

Chapter 1

Nutrition in Public Health

Student assignments and activities designed to enhance learning and stimulate critical thinking.

1. Research a *School of Public Health* (a list of accredited public health schools can be found at: <http://www.ceph.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3344>) and review the school's curriculum and graduation requirements. Then, answer the following questions:

- A. Does the School of Public Health offer a nutrition concentration or require coursework in nutrition? If so, what is the nutritional focus: domestic, international, urban, rural, combination, other?
- B. If the school does not have offer a nutrition concentration or require coursework in nutrition, can students take nutrition classes in other departments within the University?
- C. Why is the understanding of nutrition an important component of any public health program?
- D. What are some of the research interests and studies that the public health professors are conducting?
- E. How might the location of the school dictate what target group is studied or served?
- F. Is nutrition one of the required areas of knowledge set forth by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)? What does this mean for public health students?

2. Using the list of accredited dietetic internships

(http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/career_2191_ENU_HTML.htm), identify three that have an emphasis on community nutrition. What is it about these internships that make them community focused? What types of locations are used for the experience in community nutrition?

3. Locate a *public health nutritionist* or *community nutrition professional* that works in a non-profit or for-profit organization in your geographic area. Interview the nutrition professional about his or her job responsibilities, training, career path, and new ventures. Here are some questions that will provide valuable information:

- How long have you been in your current position? Summarize the responsibilities you have in your current position.
- What other positions in community and/or public health nutrition have you held?
- What skills do you use in your current position? What are the most challenging aspects of your work?
- What specific components of your education were the most useful in preparing you for your current position (such as courses, individual assignments, field work experiences, research opportunities, travel, reading, and so on)?
- Describe an activity that represents a new venture for you or your department or organization or that was creative or innovative. Did you make mistakes while working on this project, and, if so, what did you learn from them? Was there a point at which you

thought about giving up? If so, what kept you going? What would you do differently next time?

- Which professional project or initiative that you worked on are you the most proud of? Please explain why you value this experience so highly.
- How do you differentiate between *community nutrition* and *public health nutrition*?

Based on your interview, prepare a summary of his or her answers to your questions, such as the ones listed above. Don't limit yourself to these questions. Some others may come to mind during the course of your conversation. Include in your summary the name, title, organizational affiliation, address, phone number and e-mail address of the person interviewed. *Don't forget to follow up the interview with a hand-written thank-you note.*

4. Review the various offices of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on pages 13-17. Which of these offices would you expect to be involved in national obesity-related initiatives? In what capacity are they involved? What are the obesity intervention programs under the jurisdiction of these offices? (For the most up-to-date information, check online at www.usda.gov and www.hhs.gov)