

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Health Policy and Management

Master of Public Health and Graduate Certificate Health Policy 2026-2027

Note: All curriculum revisions will be updated immediately on the
website <http://www.publichealth.gwu.edu>

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Master of Public Health (MPH) in Health Policy

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Health Policy and Management—a practice-oriented academic community in Washington, DC—is to improve health and health systems locally, nationally, and globally through excellence in education, innovative scholarship and applied research that is translated into practice and policy, and the promotion of transformational leadership that advances health policy and health services management.

We are committed to:

- Preparing graduates who will become innovative and effective leaders in public health and health policy, health services delivery, and health system transformation;
- Conducting rigorous multidisciplinary research that addresses significant health challenges, is objective, and is translated to inform and affect health policy, health care management, and public health practice;
- Being a trusted resource for shaping and advancing health policy and management practices because of our research integrity and rigor, the real-world leadership experiences of our faculty and staff, and our exceptional students;
- Leveraging our unique location in Washington, DC which allows for strong collaborations with health policy and management leaders and practitioners;
- Improving the health and health care of under-served and vulnerable populations; and
- Promoting equity, social justice, and learning from the diversity among our faculty, staff, students, and alumni in terms of background, experience, and thought.

Overview

The Department of Health Policy and Management is the home for health policy studies and research at the Milken Institute School of Public Health (SPH). The Department focuses on virtually all facets of U.S. health policy related to both public health and health services and emphasizes preparing students to understand and analyze health policy matters in a broad, cross-cutting, and real-world context. Among schools of public health, the Milken Institute SPH Department of Health Policy and Management is unique, having been created to take maximum advantage of its location in Washington, DC, the nation's health policy-making epicenter. The MPH in Health Policy is for students who wish to develop in-depth policy analysis skills for use in various practice settings, including both federal and state levels of government, private-sector health policy consulting, and not-for-profit advocacy. This program is also available as a joint degree to GW law students (the JD/MPH and LLM/MPH programs) and physician assistant students (the PA/MPH program) who wish to enhance their clinical training with a thorough understanding of health policy. The Graduate Certificate in Health Policy is also available (please see section "B" below), standing alone or as a supplement to a primary (e.g., MPH, JD, MD) degree.

Course Requirements

All MPH students admitted to the Health Policy program enroll in MPH Core Courses (17 credits), Program-Specific Courses (20 credits) and Elective Courses (8 credits). The MPH Core includes a practice experience in which students apply their didactic education by working for credit for an organization that engages in health policy research, analysis, or practice. Students may wish to give greater emphasis to either public health or health services policy as they develop their course of study with their advisor. See the Program-At-A-Glance section below for details about the required courses.

Program-Specific Competencies

Graduates of the MPH in Health Policy will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze health policy options to address public health and health systems problems, including their impact on equity.
2. Interpret and apply laws to health policy situations, considering relevant facts, equity, and the legal rights and responsibilities of stakeholders.
3. Apply microeconomic concepts and tools to analyze health policy questions.
4. Find, assess, and apply data (including statistics) and other evidence to do policy analysis and research.
5. Write and speak on health policy topics clearly and persuasively in different contexts for and on behalf of a variety of stakeholders.

Required MPH Core Courses		Credits	Semester Offered
PUBH 6000	MPH Applied Practice Experience	0	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6002	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6003	Principles and Practice of Epidemiology	3	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6007	Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6009	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation (prerequisite: PUBH 6007)	2	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6011	Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health	3	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6012	Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Fall, Spring, Summer, Online
PUBH 6021	Essentials in Public Health Practice & Leadership 1 (Note: Must be taken in first semester)	1	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6022	Essentials in Public Health Practice & Leadership 2	1	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6023	Interprofessional Education Experience	0	Fall, Spring, Summer
Total	MPH Core Course Credits	17	
Required Program-Specific Courses		Credits	Semester Offered
PUBH 6310	Statistical Analysis in Health Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6002)	3	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6315	Introduction to Health Policy Analysis (prerequisite: PUBH 6012)	2	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6320	Advanced Health Policy Analysis (prerequisites: PUBH 6315)	3	Spring, Fall
PUBH 6325	Federal Policymaking and Policy Advocacy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012)	2	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6330 OR	Health Services and Law (prerequisite: 6012)	3	Either Fall or Spring
PUBH 6335 OR	Public Health and Law (prerequisite: 6012)		Either Fall or Spring, Online
PUBH 6340	Health Economics and Financing (prerequisite: a prior course in economics or PUBH 6352)	3	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6350	Health Policy Capstone (prerequisites: 6310, 6320, and departmental approval) Notes: <u>Must</u> be taken in final MPH semester, or second to last if graduating in December. Formerly “Culminating Experience.”)	2	Spring, Summer
	Health Policy Selective (choose one course from list below):	2	Note: These courses sometimes rotate and are not always taught in a given year.
Choose at least one course from this list	- PUBH 6356. State Health Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012) - PUBH 6370. Medicare/Medicaid Law & Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012) - PUBH 6384. Health Care Quality and Health Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012) - PUBH 6367. Population Health, Public Health and Health Reform. (prerequisite: PUBH 6012) - PUBH 6399. Value-Based Payment Reform (prerequisite: PUBH 6315) - PUBH 6361. Health Workforce Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012)		Fall Spring Fall Fall Varies Summer Varies

