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## An Integrated Evidence-based Approach to Provide a Practicum-based Learning Experience to Students

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## DP. Health workforce, practice and training

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### **An integrated evidence-based approach to provide a practicum-based learning experience to students**

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#### **Background:**

Due to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the public health field has an exceptional opportunity not only to address current challenges but also to rebuild and expand the workforce.

#### **Objectives:**

The main objective of this presentation is to highlight the 2018-2022 academic year's progress of the practice-based learning experience of the JPH College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University in Georgia, USA. The College serves more than 59, mostly rural counties, and involves diverse practicum preceptors, students, and existing professionals from the USA and other countries. The College provides a unique opportunity for students to develop practice-based education and training to master public health competencies in the field. The Office of Practice and Research collaborates with two Practicum coordinators on the undergraduate and graduate levels to create, support, sustain, and expand practicum opportunities locally and globally.

#### **Results:**

The Practicum has created more than 17 community partnerships that provide an ongoing Practicum opportunity on all three program levels (BSPH, MPH, DrPH). It fostered relationships between community organizations and academia to collaborate on research, interventions, and grants. It includes professional workshops, information sessions, and mentoring to adequately prepare students for the fieldwork. In addition, it incorporates 1) an advisory board committee; 2) supervisor's evaluations; and 3) alumni feedback. As a result of this program and other efforts, more than 80% of our students are employed or enrolled in further education within the defined period.

#### **Conclusions:**

This scalable and adaptable program serves as a model for advancing academia-community efforts aiming to successfully

prepare students for entering the workforce, as well as enhancing the knowledge and skills of those in the workforce, particularly those working in/plan to work in challenging rural and related settings.

#### **Key messages:**

- Practicum is essential in the successful preparation of students for entering the workforce.
- Practicum provides a unique opportunity for collaboration between community organizations and academia.