

IDC 1 (MPH):



## Letter of Intent to Develop New Academic Degree Program

The following approvals must be obtained prior to sending the Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program to the UNC System Office.

Institution University of North Carolina Asheville and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Gillings School of Global Public Health)

Degree Program Title (e.g. M.A. in Biology) M.P.H. Masters in Public Health

Reviewed and Approved By (Name and title only. No signature required in this section.)  
Check box to indicate participation in review. (Provost is required.)

### For UNC Asheville:

- Provost: Acting Provost, Karin Peterson
- Faculty Senate Chair (as appropriate): Micheal Stratton, Chair of Faculty Senate
- Academic College Dean: Dean Jeff Konz
- Department Chair: Interim Chair, Jason Wingert and Chair on PDL, Amy Joy Lanou
- Program Director/Coordinator: Travis Johnson

### For UNC Chapel Hill

- Provost:
- Faculty Senate Chair (as appropriate):
- Graduate Council (as appropriate):
- Undergraduate or Graduate Dean (as appropriate):
- Academic College Dean:
- Department Chair:
- Program Director/Coordinator:

### New Academic Proposal Process

New academic programs are initiated and developed by the faculty members. Approval of the Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program must be obtained from department chairs and college deans or equivalent administrators before submission to the UNC System Office review.

Directions: Please provide a succinct, yet thorough response to each section. Obtain the Provost's signature and submit the proposal via the PREP system to the UNC System Vice President for Academic Programs, Faculty, and Research, for review and approval by the UNC System Office. Once the Letter of Intent to Develop is approved, the institution can begin work on the formal Request to Establish a New Degree Program.

## Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program

<b>Institution</b>	UNC Asheville
<b>Joint Degree Program (Yes or No)? If so, list partner campus.</b>	UNC Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health
<b>Degree Program Title (e.g. M.A. in Biology)</b>	MPH
<b>CIP Code and CIP Title (May be found at <a href="#">National Center for Education Statistics</a>)</b>	51.2201
<b>Require UNC Teacher Licensure Specialty Area Code (Yes or No). If yes, list suggested UNC Specialty Area Code(s).</b>	No
<b>Proposed Delivery Mode (campus, online, or site-based distance education). Add maximum % online, if applicable.</b>	Campus with hybrid delivery of some courses (maximum % online = 50)
<b>Proposed Term to Enroll First Students (e.g. Spring 2019)</b>	Fall 2019
<b>List other programs in the UNC System (may be found at <a href="#">UNC System website</a>)</b>	MPH degrees are currently available at UNC-CH, ECU, and UNC-Charlotte

**SACSCOC Liaison Statement:** *(Provide a brief statement from the University SACSCOC liaison regarding whether the new program is or is not a substantive change.)*

Dr. Michael Gass, SACSCOC Institutional Liaison for UNC Asheville states: "The formation of a joint degree would be considered a substantive change and will need SACSCOC review."

**Program Summary:** *(Briefly describe the proposed program and summarize the overall rationale.)*  
Maximum of 1,000 words.

Include the following in your narrative:

- Ways in which the proposed program is distinct from others already offered in the UNC System (use the 4-digit CIP as a guide). Information on other programs may be found on the [UNC System website](#).
- How this program supports specific university and UNC System [missions](#).
- Collaborative opportunities with other UNC institutions as appropriate.

The Joint Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program with a focus in Rural and Place-based Health Transformation will be a partnership of UNC Asheville, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, and the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC). The rural and place-based focus across two complementary academic institutions and a key healthcare and training partner make this proposed MPH program distinct from others in the UNC system and in NC.

This Western North Carolina (WNC) driven project has been substantially funded by the NC Legislature with intent to increase public health capacity in the state's western 16 counties. WNC faces many health disparities including higher infant mortality rate, lower life expectancy, higher rates of chronic disease, higher rates of behavioral health issues, and higher rates of substance abuse. These disparities are rooted in lower education levels, higher poverty rates, decreased access to care with lower rates of insurance and notable geographic boundaries, decrease healthy food access and poor health behavior habits. Up to 95% of improvement in health for communities will not happen in hospitals and clinics but by addressing the social determinants of health. This joint degree program in public health will increase the region's ability to improve the health of its communities.