	PUBH 6561 or 6399. Maternal and Child Health Policy (prerequisite: PUBH 6012)		
Total	Program-Specific Course Credits	20	
Elective Courses		Credits	Semester Offered
Any PUBH or HSML course	A personalized combination of elective courses. Any PUBH or HSML course will count as an elective toward the MPH in Health Policy degree (prerequisites may apply). Courses listed as selectives above will count as an elective if not counted as a selective. Residential MPH program students may take up to 15 PUBH credits online. <u>Regularly offered HPM electives include:</u> - PUBH 6352. Basics of Economics for Health Policy (Fall, 1 cr) - PUBH 6354. Substance Use Disorder Policy (Spring, 2 cr) - PUBH 6356. State Health Policy (Fall, 2 cr) - PUBH 6361. Health Workforce Policy (Summer, 2 cr) - PUBH 6367. Population Health, Public Health and Health Reform. (Fall, 2 cr) - PUBH 6368. Law, Medicine, and Ethics (Fall and online, 3 cr) - PUBH 6370. Medicare/Medicaid Law & Policy (Spring, 2 cr) - PUBH 6378. HIV Policy (Varies, 2 cr) - PUBH 6390. Prescription Drugs: Policy and Public Health (Online, 3 cr) - PUBH 6384. Health Care Quality and Health Policy (Fall, 2 cr) - PUBH 6399. Cost-Benefit Analysis in Health Care (Spring, 2 cr) - PUBH 6399. Reproductive Health Policy (Varies, 2 cr) - PUBH 6399. Health Care on the Hill (Summer, 1 cr) - PUBH 6399. Emerging HP Issues in HC Finance (Summer, 1 cr) - PUBH 6045. National and Global Public Health Systems (Varies, 1 cr) - PUBH 6399. Health Care in Retail Settings (Spring, 1 cr) - PUBH 6399. Health Impact Assessments (Varies, 2 cr) - PUBH 6399. Value-Based Payment Reform (Fall, 2 cr) - PUBH 6399 or 6561. Maternal and Child Health Policy (Varies, 2 cr)	Varies	As elective course offerings vary, please check the current semester's course schedule for a list of health policy electives and other PUBH and HSML electives.
Total	Elective Credits	8	
Course Distribution Summary			
Required MPH Core Courses		17 Credits	
Required Program-Specific Core Courses, including the Practicum and Capstone		20 Credits	
Elective Courses		8 Credits	
Total Program Credits		45 Credits	

Graduation Requirements

All students accepted to this MPH program must follow the policies and regulations outlined in the [GW Bulletin](#) and the [GWSPH Student Handbook](#). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Minimum Course Grades
- Continuous Enrollment
- Maximum Time to Degree
- Required Minimum Degree Credits
- Transfer Credit Policy
- CITI Training
- Integrity Quiz and Plagiarism
- Professional Enhancement (PE) Hours
- Interprofessional Education (IPE) Experience
- Applied Practice Experience (Practicum)
- Culminating Experience (e.g., CE)

Course Planning Tips

NOTE: Always see your advisor for course scheduling and sequencing strategies, but remember that proper course selection, fulfilling requirements, and on-time graduation are the student's responsibilities.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) in Health Policy curriculum consists of three types of courses:

- Required Core Courses (PUBH 6002, 6003, 6007, 6009, 6011, 6012, 6021, and 6022)
- Required Program-Specific Courses, including Capstone
- Electives

For descriptions of all public health courses, see <http://bulletin.gwu.edu/courses/pubh/>. Additional information about courses and registration can be found here: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/>. For course schedules from current and prior semesters, go to <https://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/> (select main campus and then public health – log in required).

