too, would pursue a career in governmental public health.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, Sonja moved back to rural northeast Washington State from Seattle and began an internship at the Northeast Tri County Health District, where she supported the public health work being done in Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties. Through her internship, she completed hundreds of COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing interviews, maintained the COVID-19 case, hospitalization, and death data for the tri counties, and helped organize and facilitate mass COVID-19 vaccination clinics alongside an Incident Management Team. After finishing classes online and graduating from Seattle University in spring 2021, Sonja transitioned from intern to Community Health Specialist. She began taking on additional projects unrelated to COVID-19, including leading three independent Community Health Needs Assessments and corresponding Improvement Plans for Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties, as well as representing small, rural health districts through her participation in the statewide Assessment Subject Matter Experts workgroup.

Though she continues to work part time at the Northeast Tri County Health District, in fall 2023, Sonja moved to Washington, DC, to pursue her MPH from the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. Her focus is health policy. Sonja is excited to live and attend school in the epicenter of public health and she looks forward to continuing to broaden her public health experiences throughout her MPH program.



Leticia A. Nketiah

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Leticia is passionate about utilizing policy to advocate for health reform and equitable change. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Management, Leadership, and Policy from The Ohio State University and is currently pursuing her Master of Public Health (MPH) with a focus on Health Policy at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University.

Leticia's commitment to effecting change in healthcare extends beyond the classroom. She is currently employed at a D.C.-based health policy consulting firm, actively contributing to the shaping of healthcare policies. Prior to her move to the nation's capital, Leticia garnered practical experience as a Legislative Fellow at the Ohio Statehouse. In this capacity, she worked extensively on the health and human services portfolio, notably contributing to the state's budget-making process.

Since her freshman year of college, Leticia has expanded her knowledge of the state policymaking process, serving as an intern with the State Innovation Exchange and as an Ohio Government Internship Program Fellow, where she worked at the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. These opportunities, coupled with her lived experiences, reinforced her belief in the importance of addressing critical issues at the state or local level to positively impact communities.

In her leisure time, Leticia enjoys sharing her passion for health policy through her journalistic blog and traveling. One memorable experience that has shaped her goals is her study abroad to London, where she studied comparative healthcare systems, interviewed UK residents about the benefits and pitfalls of the National Health Service, and worked with a charitable NGO dedicated to alleviating poverty in African countries. As an aspiring advocate and public servant, Leticia aims to create localized impacts and address health disparities in underserved communities, driven by her enduring commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare for all.



Adeline Rosales

Adeline A. Rosales, a first-generation college student, graduated from California State University Long Beach (CSULB) with a BA in Communication Studies and Certificates in Dispute Resolution and Healthcare Administration. During her time at CSULB, she was a BUILD (Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity) Scholar, where she completed an independent research project that also served as her honors thesis. This project assessed the efficacy of local county public health department websites in Southern California to determine the accessibility and cultural relevance of pandemic-related information for diverse communities. As a research assistant at the CSULB Center for Latino Community Health, Evaluation, and Leadership Training, her primary focus was on obesity prevention, nutrition education, and advocacy for minority populations within the Latinx community. As a UCLA Public Health Scholar, Adeline completed an

internship with Pacoima Beautiful, deepening her passion for Health Policy, particularly in the realm of environmental justice. During her time as a UCLA Public Health Scholar, Adeline received an honorable mention for the Williams-Hutchins Health Equity Award, recognizing her dedication to advancing health disparity science and minority health during her summer experiences working in public health. Her internship experiences with UniteHere and LiBRE were pivotal in fueling her passion for policy and advocacy. Her work with UniteHere in the labor union movement and her engagement with LiBRE in community-driven advocacy initiatives highlighted her commitment to social justice and strengthened her resolve to effect change through policy-driven interventions that empower and uplift underrepresented communities. Born and raised in the low-income Southern California community of Rialto in the Inland Empire, Adeline Rosales' personal experiences and the journey of her immigrant parents have ignited her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the realm of health policy for minority populations. Now pursuing her Master's in Health Policy as an HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) Public Health scholar, she has a profound understanding of the unique challenges minority communities face and is driven to be an advocate and catalyst for transformative change, ensuring equitable access to healthcare and improved well-being for all.



Hailey Wilson

Hailey Wilson currently works for the Oklahoma State Department of Health as a Public Health Specialist. Hailey's primary responsibilities include inspecting and assessing various establishments, including restaurants, hotels, and schools. Her favorite aspect of her job is the opportunity to educate and work with business owners to identify potential health concerns and develop effective solutions that benefit both their business and the broader public.

Hailey has always been interested in helping others since she was a child. Her dad worked with a nonprofit organization through her school years, and that's where she first started to volunteer, helping to serve breakfast in her community. She went to middle school and high school in Plano, Texas. During this time, she continued her volunteer work and discovered various avenues to make a positive impact on her community. This experience allowed her to get involved in different areas

and explore the various ways in which she could contribute to the benefit of others.

Upon graduating from high school, Hailey enrolled at Mercyhurst University in Erie Pennsylvania where she was a student athlete. At Mercyhurst, she was introduced to public health for the first time. She was instantly interested in public health because of the ability to help people on a larger scale. Some of her favorite classes in college were public health program evaluation and health policy. In her program evaluation class, she and her classmates had the opportunity to develop a program to help the surrounding community. They worked together with an organization that works to improve neighborhoods to try to come up with ways to help those who live in poverty.

Hailey graduated Summa cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and a minor in Biology in May 2022.