1.0 Background

1.1 About the MPH program.

The MPH program at East Carolina University (ECU) is housed in the Brody School of Medicine. The impetus for establishing the program was based on the eastern North Carolina’s (NC) poor health indicators. Eastern NC health indicators rank lower compared to western and Piedmont counties as well as other US cities. Eastern NC counties are predominantly rural and disproportionately socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to other regions.

The goal of the MPH program is to contribute to improving the health status of the region’s population. We actively promote community engagement, community service, and active learning to promote and improve community health. The program incorporates practice-based teaching, competency-based learning, and evidence-based principles.

Core knowledge areas include epidemiology, health services administration, ethics and law, health behavior and health education, biostatistics, rural health, and environmental health. An internship in any of these settings is required, and the faculty help match students with their interests. We encourage interdisciplinary relationships and research with the School of Medicine, School of Dental Medicine, College of Nursing, and other university programs.

About 60% of MPH courses are offered on-line and most face-to-face courses are offered 1 session per week for 3 hours, typically, after 3pm. Students can progress through the program either on a part- or full-time basis. Faculty members work with each student individually to tailor an education for their goals. With the Brody School of Medicine, we also offer a dual MD/MPH program.

Historically, our program was founded for NC residents with a principal focus on training a workforce for local and state public health agencies, hospitals and other health and human service providers in North Carolina. While that focus remains our main primary objective, careers in public health require greater skills using technology, quantitative skills to analyze data, and understanding of the complex delivery of healthcare, so our program provides curriculum in these areas.

We offer three concentrations: epidemiology, health administration, and health behavior.

Our program has received accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) in 2012 and is currently accredited through 2019. CEPH (https://ceph.org/) is an independent organization which accredits independent public health programs and schools of public health, as recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Chair of the Department of Public Health and MPH Program Director is Dr. Ronny Bell. Faculty members have a variety of specialties and expertise in epidemiology, health administration, and health behavior and promotion.