The MPH core courses are designed to provide students with a broad public health context as well as a foundation for subsequent coursework. Early completion of these core courses ensures that students will have the base of knowledge to successfully complete the program specific courses and to get as much as possible out of them.

- PUBH 6021 Essentials in Public Health Practice & Leadership 1 must be taken in the student's first semester. In rare cases where special circumstances apply, the Program Director may give permission for a student to take it in their second semester.
- PUBH 6012 is the prerequisite for most of the program-specific required courses in health policy. Therefore, students seeking to graduate in two years must take PUBH 6012 in one of the first two semesters of study.
- PUBH 6315 is the prerequisite for 6320 (Advanced Health Policy Research and Analysis Methods). Students must take 6315 before 6320.
- PUBH 6310 (Statistical Analysis for Health Policy) and PUBH 6320 (Advanced Health Policy Research and Analysis Methods) are the course prerequisites for PUBH 6350, the Health Policy Capstone. Students must take 6310 and 6320 before 6350 (the Capstone). Ideally, students will take 6320 the semester immediately before 6350.

- PUBH 6350, the Health Policy Capstone, must be taken in the student's final MPH semester if the final semester is spring or summer. If the student's final semester is fall, he or she must take the capstone in the summer preceding the final semester. Registration for the Capstone requires departmental approval via registration transaction form.

Please check the course schedule for a given semester to determine all applicable prerequisites.

Timing and Accelerated Options

We recommend that students allow at least five semesters to complete the MPH program. (This is typically two fall and spring semesters and one summer.) Students must complete the MPH program within five years.

The program technically can be done in a minimum of four semesters if started in a Spring or Summer semester, but students on this accelerated path must carefully plan their program and ensure they register as soon as registration opens to ensure that they get into the courses they need. Students may encounter schedule conflicts that prevent them from taking the courses they prefer and potentially delay graduation.

It is possible for students admitted to the residential MPH in Health Policy program to take online courses their first semester, which must include PUBH 6002 and PUBH 6012, and then complete the rest of the program on-campus in 12 months, which may be May to May or August to August (spending three semesters in residence in Washington, DC). **Students wishing to pursue an accelerated option should talk with their assigned academic advisor and/or the program director to plan their program carefully before they begin.**

The MPH in Health Policy is designed to be accessible to working professionals with all core courses available in the late afternoon (**3 pm or later**) or evening in fall or spring semesters, in addition to the opportunity to take up to 15 credits online. **Note that it is not possible for all courses to be made available after 6 pm so a student may need some flexibility in their work schedule if working full time while pursuing the MPH.**

Sample Schedules for the MPH in Health Policy

Table 1 (full time students) and Table 2 (part time students) present sample course schedules that students admitted to the MPH program in Health Policy can use as a guideline to structure their program of studies. In all cases, 45 credits are required to complete the degree, including core courses (17 credits), program specific courses (20 credits), and Health Policy electives (8 credits).

Table 1: Sample Schedule for 2-Year Completion (fall start)

*Note that course schedules are subject to change.

Semester	Cr	Course #	Course Name
Fall 1 st year 11 credits	3 3 2 2 1	PUBH 6002 PUBH 6003 PUBH 6007 PUBH 6012 PUBH 6021	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health Principles and Practice of Epidemiology Social & Behavioral Approaches to Public Health Fundamentals of Health Policy Public Health Practice & Leadership 1
Spring 1 st year 11 credits	3 3 2 1 2	PUBH 6011 PUBH 6310 PUBH 6315 PUBH 6022 PUBH/HSML course	Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health Statistical Analysis in Health Policy Introduction to Health Policy Analysis Public Health Practice & Leadership 2 Elective
Summer 1 st year 4 credits	2 2 0	PUBH 6009 PUBH/HSML course PUBH 6000	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation Elective Practicum
Fall 2 nd year 10 credits	3 2 2 3 0	PUBH 6320 PUBH 6325 PUBH ____ PUBH 6340 PUBH 6023	Advanced Health Policy Research Analysis Federal Policymaking and Policy Advocacy Health Policy Selective (or alternatively, Public Health & Law) Health Economics and Financing Interprofessional Education Experience
Spring 2 nd year 9 credits	2 3 2 2	PUBH 6350 PUBH 6330 PUBH/HSML course PUBH/HSML course	Health Policy Capstone Health Services & Law (or alternatively, Health Policy Selective) Elective Elective

Table 2: Sample Schedule for 3-Year Completion (fall start)

*Note that course schedules are subject to change.

