



# THE ADVISOR ADVOCATE

## Major Spotlight: Public Health

Many people are concerned about health—not just their own health, but that of cherished family members, friends, and colleagues—and most hope to participate in vibrant and healthy communities throughout their lives. As a field, **public health is geared toward protecting, promoting and monitoring the health of people where they learn, live, work, and play.** With such a broad, multidisciplinary charge, it's hard to pick a life issue or social problem that doesn't relate to public health.

Let's take the example of food – a necessity of life. Choosing what (and what not) to eat is an individual choice. When people sit to eat meals together, food is interpersonal and social. Whether or not fresh, nutritious ingredients are affordable on a regular basis is a dietary and economic concern. How accessible grocery markets are to shoppers is a transportation, zoning, and planning issue. Production and supply chains consider where food is grown, how ingredients get safely processed, and the shipping routes to the grocery aisles and ultimately to your plate. As a multidisciplinary field, public health helps us understand the complex relationship people have with food, whether they are hungry, under-nourished, obese, or at risk for some diseases. Public health responds and investigates when foodborne illnesses erupt and guards against future outbreaks.

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Public health supports people's health collectively by preventing disease through large scale solutions that reach communities and populations. It addresses a range of topics, such as opioid misuse, workplace safety, or inaccessibility of medical providers, that require systemic solutions.

Our public health program prepares majors with the skills needed to address current and emerging health challenges. Supported by three colleges—Health and Human Services, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the John J. and Char Kopchick College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics—and over a dozen departments, our program is truly multidisciplinary. Our students learn about public health in courses taught by esteemed professors from a variety of home disciplines like biology, economics, geography, nursing, mathematics, and psychology. Students complete their studies by practicing their skills in the real-world during internship placements. The major includes four "flavors" or concentrations that support healthy and thriving communities:

- 1. Epidemiology & Biostatistics,**
- 2. Environmental & Occupational Health,**
- 3. Behavioral & Mental Health, and**
- 4. Global & Rural Communities**

For more information about the public health program, visit us at [www.iup.edu/public-health/](http://www.iup.edu/public-health/) stop by our office in **Sutton 352** email us at [public-health@iup.edu](mailto:public-health@iup.edu)

**For more information:**  
CTE Office: 103 Stabley

**Director:**  
Stephanie Taylor-Davis  
[teaching-excellence@iup.edu](mailto:teaching-excellence@iup.edu)

**Associate Director for Academic Advising:**  
Erin Conlin  
[elconlin@iup.edu](mailto:elconlin@iup.edu)

**Editor and Designer:**  
Margaret Olin