The program aims to train students from various backgrounds and experience in core public health, healthcare transformation, and place-based public health practice with a focus on rural health. The target audience will be inter-professional cohorts representing various academic backgrounds and life experiences that will inform their public health training. The program design, distinct from other UNC system MPH programs, will involve small cohorts, case-based and community-based activities, and instruction by interdisciplinary faculty from the humanities to health sciences. The delivery method will be majority synchronous onsite classes, leveraging online resources. For the Asheville cohort, in-person classes will be held one day a week, with the intent that students may work while pursuing their degrees. This format was determined by the Asheville partners based on feedback they received from potential prospective students, and it is consistent with current best practices in public health teaching.

All accredited MPH degrees must meet foundational competencies as defined by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). In addition, the rural and place-based focus competencies will include: taking multiple perspectives and historic understanding of "place"; exemplary leadership and innovation capacities in rural health and public health; experience connection and partnership with communities in WNC; exceptional ability to conduct research, innovate, and advocate to address needs of communities; skills for advancing health equity, and understanding of community-driven research. SACSCOC assessments will be planned as the degree program is developed; assessment decisions will be made jointly by the two campuses.

The goal of expanding public health capacity in WNC contributes to all five UNC System strategic planning priorities. In particular, the availability of a joint MPH program in Asheville will address the system goals of access to educational opportunities for workforce development, economic impact and community engagement.

#### *UNC Asheville*

The University of North Carolina at Asheville, with its distinctive mission as North Carolina's Public Liberal Arts Institution along with Asheville's strong and diverse systems for health care and public health engagement, make this campus ideal for an innovative liberal arts learning experience for masters students of public health.

Public health is an inherently interdisciplinary field requiring a strong liberal arts training to understand determinants of health and to develop creative approaches to promoting population health. The cultivation of critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, and honest open inquiry is key to preparing public health professionals, and the MPH program would not only fit in well with these dispositions but also could contribute to them on our campus. Through the MPH program, we will train residents and others in the practice of rural and WNC public health issues and work, fulfilling a necessary public good close to campus.

UNC Asheville's strategic plan includes three core values: diversity and inclusion, innovation, and sustainability. With the focus on health equity to create long-term social change, the MPH program aligns well with the values of diversity and inclusion and sustainability. The program is the second Master's degree at UNC Asheville, representing an innovation that is both welcome and sound.

#### *UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health*

The Blueprint for Next at UNC Chapel Hill sets the strategic framework that names the University's priorities. Following the Of the Public, For the Public pillar, a joint MPH program will increase applied expertise in the state and remove barriers to accessing the attainment of that expertise. Following the Innovation Made Fundamental pillar, a joint MPH program will demonstrate our new learning imperative through experiential curricula and address changing student and workforce needs through training that fosters the skills and relationships that will help students build careers in Western North Carolina.

The Gillings School of Global Public Health seeks to improve public health, promote individual well-being and eliminate health inequities across North Carolina and around the world. Providing an MPH offering where people can stay in or come to WNC encourages people to remain in the area after they have completed their education. Offerings from the UNC Medical School and Eshelman School of Pharmacy, which are also connected to the larger legislatively funded effort, already have demonstrated that this principle works in practice. A joint MPH offering will help meet a critical need in North Carolina and is closely aligned with our expertise and our mission.

**Student Demand:** *(Provide evidence of student demand. Discuss the extent to which students will be drawn from a pool of students not previously served by the institution. Maximum length 1,000 words.)*

The intended audience includes individuals who already have a professional identity and who have at least two years of health-related experience, and who aim to broaden their knowledge and skills in public health philosophy and sciences, and who prefer to remain living and working in western NC while earning their degree.

An electronic survey of potential enrollees was conducted in early 2017. Major health organizations helped distribute the electronic survey in order to ensure broad reach, including: Mission Hospitals (16,000 employees), Western NC Medical Society, UNC Asheville, MAHEC, Buncombe County CHIP (Community Health Improvement Process) team, and WNC Health Network (which serves all local public health departments in WNC). A total of 1,320 people responded. Among the respondents, 223 were very interested and would sign up for the first cohort, suggesting that there would be a likelihood of fully enrolling for years. In addition, 445 of respondents were interested and would consider applying.

