

Practicum Abstracts 2024

Degree: MPH-65

Field of Study: Health Policy

Project Title	Project Summary or Abstract
Understanding MIBC neoadjuvant treatment patterns in a post-pembrolizumab era	This project focused on analyzing real-world evidence to support clinical trials in bladder cancer. It was within the outcomes research department and involved creating submission materials, data analysis, and collaboration with other stakeholders across commercial and research groups.
Researching the integration of Medicare-funded community health workers into care teams for people with substance use disorder	Following the implementation of a rule change from CMS, I was initially tasked with researching how Medicare-funded community health workers can be integrated into care teams for patients with substance use disorder. While community health workers have the potential to improve patient outcomes, one specific issue related to this policy is that Medicare does not cover many types of SUD treatment. After concluding this project, I drafted a proposal related to the unification of demand reduction (e.g., prevention and treatment) and harm reduction (e.g., naloxone and sterile syringes). While many see these as contradictory approaches—the former seeks to discourage drug use, while the latter seemingly tolerates it—I outlined how they are complementary, given that they were designed to reduce different aspects of the drug-attributable burden of harm. I also analyzed data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, focusing on the frequency of marijuana use and the association between religiosity and substance use. Lastly, building on a prior project that was published in JAMA, I was invited to present this on a webinar organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which I worked on during the internship. The in-person internship was completed with the Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Addiction Medicine.
Individual Insurance Plan Oversight Work	Streamlined the risk mitigation process during open enrollment periods by developing template communications and guidelines for both the federal exchange team and the Medicare Advantage team. Also presented to staff on the recent overturning of the Chevron case deference; outlining the history, reasoning, and potential impacts of this ruling on OPOLE staff and relationships with

	<p>insurance plans. Additionally reviewed and edited account managers standard operations by gathering information on calls with insurers such as Oscar Health, Aetna, and Blue Cross Blue Shield.</p>
<p>Rappaport Fellow, Office of Senator John Keenan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Drafted and filed a dozen amendments related to legislation regarding hospital oversight, insurance reform and substance use treatment. Several amendments passed the Senate. o Developed talking points for Sen. Keenan to use on the Senate floor to persuade colleagues to support his legislative priorities. o Provided technical consultative services to state Senators related to health care legislation. o Developed, recommended, and prepared legislative policies proposals around insurance reform related to prior authorization and drug pricing reporting requirements. o Completed a quantitative research project analyzing the public health impact of Massachusetts' online lottery, which was used to impose safety measures in the final law. o Participated in advocacy meetings with health professionals, constituents, and lobbyists, to gather input and build consensus around key legislative initiatives. o Drafted policy memo around various health policy topics including the state of MassHealth funding for substance use and mental health treatment.
<p>Manatt Health Summer Analyst</p>	<p>For my practicum, I spent 10 weeks as a Summer Analyst working on several engagements, including provider strategy, strategic planning, and landscape analysis projects. I enjoyed learning from peers and clients while strengthening skills in project management, communication, and research. Contributing to four separate projects created opportunities to interface with a variety of clients, learn from internal leaders, and hone core consulting skills.</p>
<p>Women Veterans and Homelessness: Bridging Gaps with Research and Innovation</p>	<p>My practicum project addresses the rising rates of homelessness among women veterans, a population experiencing a 24% increase in homelessness between 2020 and 2023, in contrast to a 4.5% decrease among veterans overall. The project explores key gender-specific risk factors such as Military Sexual Trauma (MST), intimate partner violence (IPV), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which disproportionately affect women veterans. It critically evaluates the current VA homelessness screening and service utilization processes, identifying significant gaps in the identification and support of homeless women veterans. The project highlights barriers to service uptake, including under-identification in VA records and structural barriers in housing programs that do not adequately address the needs of women with families. Policy implications include recommendations for integrating Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) into VA screening, enhancing</p>

