Students in the Department of Public Health at Montclair State share a passion for creating a world where everyone can thrive. Often, when people think about careers in health, they think first about medical careers that involve treating individuals who have illnesses or injuries. Public health practitioners, in contrast, protect the health of whole populations by focusing on prevention. They also focus on changing aspects of society that cause health disparities (differences in health outcomes) among different groups of people.

Our students learn how to create programs and promote policies that help keep people and communities safe and healthy, so they are less likely to suffer preventable illness, injury, and death, or to undergo expensive, difficult medical treatments. Public health advances that have had a major impact on promoting health and preventing premature death and disease are as varied as tobacco control, vaccines, seatbelt and helmet laws, comprehensive sexuality education, nutrition and food safety standards, community design to support walking and other physical activity, and many more. Ensuring that our students understand how to help create a society where the benefits of such advances are shared equitably by people of all backgrounds — including people of different races, ethnicities, ages, socioeconomic statuses, sexualities, gender identities, physical abilities, immigration statuses, and more — is a priority in all of our programs.

Graduates leave our public health program with the knowledge and skills they need to build careers that give their lives meaning and make a difference in the lives of others. Building upon a basic foundation in the core disciplines of public health (epidemiology, environmental health, social and behavioral health, biostatistics, and policy and administration) and then developing knowledge and skill in their area of concentration, our public health students have the opportunity to focus on specific areas of health such as chronic disease, infectious disease, maternal and child health, gerontology, child and adolescent health, sexual health, mental health and substance abuse, nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention, and violence and injury prevention, among others. Our academic programs, both graduate and undergraduate, emphasize applied experience, offering students numerous opportunities for hands-on fieldwork, service learning, and internships.

As a rule, our society waits to address many of the health issues we face “downstream” by attempting to come up with a cure. If you believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, if you are burning to bring knowledge and science to bear on health problems facing your town, state, nation, and world, if you believe that every human being has the right to an equal opportunity to be healthy, then we invite you to join us “upstream” by earning a degree in public health at Montclair State! Together, we can contribute to building a healthier, better-educated, and more just society.

**Mission:** The mission of the Department of Public Health is to prepare culturally competent professionals in public health, with a strong focus on social justice consistent with the missions of the University, College, and The Graduate School. Our interdisciplinary academic and experiential programs train public health practitioners with professional skills for planning, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining efforts to enhance population health and eliminate health disparities. Our programs seek to advance the goals of Healthy People 2040 and the National Prevention Strategy and to contribute to a diverse public health workforce by developing and nurturing a student body that represents multiple cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds.