

New: BS in Public Health in Environmental Health

Public Health, Nutrition & Wellness add new degree program

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By: Becky St. Clair

In fall 2017, Andrews University will begin to offer a [Bachelor of Science in Public Health](#) with a concentration in environmental health through the [Department of Public Health, Nutrition & Wellness](#). Environmental health is a branch of public health protection that is concerned with all aspects of the natural and built environment that may affect human health. The BSPH program focuses on implementing solutions to environmental problems by working with state and local government as well as on international platforms.

“This new program provides exciting career opportunities in both public and environmental health,” says [Padma Uppala](#), director of the BSPH program. “In this ever-changing world, the goal is to restore quality to both the natural environment and quality of life.”

The BSPH program in environmental health is the first of its kind at the undergraduate level in the Adventist education system. It is a rigorous yet flexible science-based applied program. Students who join the program in fall 2017 are eligible to earn a scholarship of \$19,000 per year if they meet the scholarship criteria.

“Employment of environmental scientists and specialists is projected to grow 11 percent from 2014 to 2024,” Uppala notes, “faster than the average for all occupations.”

Increased public interest in the hazards facing the environment, as well as the demands placed on the environment by population growth, is expected to spike demand for environmental scientists and specialists.

“Public health has a rich history over the past decade of major contributions to improving the health of the public,” Uppala offers. “The Bachelor of Science in Public Health degree will provide students with a versatile future that may include working as a physician, dentist or pharmacist as well as pursuing an online MPH degree at Andrews University.”

Upon completion of the degree, students will be eligible to take the exam to receive certification as a [Registered Environmental Health Specialist](#) (REHS) that qualifies for entry-level positions in the field of environmental health. The BSPH curriculum is built around the basic principles of environmental health that include exploring the complexity of the natural environment and the complex interactions between humans and natural elements and the resulting impacts on human health. Students will also examine large scale and global environmental hazards to human health that include climate change, loss of biodiversity, changes in hydrological systems and supply of fresh water, land degradation and stresses in food production systems.

“Environmental degradation occurs over long-term and is potentially irreversible,” explains Uppala. “Emerging risks are identified every day. Increasing industrialization, explosive urban population growth, illegal dumping of electronic and toxic wastes, non-sustainable consumption of natural resources and use of dangerous substances and drugs all contribute to the health of children and adults.”

The field of environmental health, which is one of the core foundations of public health, is undergoing dramatic changes in the areas of climate change, disaster preparedness, the built environment and exposure to unknown hazardous chemicals in food, water and air.

In meeting the demands of this burgeoning field, the Andrews BSPH program emphasizes challenges students will face in the real world. Students will familiarize themselves with the local and global implications of environmental health initiatives and the roles they can play in improving the health of the people.

Some of the current pressing environmental issues and priority health issues identified in the U.S. include the role chemicals may play in autism, asthma and cancer; the extremely high mortality rates from opioid epidemic; endocrine disruption as well as climate change and human health.

“Identified priority areas provide exciting opportunities for engaging students in research and service as well as opportunities to improve human health and be agents of change in the world,” Uppala says. “Science for service becomes a way of life for those in a public health profession, and joining the Andrews BSPH program is a great step in the right direction.”

Related Links

- [Watch a video](#) about the Department of Public Health, Nutrition & Wellness
- [More information about PHN&W at Andrews](#)
- [School of Health Professions](#)
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