	<p>provider training with a focus on cultural competence, and expanding gender-specific services. By assessing existing VA programs and proposing targeted research on service utilization and health needs, this practicum aims to inform policy reforms that better address homelessness among women veterans.</p>
<p>Manatt Health Summer Analyst Program</p>	<p>During my practicum, I worked primarily with state governments, where I had the opportunity to sharpen my expertise in behavioral health while honing skills in project management, research, and policy analysis. I worked on projects that strengthened children's mental health services and expanded access to substance use treatment to adults with stimulant use disorder. Throughout the summer, I attended client meetings, conducted research, developed memos, and applied my policy and economic analysis skills.</p>
<p>Health Communications In Science Media</p>	<p>I completed my practicum at LifeSci Communications, and I absolutely loved the experience. LifeSci represents clients across the biotech and pharma space, working on everything from diabetes and obesity treatments to genetic engineering, gene therapy, and even treatments aimed at curing blindness caused by degenerative diseases. It was incredible to be involved in cutting-edge scientific research and to help build strategies that communicated the impacts of this research to the public, inspiring trust and, ultimately, saving lives. I worked on the Media Relations team at LifeSci, where I was directly involved in designing and pitching media strategies for emerging biotech and pharma companies to various media outlets. Health communications was a completely new field for me in practice, and I wasn't sure what to expect. Many people who had worked at communications agencies like LifeSci told me it would be like boot camp—and they were right. The fast-paced, unpredictable, and dynamic workflow of an agency was something I really enjoyed, and I felt like I was learning something new every day.</p>
<p>Medicaid Leadership & Capacity Building Medicaid/Medicare Integration</p>	<p>I worked with the Center for Health Care Strategies' Aging and Disability team on a project related to expanding access to integrated Medicare-Medicaid models in rural areas. This included conducting a literature review of factors influencing the financing and delivery of health care in rural communities, particularly for dually eligible individuals, and creating comprehensive summaries for our funder. I also supported the Leadership and Capacity Building team to support an organizational development strategy at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, facilitating interviews with staff and presenting at a retreat to leadership in Austin, TX. I also updated and developed new curriculum</p>

	<p>material that can be used to train state Medicaid agency staff on Medicaid policy basics, specific policy areas, and leadership skills.</p>
<p>ADVI Health - Health Policy Consulting Intern</p>	<p>I will spent my time working as a health policy consulting intern on multiple short and long term projects throughout the summer. Many of these projects supported clients within patient advocacy groups, oncology, and the pharmaceutical industry on drug access policy for patients, the Inflation Reduction Act, and Medicare reform. My role included creating written summaries, memos, and PowerPoint presentations for clients, conducting qualitative and quantitative research, attending and reporting on government healthcare hearings, and support the federal and state policy team and clients through a variety of additional tasks.</p>
<p>Evaluating the Impact of TeamBirth on Maternal Health Equity at a New Jersey Hospital</p>	<p>For my practicum at Ariadne Labs, I contributed to the evaluation of the TeamBirth initiative at a New Jersey hospital. TeamBirth is a patient-centered approach designed to improve communication and teamwork during childbirth, ensuring that all birthing people have a voice in their care through structured huddles and a shared planning tool. The initiative aims to address communication gaps that often lead to adverse outcomes during labor, particularly among marginalized populations.</p> <p>My project involved both quantitative and qualitative data analysis of over 700 patient surveys collected before and after the implementation of TeamBirth. The surveys captured demographic data and patient experiences related to autonomy and decision-making. I focused on how exposure to TeamBirth huddles impacted these factors, particularly across different racial and ethnic groups. My analysis found significant improvements in patient autonomy and perceptions of being heard following TeamBirth implementation, with the largest gains reported by minority patients.</p> <p>In addition to data analysis, I also interpreted patient feedback to identify inconsistencies in the huddle process and disparities in care experiences, which informed recommendations for improving the initiative's implementation. The findings from my work will contribute to ongoing quality improvement efforts at the hospital and provide insights into addressing health disparities in maternal care.</p>

