



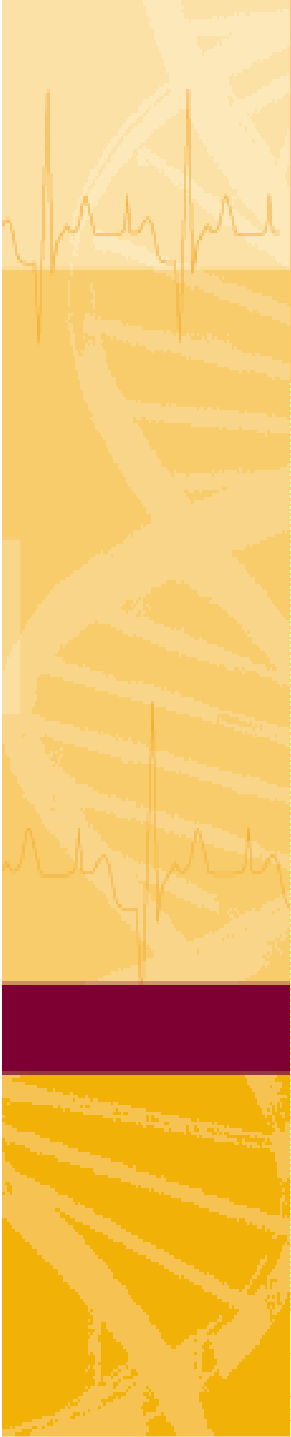
***Politics, Policy and Public Health:  
Innovative ways to engage the  
next generation of public health  
professionals***

American Public Health Association  
November 5, 2007

Tricia Todd, MPH  
University of Minnesota  
Health Careers Center

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# ***Why Not Public Health?***

## ***The challenges in making Public Health a career choice for pre-college and college students***

**American Public Health Association  
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## High Schools



## U of M Undergraduate Colleges

College of Liberal Arts  
College of Biological Sciences  
College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences  
College of Education and Human Development  
College of Continuing Education  
Carlson School of Management  
Institute of Technology

## Other Campus Partners

Office of Undergraduate Admissions  
Consortium for Post-Secondary  
Academic Success  
Honors program  
Office of Equity and  
Diversity

## Other MN Colleges

Minnesota State Colleges &  
Universities  
Minnesota Private Colleges

## Health Careers Center: Doorway to the AHC



**Health  
Careers  
Center**



**College of Pharmacy**



**College of Veterinary Medicine**



**Medical School**



**School of Dentistry**



**School of Nursing**



**School of Public Health**



**Center for Allied Health**

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# U of MN

## Health Careers Center

2004 - Present

*A unique center at the University of Minnesota dedicated to creating proactive programs, providing educational services and influencing policies that contribute to building the next generation of diverse health professionals.*



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# Pre-college Programming

- **Scrubs, Gloves & Microscopes (2006-07)**
- **Health Career Investigators (2005-07)**
  - Health Occupations Teachers HCI Contest\*
  - Health Career Investigators – AHEC\*
  - **Health Career Investigators: *Special Edition Public Health* (2007)**



# Scrubs, Gloves & Microscopes

## *Pilot Year 2006–2007*

**1/2 day program exclusive to exploration of a health career:**

- **Clinical Lab Science (Oct'06)**
- **Veterinary Medicine (Nov'06)**
- **Physical Therapy (Jan'07)**
- **Dentistry (Feb'07)**
- **Medicine (Mar'07)**
- **April Cancelled\***
- **Pharmacy (May'07)**



# Scrubs, Gloves & Microscopes

## *Pilot Year 2006-2007*

Medicine



Clinical Lab Science



Dentistry



Veterinary  
Medicine



Physical  
Therapy



# Health Career Investigators (HCI)

- 2–3 day high school career exploration program
  - Hands-on experiences “doing the work”
  - Find out what they like or don’t like (blood!)
- Program design changes each year
  - *Hot Health Issues – Hot Health Careers*
  - *High Tech, High Touch*
- Introduction to college preparedness
- Interdisciplinary focus through case studies and discussion





# Health Career Investigators



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# HCI Special Edition: Public Health

