

2024-2025

**Office of Applied Practice
and Workforce Development**

APPLIED PRACTICE ANNUAL REPORT



**Arnold School of
Public Health**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Mission and Goals
- 2 Letter from the Director
- 3 Staff and Applied Practice Impact at a Glance
- 4 Career Services
- 5 Research Activities
- 6 Featured Community Building Events
- 8 Featured Guest Lecture



MISSION & GOALS

The mission of the Office of Applied Practice and Workforce Development is to bridge academia and public health practice by providing and/or connecting students and the existing workforce to training, professional practice experiences, mentorship, and resources to protect and improve the health of all communities.



Discovery I Building, Arnold School of Public Health

WE AIM TO:

- Manage and build relationships with students, faculty, and community partners
- Facilitate, monitor, and evaluate meaningful and applied practice opportunities
- Manage and build relationships with students, faculty, and community partners
- Provide professional development opportunities and resources to students and the public health workforce
- Conduct and disseminate research on public health workforce trends, needs, challenges, and workforce transitions
- Develop strategies to address workforce shortages and disparities
- Provide educational and professional guidance on career preparation/enhancement, career paths, job placement, and alumni networking
- Showcase applied practice and workforce development opportunities and stories
- Provide education and technical assistance and support to agencies and organizations to develop and/or enhance public health workforce development training and education initiatives



*Dr. Zach Jenkins and Ms. Brittany Sutton
at the 2025 ASPPH Conference*



*Ms. Brittany Sutton at the 2025 ASPPH
Conference*



*ASPH Students at the "50 on the Field"
event*

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the 2024 Spring semester drew to a close, there was a sense that the winds of fortune were favoring the Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH) more than ever. At this time, the Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP) was particularly primed to make new strides across the academic public health landscape. The OPHP had recently made several personnel changes, including appointing Dr. Myriam Torres as Assistant Dean of Public Health Practice, adding Dr. Mary Jones as the Director of Workforce Development, hiring Dr. Zach Jenkins as the Director of Applied Practice, and recruiting Ms. Brittany Sutton to be the Public Health Practice Associate. Together, this team played a crucial role in ensuring the ASPH remained an accredited school of public health, the only one in the state of South Carolina, and helped usher the ASPH into its 50th year anniversary as a school. The catalyst for the reinvigoration of the OPHP can in part be attributed to a retreat held by Dr. Zach Jenkins and Ms. Brittany Sutton during the Spring of 2024. During this time, the Applied Practice division of the OPHP spent time brainstorming and reimagining how Applied Practice could best fulfill its purpose for the ASPH. Applied Practice brought the outputs of this retreat to the inaugural OPHP meeting involving all of its current members that summer and laid the groundwork for the work to be accomplished that year. What follows in this report is the summary of the new Applied Practice's initiatives and efforts to document their impact in fulfilling the OPHP guiding principles. On behalf of the Applied Practice office, we sincerely hope that you enjoy reading this inaugural summary about the impact of our office during AY 24-25. We look forward to contributing to the future of applied practice and the field of public health, which is undoubtedly bright.



ZACH JENKINS, PHD, MPH, CPH

Director of Applied Practice
Office of Public Health Practice



OUR STAFF

ZACH JENKINS, PHD, MPH, CPH DIRECTOR OF APPLIED PRACTICE

jenki275@mailbox.sc.edu

Phone: 803-777-4788

Office: Discovery I Building 235

915 Greene St.

BRITTANY SUTTON, MPH PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE ASSOCIATE

btsutton@email.sc.edu

Phone: 803-544-0485

Office: Discovery I Building 251F

915 Greene St.



Is your organization interested in working with MPH students?
Please [fill out our online form.](#)

APPLIED PRACTICE AT A GLANCE

48

MPH STUDENTS COMPLETED 48
APPLIED PRACTICE EXPERIENCES,
ACROSS 5 STATES, AND 2 COUNTRIES,
EQUATING TO APPROXIMATELY 9,140
HOURS OF WORK WITH
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

11

11 NEW PARTNERING
ORGANIZATIONS TO TOTAL 123
FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH
ORGANIZATIONS TO PLACE
STUDENTS ACROSS 26 DIFFERENT
STATES

