

Milken Institute School of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department of Prevention and Community Health

Master of Public Health Public Health Communication and Marketing 2026 - 2027

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

Program Director

Khadidiatou Ndiaye, Ph.D.

Teaching Associate Professor of Prevention and Community Health

The George Washington University

950 New Hampshire Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20052

kndiaye@gwu.edu

202-994-1876 (office)

Mission

Based on an ecological model of health, the mission of this program is to educate public health professionals to use communication and marketing as strategic tools to influence people, places, and environmental conditions in ways that advance public health objectives.

Goal

Our graduates will possess the skills necessary to become highly effective public health practitioners and leaders. Their specific expertise in the strategic use of communication and marketing tools will enable them to work collaboratively with a broad range of other public health experts to plan high-impact health enhancement initiatives, and to implement or supervise the implementation of the communication and marketing components of public health initiatives.

Specifically, our students will become proficient at developing, implementing and evaluating:

- Communication programs that help people make sound health decisions and effectively manage their health behaviors.
- Marketing programs that improve the health capacity of communities by enhancing the competitiveness of the healthful (versus unhealthful) products and services offered to community members.
- Communication programs that promote the adoption of policies – in the public and private sector – which enhance health.

Course Requirements

All Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University (Milken Institute SPH) MPH students who select the Public Health Communication and Marketing (PHCM) Program enroll in Milken Institute SPH-Wide Core Courses (17 credits) to include the Practicum, Departmental Core Courses (6 credits), PHCM Required Courses (12 credits), and PHCM-Specific Electives (10 credits). The 45-credit hour requirement includes a Culminating Experience (2 credits). Students apply their didactic education in real world settings (Practicum) and pursue original research (Culminating Experience). The specific course requirements are presented in the attached Program at a Glance sheet.

Program-Specific Competencies

Upon completion of the MPH Program in Public Health Communication and Marketing, students will be able to:

1. Apply an ecological framework to assess and promote population health.

Students will be able to identify and assess people-based and place-based causes of health and disease. They will also be able to apply this information to develop strategic plans, and to recommend and develop effective public health interventions. This includes, but is not limited to, the ability to understand and explain the potential and limitations of public health communication and marketing campaigns. Relevant courses: PUBH 6503, 6570, 6571.

2. Utilize marketing research to develop and improve public health programs.

Students will understand and be able to explain the value of marketing research methods in creating and improving public health programs. They will be grounded in public health research and evaluation methodologies and apply them in PHCM. Moreover, students will be able to apply a range of qualitative and quantitative marketing research techniques in creating, monitoring and continuously improving PHCM and other public health initiatives. Relevant courses: PUBH 6503, 6501, 6570, 6571.

3. Develop and administer communication programs to promote individual- and population-level behavior change.

Students will understand the relevance of—and be able to apply—a range of communication, cognitive and behavioral science theories in the effective design and delivery of public health communication messages and campaigns. This includes the ability to use formative research to design effective health messages, and the ability to plan and implement effective means of delivering health information to targeted populations. Relevant courses: PUBH 6503, 6570, 6571.

4. Develop and administer marketing programs to promote individual- and population-level behavior change and improve the health capacity of communities.

Students will be able to plan and implement social marketing programs targeting consumers (i.e., the people most affected by the burden of the public health problem). They will also be able to plan and implement social marketing programs that create environmental change by targeting the people who make decisions about products and services offered, and policies implemented, in various community settings. This includes developing effective distribution channels for public health products and services, and integrated marketing communication campaigns to support them. Relevant courses: PUBH 6500, 6503, 6571, 6570.

5. Develop and administer communication programs to promote the adoption of policies that enhance health.

Students will understand the relevance of—and be able to apply—a range of theories and techniques to advocate for policies that advance the public's health. This includes the ability to effectively design messages for use in policy advocacy campaigns, and to plan and implement effective means of delivering policy advocacy campaigns. Relevant courses: PUBH 6503, 6570, 6571.

6. Evaluate public health communication and marketing initiatives.

Students will be able to prepare program goals and objectives for health enhancement programs. They will also be able to conduct basic evaluations of public health communication and marketing programs, including working with stakeholders to plan and implement process and outcome evaluations of health communication and marketing initiatives. Relevant courses: PUBH 6503, 6571, 6570, 6501, 6504.

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Program-at-a-Glance
2026-2027

Semester Offered = on-campus courses, unless otherwise specified; * = courses offered on campus and online; residential students may take as many as 15 credits from online offerings);

^Only one of these courses may count toward your 10 elective credits.

