

Maternal Child Health Scholar Training & Enrichment Program (MCH-STEP) Newsletter Spring 2025



MCH-STEP Purpose

We aim to inspire the interest of undergraduate students in MCH-related public health, help them explore and envision MCH-related career paths, and enhance the next generation of MCH-related health professionals.

MCH-STEP is a 5-year training grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Spring 2025 Events

- Monthly Seminars
- MCH-STEP & PEP Menstrual Stations
- LEAP Annual Meeting
- MCH-STEP @ RCAW
- Professional Development
- Scholar Achievements

Monthly Seminars

Speed Networking Event



In February 2025, scholars had the opportunity to participate in a speed networking event in which they were able to converse with professionals in their field, find possible internship opportunities, and make connections within their future professional field of work. This event was held in collaboration with other student organizations including PEP Squad, HER+, TACO, and Eta Sigma Gamma and was sponsored by the Department of Health Education and Promotion.

MCH-STEP Alumni Panel

Due to the majority of Cohort 3 scholars being out in the field conducting full-time internships, their March monthly seminar was held virtually with 2 alumni of ECU and the MCH-STEP program; Ms. Simona Adhikari (Cohort 1) who received a BS in Public Health and Ms. Nylia Jefferies (Cohort 2) who received a BSW in Social Work. They shared their professional journey after MCH-STEP and how MCH-STEP impacted their career path.

Career Panel

The March monthly seminar held for Cohort 4 Scholars was a career panel in which 2 panelist discussed their first-hand experiences and stories with MCH and the impact it had on them. Panelists included Ms. Jamie Williams and Ms. Molly Robinson, both faculty in the Department of Health Education and Promotion. Panelists were open to questions from scholars and were able to create great conversation amongst the group.



End of Year Celebration

MCH-STEP ended the academic year (2024-2025) by celebrating and reflecting on the past year. Scholars and faculty mentors shared their highlights for the year and goals for the upcoming year. Cohort 3 scholars shared their plans after MCH-STEP since it was their last seminar as a scholar. Happy Graduation Cohort 3 Scholars!

MCH-STEP & PEP Menstrual Stations



A'riana Crumpler received an URCA award which funded her creative project; Menstrual Stations in each of the 3 bathrooms in the Carol Belk building. She has been responsible for making sure they stay stocked with feminine hygiene products as well as develop a survey for users of the stations to provide feedback.

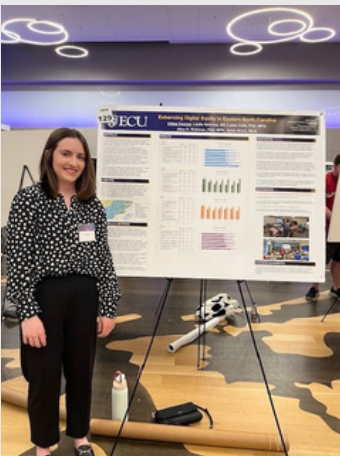
MCH-LEAP Annual Meeting

Dr. Alice Richman and Ms. Kelli Russell attended the MCH-LEAP meeting March 2025 at the University of South Carolina alongside other universities with LEAP programs funded to shape the future workforce in MCH.



MCH-STEP @ RCAW

Research & Creative Activity Week here at ECU provides students the opportunity to display and present the research and creative activities they have been working on to fellow students, colleagues, and the local community as well as network with and meet other scholars with shared interest areas. There were **10** MCH-STEP Scholars who presented in this years RCAW.



MCH-STEP RCAW Winners



Community Engagement
Rashanda Cooper
Mentor: Dr. Alice Richman
“Closing the Gaps and Increasing Community Involvement in Child and Maternal Health: Results of the 2024 North Carolina Title V Needs Assessment”

Human Health

Kendall Pixley

Mentor: Dr. Jessica Cooke Bailey

“Bridging Rural Inequities in Diabetes and Glaucoma Education and Screening in North Carolina (BRIDGES-NC)”



Professional Development

In January 2025, MCH-STEP Cohort 4 scholars Makayla Sims-Jones and Aniya Cherry attended the **Society for Social Work & Research Conference**. As stated by Aniya, “My experience at the social work conference in Seattle was an incredibly informative and valuable experience, as I had the opportunity to connect with fellow professionals, engage with insightful presentations on topics of interest, and witness real-world application of social work and research.”



In March 2025, Cohort 4 scholars Aaliyah Finnell-Bynes, Turner White, and Alexis Montgomery attended **the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs conference** in Washington D.C.

“It was an incredible experience to hear from professionals in the public health space about the groundbreaking work being done across the country and within our own communities. We left **AMCHP** feeling inspired and motivated to continue advocating for maternal and child health while learning from the best in the field.”

-Scholars Aaliyah, Turner, & Alexis (pictured left to right)



Professional Development

The 2025 **Society of Public Health Educators (SOPHE) Conference**, Waves of Change: Embracing Diversity and Technology for Equity and Wellness was held April 15 - 19, 2025 in Long Beach, California. Six MCH-STEP Scholars attended including Graziella De Souza Nunes, MaKayla Cash, Aijadais Godfrey, Tyler Newton, Gabriela Gervasio, and Chloe Cannon.



Scholar Achievements

In early March, MCH-STEP Cohort 3 scholar Gabrielle Canady was selected to join the **NC Black Youth Wellness Advisory Board**. During her time on the board she will be advocating for youth mental health, breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, promoting suicide prevention initiatives and supporting community engagement. Congratulations Gabrielle!



MCH-STEP Cohort 3 scholar Bridget Smith-Butler was admitted to the Master of Social Work program at ECU for graduate school. Bridget will be continuing her journey as a social worker specializing in maternal & child health with a focus on care management. Congratulations Bridget!

“I credit my success to the invaluable experiences and knowledge gained from the MCH-STEP program.”
-Bridget Smith-Butler

Scholar Achievements Cont.

Cohort 4 scholar Chloe Cannon had, in her words; “a phenomenal opportunity” to attend the McDonald Conference for Leaders of Character in West Point, New York in mid-March. “It was great to meet and learn from so many motivated students and leaders from various backgrounds. As the first ECU student to attend this prestigious conference, I felt both honored to represent our university and inspired by the connections made with remarkable student leaders and mentors.” Great work, Chloe!



Aya Hageb, Cohort 4 Scholar was selected as a Title V intern for the Virginia Department of Health through the the MCH Workforce development. She will be interning this summer 2025 looking at screenings related to developmental delay in VA.

Cohort 3 Scholar Trisha Rangaraju was selected as a recipient of the 2024-2025 Truist Leadership Center of Excellence in Leadership Award. Way to go, Trisha!