71

71 APPLIED PRACTICE & CAREER
ADVISEMENT CONSULTATIONS
WITH MPH STUDENTS

3-1-1

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:
3 CONFERENCES ATTENDED, 1
CONFERENCE PRESENTATION, 1
PUBLICATION

MOCK JOB APPLICATION

A new initiative developed by Applied Practice this year is the Master of Public Health (MPH) Mock Job Application Resource. This tool provides MPH students enrolled at the ASPH the opportunity to simulate the job application and interview process by “applying” for several fictitious yet realistic public health roles, which are outlined on the OPHP website. Members of the OPHP and Dean’s Office staff role-play as the hiring agency and provide feedback to students on how to improve their application (e.g., resume, cover letter, interview skills, etc.) at the culmination of the mock interview. Moreover, if students have specific jobs they want to apply for, they can submit these positions for review, and the OPHP will prepare interview questions for the desired position and provide feedback to students. This initiative, which launched in January, had three second-year MPH students submit applications and complete mock interviews, two of which were Epidemiology students and one of which was a Health Services Policy and Management student. The Epidemiology students applied for existing job positions, while the Health Services Policy and Management student submitted a paid internship opportunity. That student was offered the position they applied for, and as of this report, one of the Epidemiology students found full-time employment shortly after graduation.

MOCK COVER LETTER REVIEW

Applied Practice now formally offers to review resumes and cover letters for MPH students. This was an informal practice for years, but Applied Practice is now formally advertising the service directly to students and through the [newly revamped OPHP website](#). In addition to the 3 resumes and cover letters reviewed through the MPH Mock Job Application Resource, Applied Practice staff reviewed 9 unique resumes (1 Environmental Health Sciences alumni, 1 Environmental Health Sciences student, 1 Health Services Policy and Management student, 6 Epidemiology students) and 3 cover letters (1 alumni, 1 Health Services Policy and Management student, and 1 Epidemiology student).

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON COLLEGE-WORKFORCE TRANSITIONS (CCWT) CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

In the Fall of 2024, Dr. Zach Jenkins presented at the prestigious Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) annual conference. Dr. Jenkins' presentation was titled "Leveraging Design Thinking for Crafting Meaningful Internship Experiences." In short, this presentation focused on leveraging inclusive talent management techniques as a part of designing internship experiences for traditionally underrepresented interns. His work was positively received and fostered a great discussion among experiential educators across the nation. This presentation also opened the door for Dr. Jenkins to become a member of the [CCWT affiliate program](#).

PUBLICATIONS

Jenkins, Z., & Yao, C. (2025). A critique of race-neutrality discourse among internship benefits: a critical discourse analysis. *Education + Training*, 67(2), 171-183. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-09-2024-0445>

HONORS SENIOR THESIS PROJECT

Dr. Jenkins served as an integral member of Riley McNabb, an ASPH undergraduate student's honors senior thesis committee. Riley's research project, "An Asset-Based Approach to How Essential Workers Promote and Advance the Health and Wellbeing of Students and Staff at the University of South Carolina." This research focused on uplifting the strengths of essential workers and highlighting the role they play in protecting the health of community members. Riley presented the research findings at the Honors Thesis Symposium on 4/11/25.



Interested in a research collaboration? [Let us know!](#)

Pictured left to right: Dr. Zach Jenkins, Riley McNabb & Dr. Elizabeth Adams

FEATURED COMMUNITY BUILDING EVENTS

HOBCAW PHIELD EXPERIENCE

Every year, the ASPH hosts a Public Health Integrated Environmental Leadership Development (PHield) experience for MPH students at Hobcaw Barony, a private research institution in Georgetown, SC. During the PHield experience, MPH students engage in a host of activities, including touring the grounds of Hobcaw Barony, participating in a walk audit of downtown Georgetown, engaging in guided discussions with practitioners, networking with partners, and much, much more. Applied Practice staff play a key role in managing the logistics of this event, including documenting which students are attending, organizing and reimbursing travel, ordering food, as well as ensuring that faculty and staff adhere to the planned schedule. Additionally, Applied Practice staff assist in conducting the evaluation of the PHield experience.

INTEGRATING PERSPECTIVES PANEL

Each year, in order to fulfill the Council on Education for Public Health's competency, integrate perspectives from other sectors to professions to promote and advance population health, Applied Practice staff coordinate the Integrating Perspectives Panel Event (IPE). This involves identifying and developing a case study, identifying and securing panelists and a moderator, and organizing the logistics for the event. This year's theme was Perspectives on Resilience in Public Health: Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and What Comes Next. Panelists included members from workforce development, education, food systems, and journalism.



*Walk Audit Activity in Downtown
Georgetown, SC*



Hobcaw House Tour

Please join us for a
Public Health Panel Discussion:
**PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC AND WHAT COMES NEXT**

PANELISTS:



MODERATOR:

Monday, October 28th | 2:00 - 3:30 PM
Pastides Alumni Center | Presidential Dining Room



IPE 2024 Event Flyer

GOVERNOR'S CUP

For the past two years, Dr. Zach Jenkins has served as the Logistics Manager for the renowned **Governor's Cup Road Race**. The Governor's Cup is sponsored by Lexington Medical Center, and the plethora of community partners that are involved in the race allows Applied Practice to build and strengthen these relationships. Excitingly, Ms. Brittany Sutton joined Dr. Jenkins as a Logistics Coordinator this past year and helped facilitate another successful year for the Governor's Cup. In addition to the Applied Practice team serving on the committee, they also involved 4 MPH students in the event, as well as a host of undergraduate ASPH volunteers.



