Executive Summary/Abstract

My field studies internship was with the Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health (the Trust) from June 2012 to August 2012. The Trust is a non-profit organization working to improve the health of children of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). It is housed within LAUSD’s headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. I had the pleasure of working with Maryjane Puffer, my preceptor and the executive director of the Trust. I also worked with several LAUSD personnel, including Dee Apodaca, Director of District Nursing, and Kim Uyeda, Director of Student Medical Services. In addition, I had the opportunity to meet weekly with Sheryl Kataoka and Rebecca Dudovitz from the UCLA/RAND Prevention Research Center, who are evaluating several projects from the Trust and who provided myself and three other interns with feedback and advice for our respective projects.

My internship focused on one of the Trust’s three strategic goals: improving the oral health environment for LAUSD students. There are several dental services available to LAUSD students, but these efforts are not coordinated, and in many cases, not all students receive services. My first project was to map oral health services within LAUSD, specifically within East Los Angeles, for purposes of examining how these services can be better utilized to provide more oral health care for students. My main project was researching best practices of primary prevention programs in order to develop a pilot program for LAUSD that included universal screening, fluoride varnishes, and community referrals. At the end of my internship, I developed a report of one pilot program specific to East Los Angeles, which would be used in planning meetings between the Trust, LAUSD and a mobile dental provider currently operating in LAUSD. The report included a program outline, staffing information, program costs, outcome evaluation measures, questions to be discussed, resources and recommendations.

In July, the Trust was applying for a grant that would help fund the pilot program, and I assisted with the application by writing a draft workplan, the community needs section, and several sample letters of support. At the end of my internship, we received word that the grant was awarded to the Trust in full. In addition to these activities, I supervised Cal State Northridge nursing student volunteers who helped the Trust update a low-cost dental referral list to be used by LAUSD Nursing. I also created promotional materials for the Trust, including a road map that could later be used when the Trust re-vamps its website. I was also able to attend several oral health stakeholder meetings and several Trust planning meetings with various community stakeholders.

Through my internship, I gained in-depth knowledge of the importance, financing, utilization, and delivery methods of children’s oral health care. I also gained a better understanding of how student services are organized within LAUSD, and how an outside organization such as the Trust can form partnerships to effectively collaborate with members of such a large, ever-changing entity. The dedication and passion of those I encountered at the Trust and LAUSD have made a lasting impression, and I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in such an environment.

Jennifer Frehn
Advisor: Maryjane Puffer, RN, BSN, MPA
September 6, 2012
Executive Summary/Abstract

Project: UCLA Masters of Public Health/LA Trust for Children’s Health Obesity Prevention
Preceptor Agency: Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health
Supervisor: Ms. Maryjane Puffer, BSN, MPA (Executive Director)

I completed my Community Health Sciences 400 field work at the Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health (the LA Trust) between July through September 2012. The LA Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works to improve the health of the students of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). I worked under the direction of the Executive Director Ms. Maryjane Puffer, BSN, MPA on three main projects: 1) drafting and submission of a two year Center for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transformation Program grant for $2.8 million focused on obesity prevention and social/emotional wellbeing, 2) research on existing nutrition and physical activity programs available in Los Angeles Unified School District schools and surrounding communities, 3) needs assessment of current obesity prevention, assessment, and treatment practices at the Wellness Center sites through semi-structured provider interviews.

Los Angeles Unified School District, as the second largest school district in the United States, is comprised of 793 schools and about 920,000 students throughout Los Angeles County. The Wellness Networks and 14 new Wellness Centers created at health “hot spots” throughout the district were developed to provide comprehensive preventive and primary care to improve the health outcomes, promote wellbeing, and better support academic achievement of students and their families throughout the district. My projects during the summer focused specifically on obesity prevention and treatment. Along with another MPH intern, I completed qualitative semi-structured interviews with clinical providers or clinical provider representatives from the 11 Wellness Center service provider organizations including Asian Pacific Health Care Venture, Watts Healthcare Corp, Valley Community Clinic, and Kaiser Permanente. These interviews were designed to assess current clinical practices and protocols in place at the Wellness Centers for child and adolescent obesity prevention, assessment, and treatment and to identify barriers and assets to improving upon these routine practices to decrease the prevalence of overweight and obesity among the LAUSD student population. The interview findings were compiled into provider-specific reports and recommended practices from expert committees of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention were distributed to the providers. The expert committee recommendations will be made available on an electronic dashboard to be developed by the LA Trust where Wellness Center providers can access tools and review their center’s progress in meeting obesity-related clinical indicators.