According to a Stamats survey of UNCA students conducted in 2013, of the 529 students surveyed, 16% responded that they would attend a graduate program in public health at UNCA.

In addition, according to a January 2018 Future Graduates Survey (n=570, 86% of whom were current students):

- 80.7% of respondents were somewhat or extremely likely to pursue graduate studies
- 19.1% of question respondents were somewhat or extremely likely to pursue a UNCA MPH

UNC Asheville does not currently have an MPH degree program, so the joint program will allow us to meet this unmet need for graduate education in Public Health. UNC-CH Gillings offers an MPH, but a residential degree program is not currently available to those who for professional or other reasons are unable to relocate from WNC, or who would like to study where they live.

**Societal Demand:** *(Provide evidence of societal demand and employability of graduates from each of the following source types. Maximum length 1,000 words)*

- Labor market information (projections, job posting analyses, and wages)
  - Specific to North Carolina (such as [ncworks.gov](http://ncworks.gov), [nctower.com](http://nctower.com), or outside vendors such as [Burning Glass](#))
  - Available from national occupational and industry projections (such as the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#))
- Projections from professional associations or industry reports
- Other (alumni surveys, insights from existing programs, etc.)

National:

Public health is a rapidly growing field in educational programs and job opportunities. Health Educators and Community Health Workers, common positions held by MPH-prepared individuals, held 118,100 jobs in 2016, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). MPH-prepared individuals worked primarily in general medical and surgical hospitals, individual and family services, community-based organizations and local and State governments. In addition, a small number of them worked in outpatient care centers. Median annual wage of health educators and community health workers was \$44,390 in 2016, according to BLS. BLS projects employment of health educators and community health workers to grow faster than the average for all occupations. Projected growth from 2016-2026, jobs are expected to grow 16%. Job growth is driven by the rising costs of healthcare, increased awareness of costs of preventable diseases, the need for early detection of diseases, and an increasing recognition of the need for qualified health educators.

North Carolina:

The following are growth projections for some of North Carolina's master's-educated public health professionals for the ten-year projection period between 2012 and 2022 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014):

Job Growth Projections for Master's-Educated Public Health Professionals in North Carolina (2012-2022):

- Social and Community Service Managers-31%
- Statisticians-24%
- Microbiologists-7%
- Biological Scientists-2%
- Rehabilitation Counselors-32%

Career Opportunities for Master's-Educated Public Health Professionals in North Carolina

Healthcare support occupations and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations are projected to be the two fastest growing occupational groups during the 2014 to 2024 projections decade. These groups are

projected to contribute the most new jobs, with a combined increase of 2.3 million in employment, representing about 1 in 4 new jobs.

In addition, BLS.gov outlines a 25% increase predicted in health industry salary.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides salary ranges for some of North Carolina's master's-educated public health professionals as of 2014. The salaries below range from the tenth percentile to the 90th percentile:

- Rehabilitation Counselors: \$20,430 to \$59,620
- Social Scientists: \$48,130 to \$105,030
- Biological Scientists: \$44,440 to \$105,990
- Social and Community Service Managers: \$39,350 to \$94,720
- Microbiologists: \$37,490 to 107,340

*Salaries for Public Health Professions in North Carolina that Require a Master's Degree*

<http://www.publichealthonline.org/north-carolina/>

*Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release, December 8, 2015* available from national occupational and industry projections (such as BLS).

Western North Carolina:

According to the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's March 2018 Emsi Q1 2018 Data Set, the number of positions in four key related health occupations (Health Educators, Medical and Health Services Managers, Community Health Workers, and Occupational Health and Safety Technicians) in six Western North Carolina counties near Asheville is projected to increase by 9.9% between 2017 and 2020. During this time, the number of community health workers, specifically, is expected to increase by 22%. The increase of jobs is expected to be higher than the national rate (6.6%).

Projections from Professional Organizations:

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Future of Public Health 2015

- "Maximizing health requires contributions from many sectors of society, including broad social, economic, environmental, transportation, and other policies in which government plays key roles; involvement of civil society; innovation by the public and private sectors; and health care and public health action." Training in public health is increasingly of interest to professionals across various sectors.

