

Master of Public Health

Applied Practice Experience

by

Olivia Waren

MPH Candidate

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Graduate Committee:

Dr. Ellyn Mulcahy, Ph.D., MPH

Dr. Charles Pickens, Ph.D.

Dr. Margaret Kincaid, Ph.D.

Applied Practical Experience Site:

Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Health Promotion

12/1/2024-3/31/2025

Applied Practical Experience Preceptor:

Jana Farmer, MBA, CPC, Section Director of Cancer Prevention and Control

Olivia Burzoni, MPA, Comprehensive Cancer Program Manager

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

2025

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Portfolio Products	2
<i>Table 1.1 Summary of Portfolio Products.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Table 1.2 Portfolio Products and Competency Addressed</i>	<i>3</i>
Chapter 2 - Competencies.....	5
<i>Table 2.1 Summary of MPH Foundational Competencies.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Table 2.2 MPH Foundational Competencies Course Mapping</i>	<i>7</i>

Chapter 1 - Portfolio Products

My Applied Practice Experience was completed at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, specifically within the Cancer Control and Prevention Section, which is housed under the Bureau of Health Promotion. This section facilitates multiple programs, two of which I assisted with: the Kansas Cancer Partnership (KCP) and Early Detection Works (EDW). Both programs aim to increase health equity and reduce the cancer burden throughout the state of Kansas.

The Kansas Cancer Partnership (KCP) is a collaborative network of organizations and individuals dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer in Kansas. KCP is organized into five key workgroups: Prevention, Early Detection and Screening, Survivorship, Financial Burden and Health Equity, and Policy. These workgroups focus on addressing various aspects of cancer prevention, treatment, and care across the state. The Early Detection Works (EDW) program, an initiative under KCP, provides free cancer screenings to eligible Kansas residents who are uninsured or underinsured.

In my role, I collaborated with the Cancer Prevention and Control section, assisting in the collection of data for the section's annual review and contributing to the development of support documents for the EDW program and patient screening resources. Additionally, I provided administrative support by creating contract workflows and related materials. I participated in KCP workgroup and chair/co-chair meetings, where I drafted agendas and meeting minutes. I also gained insight into the webinar planning process by attending relevant meetings and webinars/office hours.

Furthermore, I contributed to a policy scan for the bureau by cross-referencing the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations with Medicaid coverage policies in Kansas. This analysis allowed for an evaluation of the alignment between national screening guidelines and the services covered by Medicaid within the state. My project aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the administrative aspects of public health, with a particular focus on oncology resources in Kansas, especially in rural areas.

Table 1.1 Summary of Portfolio Products

Portfolio Product		Description
A	Breast Cancer Screening: A Provider's Guide	A practical guide designed for healthcare providers, offering recommendations and best practices for breast cancer screening. It includes information on screening guidelines, patient communication strategies, and resources for early detection and follow-up care.
B	Breast Cancer Screening: A Patient's Guide	A patient-friendly guide that explains the importance of breast cancer screening, available screening options, and how to access services. It is designed to help individuals make informed decisions about their breast health and understand the screening process.
C	Healthy Behaviors as Prevention Evidence Based Interventions	A document summarizing evidence-based interventions that promote healthy behaviors to prevent chronic diseases. It provides an overview of strategies such as physical activity, smoking cessation, and nutrition programs, highlighting their effectiveness in reducing disease burden.

D	USPSTF KanCare Screenings Table	A comprehensive reference table outlining U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended screenings available through KanCare, Kansas' Medicaid program. This resource was created to help the Policy Work Group of the Kansas Cancer Partnership improve screening accessibility through changes in legislation.
E	Early Detection Works Contract Workflows	A detailed workflow document outlining the contracting process for the Early Detection Works (EDW) program, which provides breast and cervical cancer screening services for eligible Kansans. It ensures clarity in administrative processes and compliance with program requirements.
F	Early Detection Works Case Management Report	A monthly report utilized by Early Detection Works (EDW) regional nurses to identify patients in need of services and follow-up care, ensuring timely support and continuity of care.
G	Cancer 101 KansasTRAIN Module	A module designed to support and educate Community Health Workers (CHWs) in providing effective care to cancer patients across Kansas. As a complement to the comprehensive module, additional sub-topics were developed to offer deeper insights into specific areas, including individual cancer types, the financial burden of cancer care, and strategies for effective communication with interdisciplinary clinical teams.

Table 1.2 Portfolio Products and Competency Addressed

Portfolio Product		Number and Competency Addressed	
A	Breast Cancer Screening: A Provider's Guide	19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
B	Breast Cancer Screening: A Patient's Guide	19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
C	Healthy Behaviors as Prevention Evidence Based Interventions	7	Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health
D	USPSTF KanCare Screenings Table	15, 19	Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
E	Early Detection Works Contract Workflows	11, 22	Select methods to evaluate public health programs

			Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative
F	Early Detection Works Case Management Report	22	Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative
G	Cancer 101 KansasTRAIN Module	19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation

Chapter 2 - Competencies

Table 2.1 Summary of MPH Foundational Competencies

Number and Competency		Description
11	Select methods to evaluate public health programs	By systematically evaluating cancer prevention initiatives, patient case management, and screening programs, this project ensured data-driven decision-making. The assessment of program outcomes, patient follow-ups, and screening policies contributed to a stronger, more effective approach to improving public health interventions.
15	Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity	By assessing how policies influence screening access, preventive behaviors, and cancer care, this project helped identify gaps and promote equitable health policies. Evaluating policy effectiveness ensured that public health initiatives were aligned with best practices and addressed disparities in care.
7	Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health	By identifying population needs and provider resource gaps, this project contributed to a targeted approach to improving screening accessibility and provider education. Understanding these needs helped shape strategies to enhance cancer prevention efforts and reduce disparities.
22	Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative	By analyzing case management workflows and behavioral change frameworks, this project contributed to more effective, integrated solutions that address public health challenges holistically.
19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	Effective communication played a vital role in this project, helping ensure that important public health messages reached the right audiences in ways that were both clear and meaningful. This was achieved by tailoring materials for patients and providers and leading discussions within KCP workgroups.