<p>Medicaid Growth Project</p>	<p>Understand pathways that individuals take to enroll with a health plan. Highlighting state by state variation of the Medicaid application process to help UHC decide where to fill the gaps and empower individuals to make informed decisions.</p>
<p>Expanding and Ensuring Access to Primary Care Through Policy</p>	<p>Through the Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC)—a national nonprofit organization that supports healthy, thriving communities across the country through capital financing, expertise, and advocacy—I worked on state health overviews, state trends in legislative primary care policy, and New York State data policy. These three projects focused on policy research and analysis that provided comprehensive insights into the state of primary care within a certain area or field. These projects supported the organization in expanding their capital financing work and maintaining their understanding of new state developments.</p>
<p>Strengthening Malaria Surveillance and Data-Driven Policy-Making in Milne Bay Province</p>	<p>In collaboration with the Milne Bay Provincial Authority, I conducted field surveys and identified key weaknesses in the malaria program’s data collection system, with a focus on data quality, timeliness, and completeness, and drafted a plan to address the identified gaps. Simultaneously, I developed an interactive dashboard that integrates and visualizes malaria data streams to support data-driven decision-making. Finally, I synthesized findings from the Milne Bay program to inform malaria control and elimination plans in Papua New Guinea.</p>
<p>Strategic Research and Development Plan for Youth Transitioning and Aging Out of Foster Care</p>	<p>The project aimed to create a strategic framework to enhance child welfare in Mississippi, specifically supporting foster youths who are transitioning (18-21 years old) and aging out of the system. Recognizing the significant public health challenge, it addressed the barriers these young adults face in achieving stability after leaving foster care.</p> <p>Developing the Strategic Research and Development Plan involved interviews with stakeholders from various fields and conducting a comprehensive analysis of Mississippi and other states. Interviewees included a Youth Court judge, a pediatrician, directors of transitional housing, executive directors from child advocacy groups, policy advocates, a Deputy Clinical Support at Child Protective Services, a peer support specialist, and the Deputy Commissioner of Child Welfare. The overarching goal was to strengthen support systems, ensure access to healthcare, facilitate smoother transitions into adulthood, and improve long-term outcomes for these youths.</p>

<p>Towards a Coordinated, Data-Informed Approach to Youth Homelessness Prevention: Implementation Planning and Sharing Insights</p>	<p>My practicum project with a statewide Homeless Youth Services office addressed challenges in coordinating cross-agency data on youth homelessness. Thousands of youths experience homelessness or unstable living conditions in the state, with some linked to significant disruptions in life such as substance use or the involvement with juvenile justice system. While each state agency collects crucial information about these youths, the absence of a common definition of housing instability and standardized approach to data analysis complicates efforts to effectively coordinate services and support.</p> <p>Over the summer, we ideated how data could be standardized, collected, integrated with the statewide information systems, and analyzed through data visualization, exploring approaches from other states and tailoring solutions to the state’s unique challenges. Additionally, we worked on producing a white paper to advocate for inter-agency data coordination, sharing insights and best practices for improving youth homelessness data collection. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure better data-driven decision-making and service access for vulnerable youth by enabling accurate identification of the need and enhancing coordination with partner agencies.</p>
<p>Summer Analyst Manatt Health</p>	<p>As a division of Manatt, Phelps & Philips, LLP, Manatt Health Strategies leverages its multidisciplinary expertise to provide comprehensive solutions to a variety of clients, including government agencies, health care providers, payers, and life sciences companies. The Summer Analyst Program extends over a 10-week period, beginning with an orientation week in New York City, and includes opportunities for peer mentorship and informal “coffee chats” with employees at all levels of the firm. This summer, I worked on a team that advised the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Health Benefits in one state on issues related to healthcare payment and delivery transformation.</p>
<p>Summer Fellowship, Office of the Chief of Staff</p>	<p>As a fellow in the Office of the Chief of Staff at the Health Policy Commission, I worked on stakeholder and legislative affairs in the lead up to the end of formal sessions of the 193rd Massachusetts General Court. This included compiling reviews of proposed legislation, summarizing bills, monitoring debates and bill passage, and answering stakeholder questions. In addition to this work, I also worked on an independent project to update an internal resource outlining other state's health care cost growth benchmark policies. I added sections to this resource on additional policies</p>

