

Dental Public Health Residency

Notes from the ADEA Residency Series

This information is a result of the annual ADEA Residency Series, co-sponsored with the Office of Career and Professional Development and UCSF ADEA chapter. Faculty, residents and D4s shared their thoughts about the qualities of an outstanding candidate in their specialty, and gave advice to D1s, D2, & D3s about the application process and residency experience.

Q: What is Dental Public Health?

A: DPH focuses on serving the dental needs of vulnerable demographic groups, including children, pregnant women, migrant workers, the disabled and the elderly.

Q: What career paths are possible in Dental Public Health?

A: DPH residents go on to do academic research, program planning, health policy or other government work. There are DPH opportunities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), NIH, and with state and county governments. Most DPH residents “end up doing a little of everything.”

Q: What is the academic life like in Dental Public Health?

A: Until you get tenure, you live off your grants. Public funding sources include the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). Private funding sources include the California Endowment. Current residents say there is less funding available now than in previous years. They also indicate that it is important these days to have a PhD in order to get tenure.

Q: What is clinical life like in Dental Public Health?

A: DPH professionals can work in a San Francisco consortium of clinics which have good benefits.

Q: What are the requirements of a Dental Public Health residency?

A: DPH residency is 1 year, but applicants must have a Master's of Public Health (MPH) before applying. Many Public Health programs allow a student to obtain an MPH in 1 year if he or she already has a professional degree. The residency program requires 10 competencies in order to pass DPH boards; however, each resident designs his or her own course of study to address the 10 competencies.

Q: What is life like for a Dental Public Health resident at UCSF?

A: Each DPH resident has a major project and a minor project. The major project is generally the resident's main research focus, while the minor project is often an administrative topic, such as grant writing. Residents have the flexibility to tailor their residency programs to address their areas of interest or to strengthen their areas of weakness, such as research, grant writing, etc. They choose their program start dates, take the classes that interest them, read articles and attend meetings as appropriate to their interests. With flexibility comes great responsibility; residents do a large amount of abstract and paper writing. According to panelists, funding and publishing are the standards for success in DPH.

Q: What is the cost of a Dental Public Health residency?

A: Tuition at UCSF is \$9,000 for a California resident. Students can apply to the American Association of Public Health Dentistry for scholarships as large as \$25,000

Q: Are there required classes in Dental Public Health?

A: The 2 required classes are Scientific Methods (all residents need to take) and Public Health every other Tuesday.