## Summer 2007

### Health Career Investigators

- Each summer – 2 - two-day immersion programs
- Hands-on experience to learn about various health professions:
  - Dental lab
  - Live surgery
  - Experimental surgery lab
  - Pharmacy lab
  - Nursing lab
  - Others brought in

### HCI Special Edition: Public Health

- Three-day summer immersion program
- **Public health only**



# HCI Special Edition Program Objectives

- Give high school students three days of experience that help them learn about the:
  - Field of public health
  - Value of public health work
  - Range of careers within public health
  - The work of public health professionals
  - Pathways into public health careers

# The Planning Partners

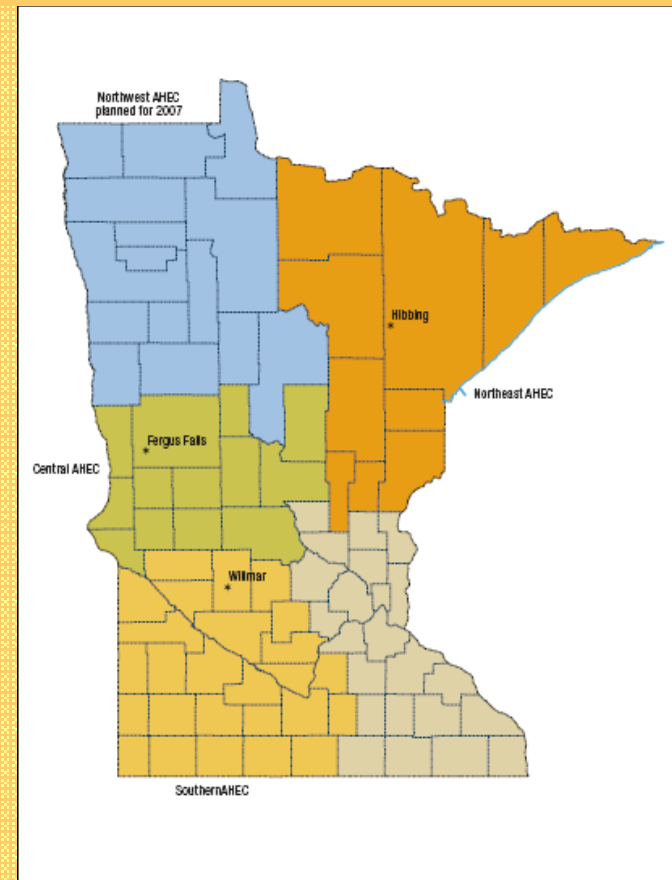
- Health Careers Center at the University of Minnesota
- Centers for Public Health Education and Outreach (CPHEO) at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health (SPH)
- Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)

# The Other Contributors

- **University of Minnesota faculty**
  - School of Public Health
  - College of Veterinary Medicine
  - School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- **Public health professionals**
  - State and local government agencies
  - Community organizations
- **State legislators (volunteering)**
- **Media partners**
  - Minnesota Daily
  - St. Paul Pioneer Press
  - Local press from Greater MN

# The Participants

- 30 high school students total from around the state of Minnesota
- Six teams of five students each:
  - 3 teams from Greater MN (15 total students)
  - 3 teams in the metro area (15 total students)





# Team Description and Roles

- Each team will have five student members:
  - Four student members are “public health generalists”
  - One student member is a “health journalist”
- Each team has one staff as “coach” to be their guide throughout the process

# Team Objectives

- Each team is assigned a piece of mock legislation relating to a public health issue
- Teams are asked to:
  - Determine if the legislation is in the best interest of the public's health
  - Conduct research through interviews with faculty and practitioners
  - Build testimony and recommend changes to the legislation
  - Present their testimony to legislators at the State Capitol

# Legislative topics

- Mandating flu shots in schools
- Licensing exotic pets
- Eliminating vending machines in schools
- Protecting the water supply from contamination
- Creating a Personal Health Records Repository
- Increase alcohol tax/restrict alcohol sales (e.g. drink specials)

# Program

- *Day 1 – Interviews with SPH faculty and other experts – build testimony*
- *Day 2 – Interviews with Public Health practitioners – build testimony*
- *Day 3 – Provide testimony to legislators*



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# The Application Process

- Application sent to high schools first week of April (Public Health Week)
  - Entering 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Minimum GPA 3.2
  - Essay
  - Letters of recommendation
- Completed applications submitted to one of four regions by June 1, 2007
- Students selected by their regional program

# Marketing

- Programs were marketed virtually the same – all high school counselors
- PH program was more heavily marketed in greater MN and to PH professionals through MDH, LPHA, MPHA, etc.