Semester	Cr	Course #	Course Name
Fall 1 st year 6 credits	3 2 1	PUBH 6003 PUBH 6012 PUBH 6021	Principles and Practice of Epidemiology Fundamentals of Health Policy Public Health Practice & Leadership 1
Spring 1 st year 6 credits	3 3	PUBH 6002 PUBH 6011	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health Environmental and Biological Foundations of Public Health
Summer 1 st year 4 credits	2 2	PUBH 6007 PUBH 6315	Social & Behavioral Approaches to Public Health Introduction to Health Policy Analysis
Fall 2 nd year 6 credits	3 3	PUBH 6310 PUBH 6335	Statistical Analysis in Health Policy Public Health & Law
Spring 2 nd year 6 credits	2 3 1	PUBH 6325 PUBH 6340 PUBH 6022	Federal Policymaking and Policy Advocacy Health Economics and Financing Public Health Practice & Leadership 2
Summer 2 nd year 4 credits	2 2 0	PUBH/HSML course PUBH/HSML course PUBH 6000	Elective Elective Practicum
Fall 3 rd year 6 credits	2 2 2	PUBH 6009 PUBH ____ PUBH/HSML course	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation Health Policy Selective Elective
Spring 3 rd year 5 credits	3 2 0	PUBH 6320 PUBH/HSML course PUBH 6023	Advanced Health Policy Analysis Elective Interprofessional Education Experience
Summer 3 rd year 2 credits	2	PUBH 6350	Health Policy Capstone

The Graduate Certificate in Health Policy

For those seeking a solid foundation in the substance of health policy and the skills of health policy analysis but who do not wish to undertake the full MPH, the Department offers an 18-credit Graduate Certificate. Designed to provide both basic and advanced-level skills in policy research and analysis, the Graduate Certificate also includes elective course offerings to fit the student's desires. If enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Health Policy Program, the student will meet often with his/her advisor to craft a personalized course of study through the Elective Course offerings. Specifically, the Graduate Certificate in Health Policy requires:

- PUBH 6002, *Biostatistical Applications for Public Health* (3 credits) (prerequisite: none)
- PUBH 6012, *Fundamentals of Health Policy* (2 credits) (prerequisite: none)
- PUBH 6310, *Statistical Analysis in Health Policy* (3 credits) (prerequisite: PUBH 6002)
- PUBH 6315, *Introduction to Health Policy Analysis* (2 credits) (prerequisite: PUBH 6012)
- PUBH 6320, *Advanced Health Policy Analysis* (3 credits) (prerequisite: PUBH 6315)
- Elective Courses (5 credits)

The Graduate Certificate in Health Policy is available standing alone, as a supplement to an MPH degree from a different department (Epidemiology, Global Health, Environmental & Occupational Health, etc.), or as a supplement to another degree (e.g., the J.D.). When pursued as a supplement to an MPH degree from another department, 5 cross-over credits from the MPH degree are available to count towards the 18-credit Graduate Certificate. In other words, for students seeking both an MPH from another department and a Graduate Certificate in Health Policy at the same time, a total of 58 credits are required to complete both programs of study (45 for the MPH and 13 additional credits for the Graduate Certificate in Health Policy).

Timing: The Graduate Certificate may be completed in as few as three semesters (12 months) if begun in spring or summer, or four semesters (16 months) if begun in fall. Like the MPH, it is designed to be accessible to working students with all core courses available in the late afternoon (3 pm or later) or evening in the fall or spring semesters, in addition to the opportunity to take some credits online. Note that it is not possible for all courses to be made available after 6 pm so a student may need some flexibility in their work schedule if working full-time while pursuing the Graduate Certificate.

Graduation Requirements

All students accepted to this graduate certificate program must follow the policies outlined in the [GW Bulletin](#) and the [GWSPH Student Handbook](#). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Minimum Course Grades
- Maximum Credit Allowances
- Continuous Enrollment
- Maximum Time to Degree
- Required Minimum Degree Credits
- Transfer Credit Policy
- CITI Training
- Integrity Quiz and Plagiarism
- Professional Enhancement (PE) Hours