

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the MTPCCR?

A training program for minority master's students and master's level health professionals in public health and social/behavioral health sciences who are underrepresented at the doctoral level. The training program consists of:

- ◆ A 5-day Summer Institute
- ◆ Paid Internships
- ◆ Doctoral Application Support Awards

What is the purpose?

To encourage minority master's students and master's level health professionals to pursue a doctoral degree and a research career focused on any stage on the broad cancer disparities continuum. The goal is to encourage our participants to be the leaders in research who study the social-behavioral factors that impact health equity. Thus, the participants' research could focus on any area of cancer disparities from prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, survivorship, to quality of life.

So it's for people who know they want to get their doctorate and study cancer?

NO! Not exclusively! The MTPCCR is designed to introduce individuals to the idea of a career in research, particularly for those who haven't considered this possibility yet. For individuals already interested in going on, the program will give them many of the tools they need to take the next step.

As noted, our goal is to encourage and support as many of our participants as possible to go on in the field of cancer disparities. The majority of our Summer Institute faculty are cancer disparities researchers. But the second aim of our program is to foster interest in public health research among those whose ethno-cultural background is underrepresented in their field.

But I'm really not interested in cancer. Is this still for me?

Yes. Many people think of microscopes and lab coats when they think of cancer research, but virtually any interest one may have in public health is applicable in cancer disparities research.

For example, we use the socio-ecologic model for the development of and control of cancer. Thus, this encompasses environmental factors, such as air pollution, chemical use on food and clothing; access to nutritious foods and regular physical activity through environmental epidemiology; health economics; policy research and advocacy. Cancer disparities research also includes research on how to change population and individual behavior for health promotion including health communication, health psychology, and many more public health topics.

As noted, we also emphasize cancer disparities research that focuses on underserved populations, including how to conduct valid research across cultures, and identifying and eliminating disease disparities and promoting health equity.

I am not a U.S. citizen, can I still apply?

Yes, non-U.S. citizens are eligible to apply. The application will be reviewed in its entirety. This includes an applicant's desire to pursue a doctorate and career in cancer disparities research addressing underserved populations. All applications will be competitively evaluated.

I am in a doctoral program, which includes the attainment of a master's degree, can I apply?

No. The program is set up for those persons who are thinking about applying to a doctorate program but have not made the final step **OR** who have not thought about it until hearing about the program. Our priority is applicants who have not applied to a doctoral program; however, we will consider applications of those who have applied but have not yet been admitted into a doctoral program.

I have a medical degree from another country, can I apply?

Yes. However, applicants must be currently enrolled in a master's health science program or have obtained a master's degree in a health science program from a U.S. institution or an institution abroad.

Can I be enrolled in any master's level health program or does it need to be in public health?

A person in any master's level health program may apply to the MTPCCR, including those in the population sciences and social/behavioral health sciences (global health sciences, epidemiology, biostatistics, health education, nutrition, behavioral sciences, health psychology, anthropology, etc.).

What is unique about this program?

The **Summer Institute** features accomplished minority role model researchers who share their personal experiences and how their life experiences inform their passion for research. Concrete didactic and personal tools on how to get in to and stay in a doctoral program are provided.

Internships give students first-hand experience in a research setting, usually working with diverse and underserved communities.

Doctoral Application Support Awards (DASA) provide financial assistance to offset the cost of testing, applications, and campus visits for those wishing to apply to doctoral programs.

How many people have participated in the program so far?

The MTPCCR was first funded by the National Cancer Institute in 1998 in Northern California at what was then the Northern California Cancer Center (now Cancer Prevention Institute of California). The grant moved to UCSF in 2002. As of *October 13, 2016*, and 16 years of the program, a combined total of 670 people have attended the programs (356-UCSF and 314-UCLA).

To date, 201 MTPCCR alumni have gone on to the doctorate (105 from UCSF/ 96 from UCLA) and 104 have completed doctoral programs; 80 are currently enrolled in a doctoral program (91.5%); 17 enrolled in but did not complete a doctoral program. Of the 670 alumni, a total of 171 participants were placed in internships (88 UCSF and 83 UCLA).

What do former alums have to say about MTPCCR?

The program has been tremendous. It has played a role in helping me to appreciate so many cultures and the great need for insiders like me. I believe that I have been empowered to take this inspiration to the next level. - *S.G.*

The summer institute has dared me to think and dream beyond the world of a MPH degree. I can say to myself *what if I went on for a doctorate?* and not *should I?* It has opened my eyes to the possibilities. - *J. S.*

Before the Summer Institute, the biggest fear I had was the fear of not being successful. Now I know, that the key to success is having support from those who have been where you are trying to go. - *L.C.*

I can't express how I feel about the gift that MTPCCR has given me. I will strive to give to others in the same powerful, positive spirit. - *A.B.*

The Summer Institute has encouraged me and guided me to reach further, not only to pursue a doctoral degree but to reach above ordinary expectations to be more than I ever imagined! - *N.F.*

The MTPCCR is a wonderful opportunity to meet world-renowned 'minority' researchers, to meet fellow participants who truly have the motivation to succeed, and to meet program staff who support our endeavors. - *S. S.*