Kennedy Krieger Institute
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

The Center for Diversity in Public Health Leadership Training
The Maternal Child Health – Leadership Education, Advocacy Research Network
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is MCH-LEARN?**
   The **M**aternal **C**hild **H**ealth –**L**eadership **E**ducation, **A**dvocacy **R**esearch **N**etwork (MCH-LEARN) is designed to support diverse and/or disadvantage undergraduate freshman and sophomore students entry into graduate school in Maternal Child Health (MCH) fields, i.e., public health and related fields such as pediatrics, nutrition, social work, MCH nursing, pediatric dentistry, psychology, health education, pediatric occupational/physical therapy and speech language pathology.

   Accepted scholars participate in the 9-week summer program and participate in seminars, research presentations, conferences, and visit the state capital during the academic school year (September-April).

2. **Who can apply to the MCH-LEARN Program?**
   - Undergraduate freshman and sophomore students with at least 3.0 GPA on a 4-point scale
   - U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, Permanent Residents

3. **What are the three public health experiences available to students during the 9-week summer program?**
   Scholars select one public health leadership experience in addition to the required research experience. Additional public health experiences offered are:

   a. **Community Engagement and Advocacy Experience:** Students work with professionals in developmental disabilities, public health, and related systems on forming, implementing, and evaluating health care and disability legislation, regulations, and practice guidelines. The importance of engaging underrepresented communities is emphasized.

   b. **Clinical Track Experience**: Students rotate through clinical experiences provided by Maternal and Child Health professionals (pediatrics, psychiatry, neurology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutrition, social work, psychology, speech/ language, special education, and nursing). In addition, students gain experience by providing community based healthcare and community support.

   c. **Research Experience:** Students work with research mentors on a wide range of public health, prevention, treatment, and epidemiological studies. Students receive training in analysis of national datasets, clinical research and community-based participatory research, especially as it relates to the elimination of socially determined health disparities.

4. **What are the typical tasks of each public health experience?**
   a. Community Engagement and Advocacy:
      - Conduct surveys in the community
      - Community observations of programs and activities
      - Public health program evaluation at the state or local government levels

   b. Clinical:
      - Observe patient evaluation and treatment
      - Assist clinical staff in patient care
      - Assist in organizing and cleaning equipment for patient visits

   c. Research Track:
      - Literature review
      - Data entry for research projects

- Make telephone calls to confirm participant data
- Analyze data from current and prior research projects
- Develop an abstract based on summer research experience

5. **What experience can students expect to gain from the MCH-LEARN program?**
   Students will participate in a comprehensive educational and applied public health learning and research experience that will enhance their abilities to successfully transition to an MCH-related graduate or professional school.

7. **Do students receive a stipend for participating in MCH-LEARN program?**
   Students receive a stipend for the 10-week summer program and a small stipend for the academic year (visit KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN for details). Adjustments to stipend are made for scholars with multiple sources of federal funding.

8. **Are travel and housing options available?**
   Housing and travel are available for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention visit in Atlanta, Georgia. Housing is not available for the 9-week Summer Session and the scientific research conference.

9. **What can students expect throughout the academic year?**
   Students will participate in educational and professional development seminars, conferences, scientific meeting presentations, and advocacy in Annapolis, Maryland.

10. **I am not an underrepresented student. Can I apply to the MCH-LEARN program?**
    The MCH-LEARN program is a HRSA-Pipeline program that emphasizes enrollment of students from underrepresented populations in the public health field (https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/diversityushealthoccupations.pdf). All students interested in working in MCH and Health Disparities fields are welcome to apply.

11. **Can international students participate in the MCH-LEARN program?**
    International students (i.e., students with F1 or K1 visa) are not eligible.

12. **Can graduate students participate in the MCH-LEARN program?**
    The program is for undergraduate students. Graduate students cannot participate in the MCH-LEARN program.

13. **Does the MCH-LEARN program count towards academic credit?**
    The student's university/college determines if academic credit will be granted for participating in the MCH-LEARN program.

14. **Are the program dates flexible (i.e., start at a later date; take time off to work)?**
    All students must commit to the entire 9-week program and academic program activities September through April. Please visit KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN for details about program dates.

15. **Where can I apply to MCH-LEARN program?**
    The online application is available at KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN.

16. **Can students without health insurance apply to the MCH-LEARN program?**
    Students without health insurance can apply to the MCH-LEARN program. Upon acceptance, all students must have health insurance.

17. **Are meals program sponsored?**
    Breakfast and lunch are sponsored by the MCH-LEARN during the Baltimore and CDC orientation.

18. **Who can write my recommendation letters?**
    Two recommendations forms from professors, clinical advisors, or research advisors at your current university are required. Letters from student teachers are not allowed. Reference format includes a brief questionnaire and up to 850-word letter of recommendation that must be added to the electronic form provided to the referee. **The deadline for letters of recommendation is January 31.**

19. **Who should recommendation letters be addressed to?**
    Please address recommendation letters to the MCH-LEARN Selection Committee.

20. **Is there a standard recommendation form to complete?**
    There is a questionnaire and recommended questions to address for the letter of recommendation.

21. **When should I expect a decision letter?**
    Decision letters are emailed by the end of March.

22. **How many hours during the week do student devote to their public health project and program activities?**
    Students devote a minimum of 40 hours per week during the summer program to their assigned public heath leadership project.

23. **How many applicants are selected to participate in the MCH-LEARN Program?**
    The number applicants vary from year to year. Slots are competitive.

24. **Where can more information on the MCH-LEARN program be found?**
    Please visit the MCH-LEARN website, KennedyKrieger.org/MCH-LEARN, for more information.

All program activities are contingent on CDC funding.
Address additional questions to MCH-LEARN@KenndyKrieger.org