



## Maryland Department of Health Student Research Project

### Ensuring Strategic Alignment Across Maryland Department of Health

#### **Focus Areas:**

*Data analysis, community health improvement, organizational excellence*

**SUMMER 2026**

**May 26 – July 31**

This project is being offered through the **University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State** (<http://mpower.maryland.edu>) – a formal collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership – “MPower” – provides funding for the program.

#### **MDH MISSION**

The mission of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is to work together to promote and improve the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management, and community engagement.

#### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The vision for MDH is a high-quality health care system that produces the best possible health for all Marylanders. Strategic planning is essential to identifying top health priorities and directing limited resources. There are a number of strategic plans developed by programs and administrations within the MDH, all with the goal of improving health for Marylanders. It is critical that these plans are aligned and not at cross purposes. Some of these include:

- Subject area strategic plans that roll up to an Administration and Agency Strategic Plan
- State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)
- The Governor’s Plan

The MDH Office of the Secretary recently established a strategic planning team to ensure plan alignment across MDH. The selected UM Scholar will join the team and play a key role in ensuring alignment across these plans, particularly when it comes to implementation.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

The UM Scholar will have the opportunity to support MDH by completing two research projects:

- One project that supports implementation of the SHIP.
- One project that helps build cross-team collaboration within MDH.

For the first project, the selected student will conduct a landscape analysis of existing programs, initiatives, and policies that support one of the five SHIP priorities, as addressed by SHIP Priority Workgroups. The UM Scholar will summarize and present the findings (both written and oral). Further, the UM Scholar will help shape workgroup activities that are informed by the analysis / review to understand the practical application of critical review and assessment.

For the second project, the UM Scholar will conduct focus groups regarding collaboration across MDH. These focus groups will aim to identify opportunities to increase cross-team collaboration which will inform implementation of strategic plans. The UM Scholar may support the facilitation and coordination of focus groups, analysis of qualitative data using spreadsheets and word processing applications, identification of key themes in participants' responses, and generation of recommendations to strengthen collaboration at MDH.

Deliverables from this work may include a written report, brief slide set, and oral presentation of the methods, findings, and recommendations.

As the UM Scholar's time allows, the selected student may conduct other activities, such as a literature review to understand approaches to addressing priorities in the SHIP. Factors to be considered for this analysis and review include determining whether the programs and policies are evidence-based and identifying meaningful and appropriate health indicators and performance measures.

To accomplish these projects, the UM Scholar's day-to-day work will include focused time to work on these projects, interspersed with opportunities to participate in several standing meetings that will allow the intern to appreciate the breadth of the work

conducted at MDH. The UM Scholar will participate in MDH orientation, supplemented by individual onboarding with mentors and scheduled 1:1 meetings to provide context to their projects and foster relationship building with the team. Additionally, the UM Scholar will be provided with training on the use of Google Suite and other platforms necessary for the completion of these projects.

Skills required to successfully complete these projects include familiarity with Google Suite or a similar platform. Some skills that can be developed include critically reviewing literature, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, use of spreadsheets and word processors, verbal and written communication, presentation, public speaking, and group facilitation skills.

### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the internship, the UM Scholar will have:

- Become familiar with the health priorities for Maryland residents and MDH's role in advancing the health of Marylanders.
- Conducted a comprehensive landscape assessment on a SHIP priority.
- Facilitated focus group discussions and practiced public speaking in front of public health professionals.
- Analyzed quantitative and qualitative data and advanced their ability to communicate, interpret, and use data to inform decision making.
- Gained exposure to governmental public health teams, terminology, and processes.

### **IDEAL CANDIDATE**

This project is ideal for a student passionate about public health and interested in state health improvement and multi-sector collaboration. The ideal candidate should also be able to:

- Apply research, analytical, and problem-solving skills
- Communicate with various internal and external audiences
- Draft clear written materials including meeting notes, briefings, presentations or communications and incorporate feedback
- Be comfortable engaging with different programs across MDH by using and develop skills including verbal and written communications, presentation, public speaking and group facilitation skills

- Be familiar with Google Suite, including word processing and spreadsheet capabilities, or a similar platform
- This position offers a hybrid work structure with a mix of in-person meetings or events and remote work. The intern should be a self-starter with good organizational skills.

## **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS**

Students may come from UMCP's College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, Graduate School, School of Public Policy, or School of Public Health and UMB's School of Medicine, School of Graduate Studies, School of Nursing, or School of Social Work.

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

**This project will be delivered in hybrid format** – Remote and in-person, with a minimum of one day a week in the office. When in person, the student will report to this address:

MDH State Center  
201 W Preston Street  
Baltimore, MD

Mentor and student should discuss delivery details during the interview, including method (in-person, hybrid, or remote), expectations, location, and meeting frequency. Flexibilities to complete the 10 weeks of research may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **PROJECT LEAD/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

Katherine Feldman, DVM, MPH, Chief Performance Officer

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## **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

- 10 weeks/400-hour student research project conducted with schedule mutually defined and agreed upon by the student and mentor.

- The project is funded by the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: *MPowering the State* (MPower) and is a part of the UM Scholars program.
- The selected student will receive a stipend for their work, to be paid in multiple installments over the 10 weeks.
  - **\$5,500** for undergraduate students
  - **\$6,500** for graduate students
- Work is expected to occur during typical business hours; Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in the Fall 2026 semester.
- Travel to and parking at MDH is the responsibility of the student, and costs are included in the stipend.

**APPLY HERE**

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Application will be linked above when it opens.