## Health Career Investigators

Investigate your future this summer and become a Health Career Investigator. Experience the "High-Tech, High-Touch" world of health care, in this hands-on interactive learning experience designed to teach you about many of today's hottest health care professions.

**WHO** For high school students entering grades 9-12  
**WHEN** June 12-13, 2007 and June 26-27, 2007  
**WHERE** Health Careers Center  
University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus  
**WEBSITE** [www.healthcareers.umn.edu](http://www.healthcareers.umn.edu)



## Health Career Investigators *Special Edition - Public Health*

Research a public health threat... Take a position on the issue...  
Present to legislators at the State Capitol...  
And help save the public from harm's way!

**WHO** For high school students entering grades 11-12  
**WHEN** July 24-26, 2007  
**WHERE\*** Health Careers Center  
University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus  
**WEBSITE** [www.healthcareers.umn.edu](http://www.healthcareers.umn.edu)

\*Also happening in  
Hibbing, Fergus Falls,  
and Willmar.



**HCII** Health  
Career  
Investigators  
Investigate your future with  
the University of Minnesota  
Health Careers Center



# Results

## Health Career Investigators

- 125 applications for 50 spots

## HCI Special Edition

### Public Health

- 2 applications
- Both students also applied to the standard HCI

# Making lemonade

- Turned the HCI Special Edition into a standard HCI, *with one additional day*
- Created a survey to learn from the HCI students...

## Why not public health?

# Why not public health?

- Was it poor marketing?
- Were the students aware of public health?
- Were the students aware of public health as a career?
- Were the students not interested in the program format?

# Was it poor marketing?

- At least one-third of students did not realize there were two program options
  - Didn't see or recognize the marketing materials
  - Didn't see both applications
- Most students learned about the program from parents, school announcements and counselors

# Were the students aware of public health?

- 60% students were aware of public health
- Many students have a relatively accurate definition of public health
  - Or at least a component: disease investigation, community health

➔ *However, many students wanted to learn about public health, together **along with other health careers***

# Scrubs, Gloves and Microscopes

**1/2 day program exclusive to exploration of a health career:**

- **Clinical Lab Science (Oct'06)**
- **Veterinary Medicine (Nov'06)**
- **Physical Therapy (Jan'07)**
- **Dentistry (Feb'07)**
- **Medicine (Mar'07)**
- **Public Health - April cancelled due to lack of applications!**
- **Pharmacy (May'07)**





# Were students aware of career opportunities in public health\*?

- Many were interested in public health topics...
  - *Obesity, Avian Flu, Methamphetamine*
- Could not understand public health as a “career” or “job”.\*

*What do you do in public health?*

\* Qualitative discussion

# What appealed in program format?

- Working in teams
- Meeting public health professionals
- Researching public health problems
- Learning about important public health issues

Note: All part of the original design

# Recommendations for future programs

- Identify effective marketing strategies **targeted directly to students**
- Put public health in the larger health careers context
- Show public health careers in the continuum of care - **prevention; treatment rehab**
- Address *meaningful* and *relevant* public health issues and show **what** public health professionals **do!**
- Demonstrate and experience the work of public health (see next slide)

# Demonstrating and experiencing public health careers

- Meet the students where they are...
  - high school – biology, social studies, math...
- Use hot but relevant health topics
  - Driving - seat belts, STD's, alcohol, drug-resistant staph, sports safety and drug use, food options in school
  - Celebrity goodwill ambassadors and activists with public health projects (Leonardo DiCaprio, Liv Tyler, Bono, Angelina Jolie, etc.)
- Tell what you do and *why you do it!*
- Let them become engaged - activists

# Finally...

- Involve students in developing your program!!
- Lessons from Target Market



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