



Maryland Department of Health Student Research Project

Strategic Transformation: Rural Health in Maryland

Focus Areas:

Rural health, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation

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 selected student will collaborate with the Maryland State Office of Rural Health (MD SORH) to help improve the quality of health among rural Marylanders by developing strong partnerships; building local resources; promoting relevant state and national rural health policies; and supporting efforts to expand healthcare access. MD SORH implements these three goals:

1. Serves as a focal point and state clearinghouse for collection and dissemination of information regarding rural health care issues, research findings, and innovative approaches to the delivery of health care in rural areas;
2. Provides coordination of rural health programming across the state and in identified areas such as diabetes, substance use, and workforce development, to avoid redundancy of efforts among public health and health care entities; and

3. Deliver technical assistance to rural-serving public and non-profit private entities to build capacity to access state and federal resources.

With this project, MD SORH, aims to support the annual review and update of the Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan and to support Maryland's pending application to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Program.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

As a UM Scholar, you will have the opportunity to provide support to the MD SORH by working toward the following goals:

1. Research identified topics to supplement development of the Maryland Rural Health Plan update;
2. Coordinate collection of Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan implementation highlights from statewide partners, incorporating dissemination as a component of the living plan;
3. Develop complementary print material drafts, including infographics, to market utilization and successful implementation of the Maryland Rural Health Plan;
4. Support office efforts to facilitate assigned components of the CMS Rural Health Transformation Program; and
5. Present internship work, as requested, to internal and external partners.

Deliverables from this work will include external communications such as white papers and one-pagers, slide sets, and oral presentations to support the Maryland Rural Health Strategic Plan and Rural Health Transformation Program.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

This project is ideal for a student with an interest in the implementation of public health plans, stakeholder engagement, public health communication, and supporting the health of rural Maryland. The ideal candidate should have experience and skills related to verbal and written communication and qualitative data collection. The ideal candidate must be a self-starter, able to demonstrate solid initiative and 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 Pharmacy.

PROJECT LOCATION

This project will be delivered in a hybrid format. This project will primarily involve remote work; with option to work in a hybrid fashion with in-office presence up to one day per week. When in person, this is the address that the student will report to:

MDH State Center
201 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

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

Sara Seitz, MPH, Director, State Office of Rural Health

OFFICE ADDRESS: 201 W. Preston Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

PHONE NUMBER: (410) 767-4467

EMAIL ADDRESS: sara.seitz@maryland.gov

More than one student will be considered for this project.

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

This button is not live.

Application will be linked above when it opens.