	states have implemented that align with the HPC's 2023 Health Care Cost Trends Policy Recommendations.
LHON Burden of Illness Study and RWD Assessment	As an intern for the Global Rare Disease HEOR & RWE team, my primary project was to expand Chiesi's internal resource pool and knowledge base for Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy (LHON), a rare genetic ophthalmology disease. To this end, I performed a targeted literature review for epidemiology and burden of illness research with a focus on US literature and performed feasibility assessments for six potential RWD partners. The findings from this work will ultimately support internal decision-making and Chiesi's broader LHON strategy.
Building Artificial Intelligence Policy Coalitions for Impact	<p>The "Building AI Policy Coalitions for Impact" project was an Aspen Digital initiative to develop and activate cross-sectoral networks to strategically connect and empower disparate communities to take action. The project focuses on building AI communities of practice among under-discussed areas.</p> <p>My responsibilities were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize an in-person convening, including the agenda development, invitations, etc. Research key actors and initiatives working on artificial intelligence (AI) governance, specifically state/local AI practitioners and AI researchers within the Public AI community. Co-develop strategic initiatives and goals for the project related to network-building and knowledge-sharing. Produce project memos to summarize project milestones and upcoming tasks. Attend and contribute to recurring weekly virtual meetings among the two policy coalitions.
Manatt Health Summer Analyst	Manatt Health is the consulting arm of a law firm named Manatt, Phelps, and Phillips, LLP. As an analyst at Manatt Health in Boston, I worked on a research project about quality incentive programs among state Medicaid agencies. As part of this project, I reviewed managed care contracts, performed data analysis using Excel, and presented weekly to a larger team. Additionally, I conducted literature reviews and assisted with project management tasks. At Manatt, there were many opportunities to network with other summer analysts, attend lunch and learns, and have coffee chats with current employees.

<p>Support of “Surveys on Willingness-to-Pay to Avoid Negative Chemicals-Related Health Impacts (SWACHE)” and “Surveys to elicit willingness-to-pay to Avoid Chemicals Related Environmental impacts (SACRE)”</p>	<p>The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the ‘world’s largest think tank,’ comprising 38 member countries that share ‘common values’ and conduct research, analysis, and policy recommendations across a wide range of economic and social areas.</p> <p>In recent years, the OECD has launched a project to support the socio-economic analysis of chemicals by, more precisely, quantifying and monetizing the impacts of chemicals on health and the environment. This project is known as the ‘Survey on Willingness to Pay to Avoid Negative Health Effects of Chemicals’ (SWACHE). The SWACHE project aims to establish internationally comparable values for the willingness to pay (WTP) to avoid negative health effects from exposure to chemicals. These values can be used by national regulatory authorities to measure the economic benefits of minimizing the impact of chemicals on human health, thereby improving environmental policy.</p> <p>The SWACHE project covers over 20 countries and includes more than 10 health endpoints: kidney disease, asthma, infertility, very low birth weight, hypertension, IQ loss in children, etc.</p> <p>What I worked on is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Data Analysis: Descriptive Analysis, Fisher’s Exact Test, Logistic Regression, etc. (2) Policy Memo: How the Results of SWACHE Can Be Utilized in Japanese Chemical Regulation Policy (3) Policy Evaluation: Review of the Japanese Government’s Environmental Policy
<p>Summer Associate</p>	<p>Supported a full-scale business transformation effort by a large healthcare system, to include clinical and non-clinical functional areas.</p>