

## ***Issues in Health Advocacy***

**Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**

**301.645 (3 credits); 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter**

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### **Course Learning Objectives:**

- to understand the role of advocacy in public health
- to begin to develop the analytical skills of a successful public health advocate
- to become aware of, examine, and learn to apply strategies and tools used by public health advocates

### **Course Description:**

This course prepares future public health advocates with substantive knowledge on how policy is crafted, how to effectively integrate public health science into the policy process, and provides practical skills on engaging policymakers, press, and public constituencies to support public health initiatives. It combines policy/advocacy theory, real-life case studies, lectures by U.S. Congressional staff, state legislators, public health scientists, and community activists and an intensive series of classroom exercises.

The topics covered by lectures and classroom exercises include: policy making intervention points, understanding the government health budget process, the role of the public health advocate in federal and state policy development and political debate, media advocacy, building coalitions and using voter education to implement public health goals, the law of lobbying and advocacy for nonprofit organizations, working with communities to advocate for policy change, and strategies and tips for preparing testimony and testifying. The course instructors and guest lecturers provide real world experiences, using both their own “down in the trenches” examples and historical cases. A wide range of public health issues are discussed within the context of the course including, for example, tobacco regulation, gun violence prevention, and public health preparedness.

Reading assignments provide background knowledge for class lectures and discussion. Written assignments are designed to integrate new knowledge. One assignment requires students to identify a public health problem and describe the targets, strategies, and short-term and long-term goals of a public health advocacy campaign that will accomplish a needed policy change. The course’s culminating assignment requires each student, as part of a multidisciplinary team, to provide oral and written testimony before a mock Senate Appropriations Committee on public health spending priorities.