

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of a joint Master of Social Work and Master of Public Health degree, effective Fall 2017.

### **Background**

The social work profession has a long history of collaboration with the public health sciences sector. Social work and public health disciplines share many areas of common interest and overlapping competencies. Each discipline has developed strategies for providing services for vulnerable and underserved population groups through a community perspective lens. The proposed MSW/MPH Joint degree program has been designed to provide Master of Social Work (MSW) students with expertise in the epidemiological approach to identifying social problems that impact the health status and social functioning of all population groups. Significant to the proposed program is the emphasis on intervention at the primary prevention level and the promotion of positive health behaviors. Additionally, the Joint degree program will be based on an ecological theoretical perspective. Students will be provided with a comprehensive, value-based “person-in-environment” perspective. This includes intervention knowledge that emphasizes assessment of primary and behavioral health needs of the target population and examines the association between social factors and the incidence of health problems in urban environments.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for healthcare and public health social workers is estimated to grow 34 percent over the next ten years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). A burgeoning number of families will require health and behavioral services as baby boomers continue to age. This estimated demand will require a social service labor force to serve public and private health and behavioral health service demands. The changes that health care reform will produce are also anticipated to affect healthcare delivery and emphasize primary prevention needs.

There are approximately 47 MSW/MPH joint degree programs across the US at this time (2016). Within Michigan, a MSW/MPH joint degree program is currently offered at the University of Michigan, School of Social Work, and a newly approved program at Michigan State University, School of Social Work.

This program will be offered through the Wayne State University (WSU) School of Social Work (SSW) and the School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences (DFMPHS).

### **Program Description**

The MSW/MPH Joint degree program will provide social work students with a deeper understanding of complex determinants of health and the scientific methods necessary to operate in an interprofessional environment. Building on the natural overlap between public health and social work, the MSW/MPH degree will strengthen and deepen the knowledge base necessary to address health disparities, urban health challenges, and equip students with the skills to qualify

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost

for employment that demands integration of prevention, research, and social epidemiological methods.

### **Admission Requirements**

The School of Social Work will be the primary school through which students seeking admission to the MSW/MPH Joint Degree program apply. Applications will be accepted for the Fall semester 2017. Applicants must meet requirements for admission to the Master in Social Work Program in the School of Social Work and for admission to the Master in Public Health Program in the Department of Family Medicine.

Once both programs have made a determination of the applicant's admission status, the School of Social Work will notify the applicant and facilitate entrance procedures. New student orientations will be coordinated between programs. The SSW will be the primary academic home, and students will be assigned academic advisors in each program.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

The Master of Social Work degree requires a minimum of sixty credits of graduate course work and the Master of Public Health program degree requires forty-two credits of graduate course work. The curricular requirements for each of the respective degree programs are unchanged.

MSW/MPH Joint Degree Program – The MSW/MPH Joint Degree Program fulfills both the MSW requirement and the MPH degree program requirement. A total of 13 credits count toward both degree requirements and are “double-counted.” The MSW credit hour requirements are also dependent upon concentration chosen and whether the student possesses a Bachelor degree in Social Work (is an Advanced Standing student).

### **Graduation Requirements**

Students must fulfill the requirements of each program and are required to complete the courses of both the MSW and MPH Programs. All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School and the regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis but must complete all requirements within six years of admission. Students who fulfill the curriculum requirements will receive both a Master of Social Work degree and a Master of Public Health degree.

### **Program Administration**

The program will be administered by the Director of the MSW/MPH Joint Degree Program. MSW program advisors will work with the Director to meet the needs of the joint MSW/MPH students.

### **Budget and Resource Requirements**

No additional resources or staff will be required to maintain the program.

### **Accreditation**

The Council on Social Work Education accredits Schools of Social Work every 7 years. The Wayne State School of Social Work was recently reaccredited in 2014. The Wayne State

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University MPH Program was accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) in 2015.

**Approvals**

The proposal for the MSW/MPH joint degree program was approved by the Faculty and Dean of the School of Social Work; Chair, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences; Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, School of Medicine, the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Office of the Provost.