

# KU-MPH EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD SURVEY RESULTS: 2015

## ISSUE BRIEF

### INTRODUCTION

This issue brief addresses the results of the survey completed by the External Advisory Board for the KU-Master of Public Health (KU-MPH) program in 2015. The survey was completed to provide information about the need for public health professionals and how The University of Kansas Medical Center can improve its curriculum for the MPH program.

### Problem/Issue

The purpose of this report is to establish what the public health workforce needs from incoming public health professionals. This survey also examined where students are being employed, common degrees among the current public health workforce, and highly desired concentrations.

### METHODS/DATA SOURCE

The External Advisory Board is selected from public health professionals and stakeholders throughout Kansas. Of the total 30 members, 22 responded to our request to complete the survey. These responses represented agencies from:

- Local/state health departments (e.g. Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Sedgwick County Health Department)
- Public organizations (e.g. Wichita State University)
- Private organizations (e.g. Quintiles, Cerner)
- Non-profit (e.g. Kansas Public Health Association, Kansas African American Museum)

### FINDINGS

#### Job Opportunities/Current Employment

In the past five years, 90.9% of participants had hired an employee with an MPH degree. Of those employees, 52.4% obtained their degree from The University of Kansas Medical Center. Participants also shared employment openings for candidates with an undergraduate degree in public health and a graduate degree in public health, which can be found in Table 1.

DEGREE	NONE	1-4	5+
BACHELOR	23%	41%	36%
MPH	14%	55%	32%

**Table 1. Position Availability in Organizations**

### Salary

The salary for a full-time candidate with a Bachelor's degree ranged from \$21,000 to \$50,000 with a mean of \$35,590. For a full-time candidate with an MPH the salary ranged from \$30,000 to \$100,000, with a mean of \$57,300.

### Concentrations

Four concentrations (Social and Behavioral Health, Epidemiology, Public Health Management, and Environmental Health Sciences) are currently offered in the KU-Master of Public Health program curriculum. The desirability of each concentration within the public health workforce is shown below in Table 2.

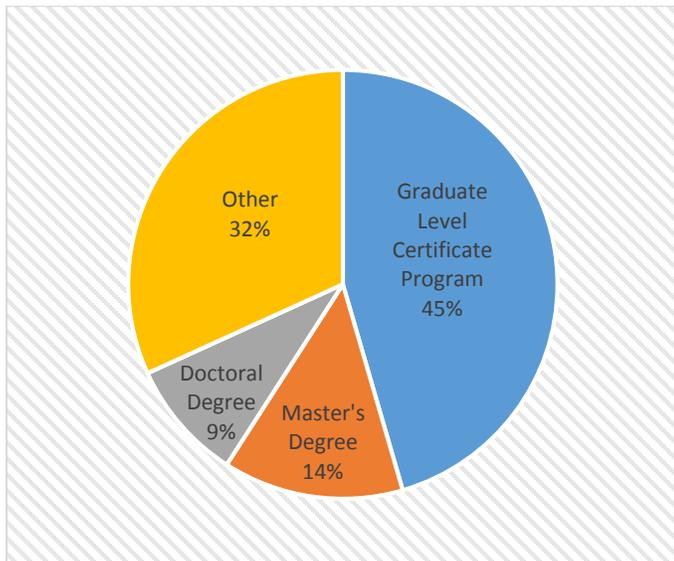
	<i>Very Desirable</i>	<i>Desirable</i>	<i>Somewhat Desirable</i>	<i>Not Desirable</i>
<i>Social &amp; Behavioral</i>	45.5%	45.5%	4.5%	4.5%
<i>Epidemiology</i>	54.5%	27.3%	18.2%	0.0%
<i>Public Health Management</i>	50.0%	18.2%	27.3%	4.5%

**Table 2. Desirability of Concentrations**

### Certified in Public Health

The Certified in Public Health (CPH) credential helps demonstrate knowledge of key public health sciences along with a commitment to continuing education in public health. First offered in 2008, CPH is listed as preferred in various job applications across the nation. While 86.4% of our survey respondents stated their organization is either not likely or are unsure that future

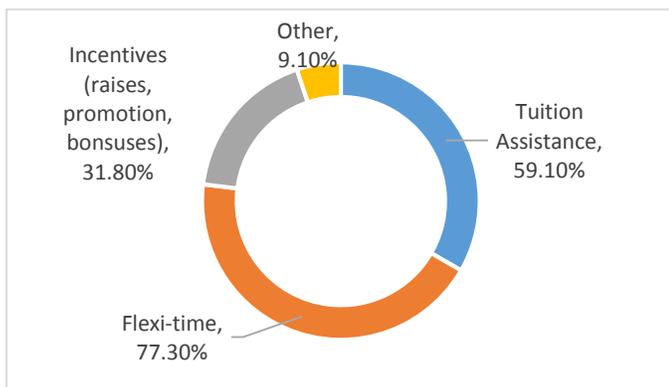
candidates would be required to have a CPH, the other 13.6% were not aware of the Certified in Public Health credential.



**Figure 3. Continuing Education Interest**

### Continuing Education/Support

As public health professionals, health problems are constantly changing requiring the need for continuing education. Figure 3 displays which continuing education programs employees may be interested in. Other ideas included programs that fulfill mandatory state and federal grant requirements (i.e. preparedness, family planning, MCH, and WIC) and those which meet recertification requirements (i.e. certified public health educator, healthy homes inspector, and accreditation). Work force development opportunities were also mentioned with ideas such as grant writing and quality improvement workshops. All but two respondents felt their organization could support employees interested in pursuing a continuing education program (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Continuing Education Support**

## CONCLUSIONS

- The job outlook is positive for students with a Master of Public Health with 87% of the organizations holding at least one job opportunity.
- Salaries ranged from \$30,000 to \$100,000 for employees with a Master of Public Health.
- Social and Behavioral Health, Epidemiology, and Public Health Management are currently the most desired concentrations.
- The Certified in Public Health (CPH) credential is not currently a requirement for employment, nor will it likely be in the near future.
- Most organizations believe their employees would be interested in a graduate level certificate program or other continuing education programs. Other programs include fulfilling mandatory state and federal grant requirements, recertification requirements, and work force development opportunities.
- Most organizations are able to provide support for employees interested in continuing education programs. These opportunities include tuition assistance, flexi-time, and incentives such as raises, promotions, and bonuses.
- Limitations are expected in the above findings, as responses were self-reported from a small and biased sample. Therefore, numbers and figures may not be representative of their respective industries.