In order to better support the Wellness Centers and obesity prevention initiatives at LAUSD, I assisted the Beyond the Bell Afterschool Program and the LA Trust in drafting and submitting a two-year $2.8 million Center for Disease Control and Prevention Community Transformation Project grant. The main objectives of the grant proposal including increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, decreasing smoking, increasing physical activity, and improving social and emotional wellbeing through student engagement projects. I assisted in writing program descriptions, creating a combined program budget, drafting and collecting letters of support from program directors and city councilmen, and editing the 50 page grant proposal prior to submission in late July 2012.

Name: Jennifer Han
Advisor Name: Maryjane Puffer
Date: 9/27/12
Abstract

I completed my internship with the Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health (The Trust) this summer. The Trust is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health of the close to 700,000 children of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The Trust works with LAUSD to oversee major efforts such as the Wellness Centers (WCs) across the district. The Wellness Centers take School Based Health Centers (SBHC) and transform them into a more powerful and sustainable partnership among local Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providers, other community agencies, and LAUSD school staff. These Wellness Centers have the holistic goal of improving the health and wellbeing of students, families, and communities, with the purpose of enabling academic success and vocational readiness among LAUSD students.

My first project with the Trust consisted of working with the contracted UCLA Wellness Center Evaluation team to 1) select the indicators to measure the WCs’ impact on student health and school outcomes and 2) develop a Wellness Center Program Evaluation data collection form to collect these measures. Although the recommended indicators by UCLA Evaluators were vast, in order to select the most feasible and significant ones we included the feedback of the WC clinic providers who will be collecting the data. I developed the Wellness Center Program Evaluation Form by adapting our partner Alameda County’s work with their SBHC and once again by consulting with the WC clinic providers.

My second project with the Trust consisted of one-on-one interviews with the School Nurses as well as the Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors (PSAC) housed at WC school campuses. Since one essential component of the WCs will be the integration and coordination of care to support students succeeding in school, the purpose of the interviews was to inform the coordination of services between the school service providers (School Nurses and PSAC) and the WC clinic providers. We anticipate that the nurses will act as WC gatekeepers and optimal referral sources for students. We also know that many of the same students the PSAC will serve will also have unmet medical and mental health needs. My final qualitative reports delineate the ways that school nurses and PSAC support students, what their experience has been in working with service providers at their respective campus, and their recommendations on how coordination of student support services can be improved.

My third and final project consisted of writing a seed grant to fund the adaptation of an innovative mobile health application at two of the WC schools. We requested $30,000 from the UCLA RAND Prevention Research Center to improve the sexual health care of adolescents utilizing Wellness Centers at Carson and Jordan Senior High Schools. Our main aim is to adapt and pilot a computer-based interactive, individually tailored mobile health application to promote responsible sexual health behaviors and prevent Chlamydia transmission and unintended teen pregnancies among ethnically diverse adolescents. We also aim to assess the intervention’s feasibility and acceptability, and leverage the technology to assess patient satisfaction with the overall visit.

Overall, I had an amazing experience learning how prevention and health promotion operates within the educational system. This internship was ideal for me because one of my interests within public health is the interaction between health and education. Skills wise, I learned how to turn indicators into a data collection form, how to conduct qualitative interviews, analyze qualitative data, write qualitative reports, and how to write my first grant.

Intern: Luz Taborga
Advisor: Maryjane Puffer, BSN, MPA
September 18, 2012