Association of Schools and Programs in Public Health (ASPPH): Framing the Future of Public Health 2015.

<https://www.aspph.org/teach-research/framing-the-future/>

- The MPH degree will continue to grow in value and in enrollment during the 21st century as societies, organizations, and individuals increasingly focus on population health and health care as key concerns.
- A decreasing percentage of MPH graduates will be employed in traditional public health agencies while an increasing percentage will be employed in a wide range of settings including other government agencies, health care delivery organizations, insurers, drug and device makers, and others.

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO): [Public Health Workforce Position Paper 2013](#).

- More than 100,000 state workers and 160,000 local workers are responsible for improving the nation's health and keeping the public secure.
- The public health workforce encompasses wide-ranging specialties, such as public health physicians, public health nurses, first responders, social workers, community organizers, advocacy specialists, laboratory workers, health educators, nutritionists, epidemiologists, and environmental health workers, to name a few.
- The public health workforce is the first line of prevention for the public when fighting against obesity, chronic disease (i.e., diabetes, heart disease, and cancer), injuries, mental illness, infectious disease, and the first line of defense when protecting the health of the environment, providing surveillance, and conducting emergency preparedness activities.
- Due to the growing U.S. population and a substantial portion of the current workforce reaching retirement in the next few years, it is estimated that we will need 250,000 more public health workers by 2020.

The growth in popularity and demand of public health programs is reflected in the UNC Asheville offering of an undergraduate major and minor in Health and Wellness Promotion, which has grown to become one of the largest majors on campus.

**Health and Wellness Promotion Graduation Rates 2104-2018**

	<b>Majors</b>	<b>Minors</b>
<b>AY 13-14</b>	45	2
<b>AY 14-15</b>	46	5
<b>AY 15-16</b>	46	3
<b>AY 16-17</b>	54	3
<b>AY 17-18</b>	46*	7

\*expected

Additionally, UNC has used the place-based approach in establishing the UNC School of Medicine Asheville and the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy at UNC Asheville. Both of these schools have reached marked success in enrollment and placement of graduates in WNC. These programs have been acknowledged nationally for this innovative approach.

**For Doctoral Programs Only:**

Describe the following (maximum length 2,000 words):

- The research and scholarly infrastructure in place (including faculty) to support the proposed program.
- Method of financing the proposed new program (including extramural research funding and other sources) and indicate the extent to which additional state funding may be required.
- State the number, amount, and source of proposed graduate student stipends and related tuition benefits that will be required to initiate the program.

**Contact:** (List the names, titles, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of the person(s) responsible for planning the proposed program.)

Position Title	Name	E-mail Address	Telephone
Vice Dean, Gillings School of Global Public Health	Todd Nicolet, PhD	<a href="mailto:todd_nicolet@unc.edu">todd_nicolet@unc.edu</a>	(919) 966-3215
Senior Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Gillings School of Global Public Health	Laura Linnan, ScD	<a href="mailto:linnan@unc.edu">linnan@unc.edu</a>	(919) 843-8044
Senior Administrator for Space Planning & Professor of Chemistry, UNC Asheville	Keith Krumpe, PhD	<a href="mailto:kkrumpe@unca.edu">kkrumpe@unca.edu</a>	(828) 250-3880
Chair and Professor, Department of Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville	Amy Lanou, PhD	<a href="mailto:alanou@unca.edu">alanou@unca.edu</a>	(828) 250-2317
Associate Professor, Department of Health and Wellness, UNC Asheville	Ameena Batada, DrPH	<a href="mailto:abatada@unca.edu">abatada@unca.edu</a>	(828) 232-5164
Interim Director, UNC Gillings/UNC Asheville Joint Programs of Public Health & Faculty Physician, MAHEC	Travis Johnson, MD MPH	<a href="mailto:tjohnson@brchs.com">tjohnson@brchs.com</a>	(828) 257-4730
Director of Administration for the Rural Health Initiative, MAHEC	Sarah Thach, MPH	<a href="mailto:sarah.thach@mahec.net">sarah.thach@mahec.net</a>	(828) 771-3426

This Letter of Intent to Plan a New Program has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate campus authorities.

Position Title	Signature	Date
Provost		
Provost (Joint Partner Campus)		