TIPS ON TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE PANEL

Since 2022, Applied Practice has hosted an annual **Tips on Transitioning to the Workforce panel** with MPH alumni from last year's graduating cohort. This event provides alumni an opportunity to share their experiences traversing the job market into employment and offers words of empowerment and encouragement for future alumni. This year's panelists included alumni Jaiden Branch MPH, Beata DeWitt MPH, and Brittany Sutton MPH, who shared empowering words of wisdom with the soon-to-be-graduates about successfully transitioning to the workforce.

MPH STUDENT-LED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Applied Practice views professional development as a complex tool that is vital in supporting MPH students as they transition to the workforce. As such, it holds a running call for student-led proposals to enhance the professional development of MPH students. This tremendous resume-building opportunity normalizes the importance of learning from peers which is an important public health workforce skill. This past year, Tanya Ambrose, a full-time Health Services Policy and Management student, non-profit organization founder and podcast host, offered advice and insight on maintaining a social media presence, engaging with the community, while balancing the weight of academia.

MPH STUDENT-LED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

teawithtanyapodcast Listen on Apple Podcasts Spotify

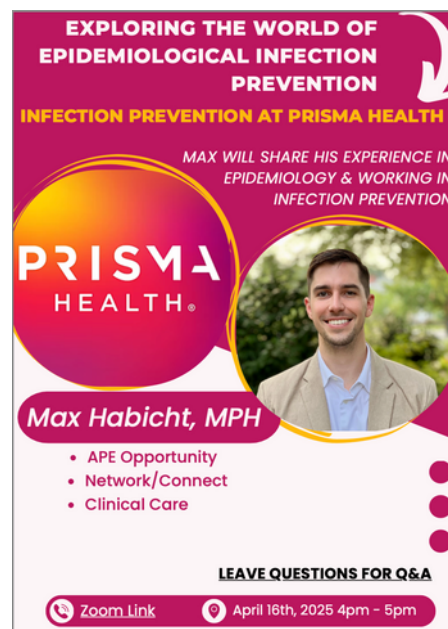
TANYA AMBROSE SHARES HOW SHE CREATED HER PUBLIC HEALTH BRAND
Social media presence, academia, & work-life balance

Check out her website TanyaKAmbrose.com **JOIN VIA ZOOM**
APRIL 24, 2025 @ 6PM

MPH ALUMNI CAREER SERIES

The **MPH Alumni Career Series** showcases the careers of alumni and provides a platform for networking for current MPH students. The inaugural event of this series featured ASPH graduate Max Habicht. In addition to showcasing a unique career, this event also was advertised as an MPH applied practice experience opportunity and culminated with a student placement.

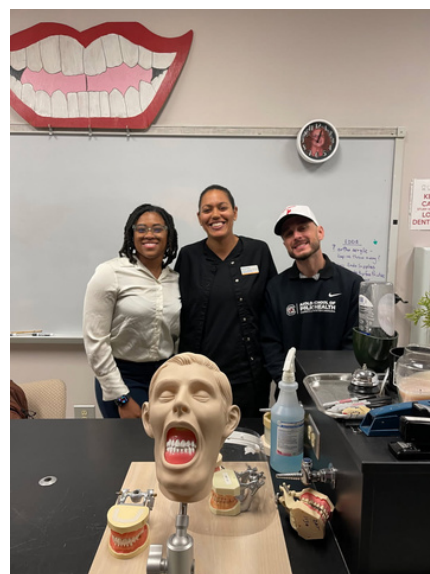
PRISMA HEALTH.



FEATURED GUEST LECTURE

MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

This past Spring, Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Brittany Sutton gave a guest lecture to the dental hygienist students at Midlands Technical College, discussing the intersection of dental hygiene and public health careers as well as how to make the most out of an internship experience. This lecture came to fruition thanks to the **South Carolina Public Health Association (SCPHA) Mentorship Program**, in which Dr. Jenkins participated as a mentor, and Ms. Angela Jackson, a faculty member at Midlands Technical College and undergraduate student at the ASPH participated as a mentee.



INTERESTED IN A GUEST LECTURE RELATED TO PUBLIC HEALTH CAREERS OR INTERNSHIPS?
SUBMIT A PRESENTATION REQUEST.



**Arnold School of
Public Health**

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**Office of Applied Practice
and Workforce Development**

Discovery I Building
915 Greene Street
Columbia, SC
29208

sph.sc.edu/opph