

University Senate

Proposed: April 2, 2015

Adopted: April 2, 2015

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN ADVANCED CERTIFICATE
IN POPULATION MENTAL HEALTH (MSPH)**

WHEREAS, the Mailman School of Public Health offers Master of Public Health candidates a choice of specializations, each leading to a certificate in the subject to be awarded in addition to the Master of Public Health degree; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for the master of public health candidate to gain an area of specialization in addition to the core curriculum offered; and

WHEREAS, mental disorders are the major overlooked challenge to population health both in the U.S. and internationally; and

WHEREAS, there is a demand among public health professionals for such a program; and

WHEREAS, the proposed certificate does not duplicate an existing program in either the Mailman School of Public Health or in any other unit of the University; and

WHEREAS, the proposed certificate will prepare students for positions focused on mental health in departments of health, federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes of Health, research institutions such as RAND, and doctoral programs in epidemiology;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate approve the Advanced Certificate in Population Mental Health proposed by the Mailman School of Public Health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the resolution be forwarded to the President and the Trustees of Columbia University for their approval; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Education Committee review the program in five years.

Proponent:

Committee on Education

1) Purpose

Mental disorders are the major overlooked challenge to population health both in the U.S. and internationally. One-in-five persons suffer from a mental disorder at some point in their lives. The public health burden of mental disorders is devastating. Major depression is projected to be the leading cause of burden of disease globally by 2030. Alcohol use disorders are among the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorders are in the 10 leading causes of disability in low and middle-income countries, while drug use disorders make the top ten list in high income countries. Increasingly, mental disorders have been linked to higher risk of the development of and mortality from chronic diseases, such as type-2-diabetes and cardiovascular disease as well as infectious disease such as HIV. As stated by former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, 'There is no health without mental health.' The goal of this certificate is to increase expertise in mental disorders among public health professionals. Students who complete this certificate will be prepared to articulate the U.S. and international public health impact of mental disorders and obtain critical skills that will enable them to conduct important work, in both research and practice, aimed at understanding the causes and consequences of mental disorders as well as reducing their public health burden.

The Mailman School is committed to knowledge creation, the translation of science for impact, and the education of the next generation of public health leaders. Given the current and projected importance of mental disorders for public health both in the U.S. and internationally, a certificate that recognizes expertise and experience in psychiatric epidemiology is not only in line with the mission of the school but is critical to its success. This certificate expands in important ways the menu of sub-specializations available to our Columbia MPH (CMPH) students under our new curriculum, launched in fall 2012. Students in the CMPH now have both a main concentration (department focus) and a required, second, certificate focus. During planning and continuing through two years of offering the new CMPH, the School has assessed the certificate options, identifying areas of strength at the School and identifying any gaps in academic offerings. Population Mental Health will be an important addition to the certificate programming at Mailman.

There is currently no other certificate at MSPH focused on mental or substance use disorders. Thus, the new program does not overlap with any existing program. The Certificate in Population Mental Health does not replace any existing programs. However, it builds on a key area of strength in the Department of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health: the Psychiatric Epidemiology Training (PET) Program. Although this training program does not have positions for MPH students, students choosing a Population Mental Health certificate will have the opportunity to attend seminars, interact with doctoral and post-doctoral students, and participate in research and practicum offered by our world class faculty.

More specifically, this certificate aims to offer MPH students the outstanding training that until now, was offered exclusively to fellows in the PET Program. PET was created in 1972 to

train individuals from different disciplines in psychiatric epidemiology. The program has supported and trained over 145 researchers who have made valuable contributions within their respective research, clinical, and community settings. MPH students who choose this certificate will benefit from the rich training environment provided by PET. The mission of the PET program is to equip new generations of pre- and postdoctoral fellows with the skills and vision needed to conceptualize, measure, and test ideas about psychiatric disorders that will advance the field in both incremental and ground-breaking ways. To fulfill this mission, we emphasize a framework for investigating the etiology, course, and consequences of mental illness that highlights the dynamic interplay of multiple levels, that is, a person (biology, psychology), in context (family, social network, neighborhood, workplace, society) through time (person and contextual change). Building this certificate will allow MPH students to access some of these critical training opportunities to improve population mental health.

2) Need

The proposed program is needed because mental disorders represent the largest, overlooked challenge to U.S. and international health. One-in-five people suffer from a mental disorder at some point in their lives. The public health burden is devastating. Major depression is projected to be the leading cause of burden of disease globally by 2013. Alcohol use disorders are among the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorders are in the 10 leading causes of disability in low and middle -income countries, while drug use disorders make the top ten list in high income countries. Increasingly, mental disorders have been linked to higher risk of the development of and mortality from chronic diseases, such as type-2-diabetes and cardiovascular disease. As stated by former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, 'There is no health without mental health.'

The goal of this certificate is to increase the expertise in mental disorders among public health professionals. Currently, mental health is underappreciated and under-resourced in relation to other public health problems of comparable scope. The US and global public health system needs professional who are educated in the prevalence, distribution, causes and consequences of mental disorders in order to make effective policies aimed at improving the health of their target populations. Public health professionals need to be educated in mental health in order to interact effectively with psychiatry, psychology and social work that are dominated by an individualistic and personalized medicine view of mental health. Research, practice and policies related to mental disorders are largely individualistic in focus and, as a result, have made little progress in reducing the public health burden of mental disorders.