

Health Concentration

Brief Description

The Health Concentration is designed for students who wish to prepare for advanced practice in direct service or management roles in health care settings. Health care settings include acute care hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, community health organizations, health-related advocacy organizations, long-term care facilities, reproductive health service providers, and public health organizations. In direct practice, social work graduates assist individuals and families to increase their capacity for functioning in the face of challenges to physical and psychosocial functioning presented by disease and/or impairment. Graduates of the Health Concentration with a direct practice focus act in diverse roles such as case manager, counselor, educator, and advocate. Graduates with an administrative focus assume leadership roles in the development, management, and evaluation of health-related programs in the domains of health education, treatment, rehabilitation, disease-management, primary and secondary prevention at the individual, family, community and/or societal levels. Graduates of both the direct practice and administrative tracks collaborate with a variety of patients, their families, health professionals, and policy makers to address health conditions, community health issues, population-based health disparities and policy environments in the context of complex and interrelated psychological, interpersonal, medical, social, economic, and political factors.

The underlying theoretical framework for the Health Concentration is the biopsychosocial approach, which emphasizes the interaction of a disease or physical impairment with the biological, social, psychological, built and political environments. Health is understood to include not only objectively assessed health conditions and community health indicators, but also subjective well being in the context of population-specific experience of health (e.g., women's health). Evidence-based practices of health care are studied in their developmental context across health care settings, and across levels of analysis. Models of health behavior and beliefs relevant to health care are taught along with pertinent political, economic, and social psychological theories. Issues of discrimination, access to care, and quality of care are discussed in the context of ethical and social justice concerns. Within this framework, the impact of health disparities on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental disability, age and national origin are considered. Interventions and strategies for eliminating health disparities are also addressed, along with culturally competent health care practices, community and political advocacy strategies, familial and community capacity building, and skills for influencing health-related policies. These interventions and strategies are discussed as they influence the adaptation, management, and prevention of disease and unhealthful environments, as well as its obverse: promoting improved health and wellness at the individual, community, and societal levels.

Two courses are required of all Health Concentration students, a concentration specific policy course, *S40-5742 Health Care: Policy and Services*, and a concentration specific theory course, *S20-3022 Health Promotion and Behavior: Theories, Problems, and Issues*. The concentration also requires two concentration specific methods course for direct practice students, *S30-9125 Social Work Practice and Services in Health Care* and *S30-5453 Principles of Clinical Interventions in Health* and then one of the following, *S30-5702 Applied Group Work Practice*; *S30-5502 Applied Behavior Therapy*; or *S30-5902 Applied Psychosocial Practice*. Administration students in Health choose from three of the school's administration courses.

Students in the Health Concentration are allowed to take one of two different evaluation courses to fulfill their concentration evaluation requirement, *S40-5842 Social Policy and Analysis*; or *S50-5050 Evaluation of Programs and Services*.

Health Concentration Course Requirements

(See “Proposed Course Offerings” for prerequisites and co-requisites)

Social Policy

S40-5742 Health Care: Policy and Services

Theory, Problems, and Issues

S20-3022 Health Promotion and Behavior: Theories, Problems and Issues

Practice Methods

Direct Practice students must take:

S30-5453 Principles of Clinical Interventions in Health

S30-9125 Social Work Practice and Services in Health Care

And one of the following:

S30-5502 Applied Behavior Therapy

S30-5702 Applied Group Work Practice

S30-5902 Applied Psychosocial Practice

Administration students select any three of the following:

S30-5703 Working with Groups on Problem-Solving Tasks

S50-5019 Personnel Management and Supervision

S50-5020 Board Governance and Volunteer Management

S50-5030 Budgeting and Fiscal Management

S50-5052 Leadership, Planning, and Decision Making

S50-5066 Marketing, Resource Development, and Community Relations

Evaluation

All students select one of the following:

S40-5842 Social Policy Analysis and Evaluation

S50-5050 Evaluation of Programs and Services

Practicum

Students are required to take five credits (600 hours) of practicum at an approved health care site.

The site should provide experience in working with patients, working with health care providers, and in fulfilling the roles of team consultants, educators, and evaluators of service delivery outcomes. Students must work with diverse populations in practicum.

Health Concentration Information

For further information on the Health Concentration, please contact Timothy McBride, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Public Health, Goldfarb 242, (314) 935-4356, tmcbride@wustl.edu.