

Social Epidemiology Certificate assists students in understanding health inequities

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The capacity to monitor, research, and address social determinants of health and health inequities is a critically important part of public health.

The Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences is now offering a Social Epidemiology Certificate to current graduate students in the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine so they can better understand how health inequities can impact populations.

“This certificate will help us further our training in understanding and addressing the social experience of populations, which gives us a better understanding of how, where, and why inequities affect health,” said Dr. Katherine Theall, faculty lead for the certificate and the Cecile Usdin Professor of Women’s Health. “It is essential that we move further upstream to address the social conditions that impact all health outcomes if we are to ever make headway in reducing health inequities.”

The specificity of the program is key. Examining larger problems at a more granular level will lead to better understanding of outcomes.

“Whether it’s COVID, cardiovascular disease, cancer, maternal and infant mortality, inequities will continue to exist until the root causes of health are addressed,” Theall said.

This certificate offers concentrated training in social and spatial epidemiology with the expressed goal of improving students’ capacity for research and action in addressing health inequities.

Courses in the program combine theory from the social sciences with rigorous epidemiological methods to address connections between social factors and health.

Those skills should enable students to tackle fundamental causes of health and reduce health disparities.

“We hope that the additional training will enrich the traditional epidemiological approach with concepts and techniques from social disciplines such as economics, sociology, and demography that will expand the theories and tools students can apply once they are out in the field,” Theall said.

All students enrolled in MPH, MSPH, and MPH&TM master’s degree programs are eligible to earn the certificate. Learn more about the program on the [certificate webpage](#).