Required Core Course (17 credits)		Credits	Semester Offered
PUBH 6000	MPH Applied Practice Experience (no fee is charged)	0	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6002*	Biostatistical Applications for Public Health	3	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6003*	Principles & Practice of Epidemiology	3	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6007*	Social & Behavioral Approaches to Public Health	2	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6011*	Principles of Environmental Health Sciences	3	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6012*	Fundamentals of Health Policy	2	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6021*	Essentials of Public Health Practice & Leadership 1	1	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6022*	Essentials of Public Health Practice & Leadership 2	1	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6023	Interprofessional Education Experience	0	Fall, Spring, Summer
PUBH 6015.19	PHCM Culminating Experience	2	See Advisor
Required Departmental Courses (6 credits)		Credits	Semester Offered
PUBH 6500*	Planning & Implementing Health Promotion Programs (Prerequisite: PUBH 6007)	3	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6501	Program Evaluation (Prerequisite: PUBH 6500)	3	Fall, Spring
Required Program-Specific Courses (12 credits)		Credits	Semester Offered
PUBH 6503*	Introduction to Public Health Communication & Marketing	3	Fall - on campus All semesters - online
PUBH 6504	Social & Behavioral Science Research Methods (Prerequisites: PUBH 6002 and PUBH 6007)	3	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6570	Advanced Public Health Communication: Theory & Practice	3	Spring (every other year)
PUBH 6571*	Social Marketing: Theory & Practice (online only)	3	Summer – online only (see schedule for details)
Electives (10 credits)		Credits	Semester Offered
<i>Select from list below or select other SPH or other school courses (e.g., MKTG, PPPA, SMPA, etc.) with advance approval from advisor. Note: Prerequisites may apply. Plan accordingly.</i>			
Global Health Electives			
PUBH 6058*	Researching Violence Against Women & Girls	2	Fall – on campus Spring – online only
PUBH 6132*	Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene (WASH) in Low-Income Countries	2	Online only (see schedule for details)
PUBH 6400*	Global Health Frameworks	2	Fall, Spring (see schedule for details)
PUBH 6452*	Social & Behavior Change Communication in Middle-to-Low- Income Countries	2	Summer – online only (see schedule for details)
PUBH 6563*	Global Child Health	2	Fall – on campus Spring – online (see schedule for details)
Policy Related Electives			
PUBH 6054	Community Engagement & Advocacy	2	Online only (see schedule for details)

PUBH 6315	Introduction to Health Policy Analysis	2	Fall, Spring, Summer (see schedule for details)
PUBH 6335*	Public Health & Law	3	Fall – in person, online Spring – online only
PUBH 6390	Prescription Drugs: Policy & Public Health	3	Online only (see schedule for details)
Digital Health Electives			
INFR 6101	Principles of Medical Informatics	3	Online only (see schedule for details)
Methods Related Electives			
PUBH 6853	Use of SAS for Data Management & Analysis	3	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6262	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems	1	Fall, Spring
PUBH 6530*	Qualitative Methods in Health Promotion	2	Spring
PUBH 6572	Marketing Research for Public Health	3	Spring – online only
Additional Communication Electives			
<i>Other electives with approval from your advisor</i> With the approval of an academic adviser, PHCM students can take courses from any program within the Milken Institute School of Public Health for which they have met the prerequisites. Additionally, PHCM students can take courses offered by other schools in our university. There are courses offered by Marketing/Business (MKTG), the School of Media and Public Affairs (SMPA), and the School of Communication (COMM), for example, that are relevant for PHCM students. Check the university's schedule of classes each semester for options, click on "Main Campus," and see what's being offered. One caveat: any elective course must be at the 6000 (graduate) level to count as an elective for our students. Suggestions for schools to look at: Marketing, School of Media and Public Affairs, Communications			
Course Distribution		Credits	
Public Health Core Courses		17	
Required Departmental Courses		6	
Required Program-Specific Courses		12	
Program-Specific Electives		10	
Total Degree Credits		45	

Course descriptions and registration information can be found on the website:
<http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics/>.

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)

Advising Notes:

The Master of Public Health (MPH) curriculum consists of four types of courses:

- Required MPH Core Courses
- Required Departmental and Program-Specific Courses
- Elective credits
- Required Applied Practice Experience (Practicum) and Culminating Experience

The MPH core courses are designed to provide students with a broad public health context as well as a critical 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. As such, entering students are expected to enroll in MPH core courses in accordance with the following guidelines:

- We expect MPH students to complete the MPH core courses in their first year of graduate study (fall/spring/summer) if they are on a schedule to complete their studies in two years.
- Students may take core courses in any order, except where prerequisites apply.

Part-time students (who generally take 5 to 7 credits per semester) will typically concentrate on taking just core courses in their first year, and then take program-specific courses in their second and third years.

In order to help assure that all students can complete core courses in the first year of study, Milken Institute SPH will offer all core courses during all three semesters (fall, spring, and summer). This will allow students who wish to complete their MPH degree within two years to do so, and will allow every student to make steady progress toward completing the MPH degree.

We recognize that there may be exceptional circumstances that make it difficult for a student to complete core courses in the first year as outlined above. Any such student should discuss this situation with his or her academic advisor.

For additional information and resources regarding registration, course descriptions, schedule of classes, etc. follow this link: <http://publichealth.gwu.edu/academics>.