The work I completed and the products I produced during my Applied Practice Experience allowed me to exercise and enhance several MPH Foundational Competencies. I will

focus on the five that were most directly applied to my work, which include numbers 11, 15, 7, 22, and 19.

In addressing MPH Foundational Competency #11, "select methods to evaluate public health programs," I was actively involved in evaluating cancer prevention initiatives and screening programs, in the form of the annual review. The annual review highlighted the work of Early Detection Works and The Kansas Cancer Partnership. The effectiveness of events was shown through statistics showcasing event turnout, social media campaign engagement, survey feedback, and success stories. In addition to this, the annual review revealed the growth of these programs, specifically by graphically representing the number of patients enrolled in Early Detection Works, how many of these patients were previously rarely screened, project spending for FY 2024, and the number of enrolled patients that received services. By showing these key metrics, one can easily compare and evaluate the growth and reach of the program. This process is crucial in public health as it ensures that resources are effectively allocated, programs are meeting their intended goals, and underserved populations are being reached.

Foundational Competency #15, "evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity," was a focus of my work. To fulfill this competency, I evaluated Medicaid coverage policies in Kansas. As part of this process, I created and documented a comparison of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) screening guidelines and Medicaid coverage in Kansas, which required collaboration with the Kansas Cancer Partnership's (KCP) policy workgroup and the Division of Healthcare Finance at KDHE. Using this information, I was able to evaluate and determine exactly where coverage lacked for the recommended screenings. For instance, I determined a discrepancy in colorectal cancer screening coverage. According to the American Cancer Society, follow up colonoscopies are recommended every three years, but Kansas Medicaid only covers colonoscopies every ten years. The seven-year coverage discrepancy hinders individuals from following screening recommendations and could serve as a barrier to the effectiveness of future screening and prevention efforts. In public health, it is important to ensure that public health programs actually reach the intended audiences and have the desired effects. By identifying barriers and coverage gaps, I contributed to a broader effort to align healthcare policies with evidence-based screening guidelines, ultimately supporting more equitable and effective public health interventions.

In fulfilling Foundational Competency #7, "assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect communities' health," I worked to identify population needs and gaps in resources that influence cancer prevention efforts. I conducted an in-depth search for state and federal grant opportunities for the Kansas Cancer Partnership Prevention Workgroup, which involved evaluating potential funding sources that could support cancer prevention initiatives. I identified 22 grants that would support initiatives ranging from community gardens to health care educational programs. This research was integral to strengthening the capacity of programs and ensuring that they could secure the resources necessary to sustain and expand cancer prevention efforts, especially for underserved populations. Additionally, I reviewed and updated workflows for the EDW program to streamline the process for providers, improving access to services for Kansas residents in need of screenings. Through this work, I helped ensure that the program's operations aligned with both the needs of the population and the available resources.

Foundational Competency #22, "apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue," was a crucial aspect of my work, particularly when analyzing the integration of evidence-based interventions (EBIs) in cancer prevention. I presented EBI research to a large group, facilitating discussions within the KCP Prevention Workgroup to guide future action steps. This involved not only presenting research but also fostering collaboration to determine the best approach to implementing these interventions across the state. After my presentation, I led a discussion in the workgroup to identify which interventions were of interest to the members. We discussed how these could be implemented, the reach of each intervention, and compared it to prior initiatives. In subsequent small group meetings, we discussed potential partners for the project which allowed us to narrow down a region in Kansas to focus on. This approach, which mimicked the Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis method, ensured that the implementation of EBIs was coordinated, effective, and sustainable across public health initiatives.

Finally, in addressing Foundational Competency #19, "communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation," I developed and presented key public health materials that helped drive engagement and informed decision-making. I created materials such as the patient and provider screening guide for the EDW workgroup, ensuring that the information was both comprehensive and accessible to diverse audiences. By presenting these materials and facilitating discussions on next steps, I helped ensure that public health messages were communicated clearly and effectively. I also had the opportunity to facilitate conversations on future strategies with the Prevention Workgroup, encouraging active participation and collective decision-making on important public health priorities. Additionally, I extracted accurate information in order to create a "Cancer 101" Module on KansasTRAIN. I presented the course outline to the KCP Health Equity Workgroup, and integrated feedback to ensure that the information was audience-appropriate and effective.

In summary, my Applied Practice Experience allowed me to apply these foundational competencies in practical, meaningful ways. Whether it was evaluating policies, researching grant opportunities, applying systems thinking, or communicating effectively, each task contributed to my growth and understanding of public health principles, particularly in the area of cancer prevention and care.

Table 2.2 MPH Foundational Competencies Course Mapping

22 Public Health Foundational Competencies Course Mapping	MP H 701	MP H 720	MP H 754	MP H 802	MP H 818
Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health					
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice	x		x		
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	x	x	x		
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate	x	x	x		
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice	x		x		

Public Health and Health Care Systems
--

5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings		x			
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and systemic levels					x
Planning and Management to Promote Health					
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health		x		x	
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs					x
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention			x		
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management		x	x		
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs	x	x	x		
Policy in Public Health					
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence		x	x	x	
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes		x		x	x
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations		x			x
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity		x		x	
Leadership					
16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue		x			x
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges		x			
Communication					
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content		x			x
Interprofessional and/or Intersectoral Practice					
21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health		x			x
Systems Thinking					
22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative			x	x	