



Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Leadership, Education, and Advancement in Undergraduate Pathways (LEAP)

Who We Are

The MCH LEAP Program is a mentored program sponsored by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) designed to meet the critical needs for improving the level of representation in public health and healthcare professions in the State of South Carolina, and in our nation.

The MCH LEAP program, which began in 2021, offers interdisciplinary MCH-themed leadership training to full-time USC undergraduate students from underserved or racially and ethnically underrepresented backgrounds.

Our Trainees

148

**Trainees engaged across
106 unique students**

68%

Identify as low-income

55%

**Identify as first-generation
college students**

The program's goal is to "bridge" trainees' transition to MCH-related graduate education or public health or healthcare jobs at graduation.

\$82,000

in tuition supplements given out to date to our trainees - most of our students receive \$500-\$2,000.

Race/Ethnicity

67.6% Black/African American

16.2% White/Caucasian

5.4% Asian

3.4% Multiracial

7.4% Hispanic or Latino

Avg. GPA

➤ **3.64**

Top 5 Majors

- **Public Health (65)**
- **Biological Sciences (24)**
- **Nursing (21)**
- **Psychology (7)**
- **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (7)**

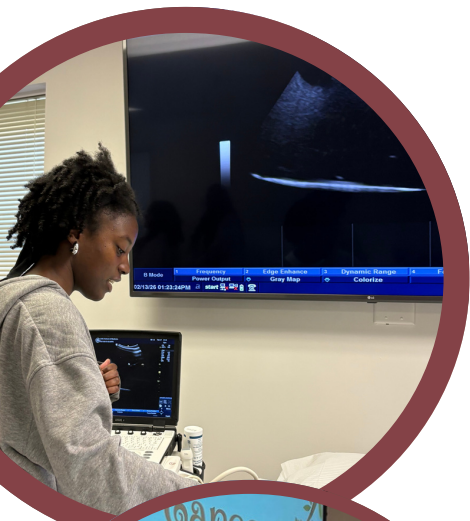
Academic Years

3.4% First Years

28.4% Sophomores

39.9% Juniors

28.4% Seniors



➤ Individual Faculty Mentoring

LEAP trainees and faculty mentors meet each semester to discuss goals, experiential learning opportunities, and new MCH topics. Mentors enhance trainees' knowledge, cultural responsiveness, and leadership skills, connecting them to valuable resources. These interactions draw on mentors' expertise to inspire the next generation of maternal and child health professionals, covering research, community outreach, and public health policy.

➤ Monthly Dinner Seminars

Each academic year, we organize monthly dinner seminars designed to introduce our trainees to various MCH topics, career opportunities, and professional development activities. The 2025-2026 dinner series featured guest speakers from USC's CIEL office and Career Center, as well as Arnold School of Public Health faculty covering subjects such as disparities in maternal and infant healthcare access and health outcomes, health policy, nutrition, gender studies, global health, and environmental epidemiology.

➤ MCH LEAP Spring Summit

A culminating experience for our LEAP trainees, faculty, and community partners. During the event, there is a keynote speaker, MCH career roundtables, student presentations, and more. Students complete reflections on their impact during the program.

► Accomplishments

86% of trainees in this past year's cohort received an internship, externship, scholarship, or grant during the MCH LEAP Program.

Our trainees have been accepted into highly competitive internships, research programs, and graduate and professional pathways during their time in the program, including:

- Medical, public health, and other healthcare-related graduate and professional programs
- Fulbright Scholar Program (France)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Internships with Emerging, Zoonotic & Infectious Diseases
- Title V Summer Internships Program - Funded by HRSA's MCHB
- MCHC RISE-UP Program – Johns Hopkins University, Kennedy Krieger Institute
- AHEC Summer Academy at the Medical University of South Carolina
- USC School of Medicine-Columbia, Finding Your Future Pre-Medical Summer Program
- Prisma Health – Medical Scribe, Genetic Counseling Assistant
- SC Dept. of Public Health – HIV Prevention & Public Health Internships
- Carolina Engage & Magellan Grants – Experiential Learning & Global Study (Netherlands)



► National LEAP Grantee Annual Meeting

In March 2025, we hosted the annual meeting for all six MCH LEAP grantee programs and HRSA staff at USC. The event aimed to facilitate learning among program leaders and inspire new ideas for building a diverse workforce in MCH. We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment for developing future leaders in public health and medicine.

***Expanding and Evolving
MCH Programs for Future Generations***



“[LEAP] allows me to learn from individuals who are where I want to be in my future career. I get to **learn from and meet individuals who are on the same path** as me, allowing me to create friendships that will possibly be beneficial in our future.”

“The mentorship, because I get to hear from accomplished faculty members about their work and time in MCH, as well as **receive guidance and tips on how to forge my own path.**”

MCH LEAP Exit Interview Feedback (N=80):

- **93.8%** of trainees are Likely/Highly likely to recommend the program to a friend.
- **72.5%** of respondents rated the program between 9-10.
- **85%** of respondents found LEAP faculty mentoring “extremely helpful”.
- **92.5%** self-reported an increase in their MCH knowledge.
- **72.5%** of respondents rated the dinner seminars as excellent.

Faculty Involvement:

Seven (7) faculty mentors from the Arnold School of Public Health have been involved in the MCH LEAP program. Through personalized guidance, they nurture the next generation of MCH leaders, fostering a community of skilled professionals ready to make a significant impact.

Community:

Strengthened our alliance and coordination with other programs on campus and throughout SC. Statewide partners: School of Medicine Greenville & Columbia, SC Department of Public Health (SC DPH), SC Area Health Education Center (AHEC), SC Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND), SC Center of Rural & Primary Healthcare, and many MCH community programs in South Carolina.