Introduction to Public Health Practice

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Underlying Themes

- Use the past as a beacon for the future.
- What is Public Health anyway?
- What careers exist in Public Health?
- What skills are needed to do Public Health?
- How can you incorporate Public Health into clinical practice?
What is Public Health Practice

- It is **more than** the challenges you face in practicing public health!
- It is about people **performing** the essential services of public health and the core functions in their own unique situation.
Postulates For This Course

• Improving the practice of public health requires changes in both our strategy and the execution of our work
• Improvement is both planning and operations; strategy and tactics
• At least 80% of expenditures go into personnel
• Considerable inefficiency comes from poor alignment of work and responsibilities with worker capabilities and resources
• Public health workers basically have an attitude of service and “civic professionalism” (Theory “Y” rather than Theory “X”)
Scholarly Work & Professional Practice – Learn By Doing

• Act your way to a different way of thinking, rather than think your way to a different way of acting
• Knowledge is generated from the complexity and demands of practice applications.
• Experience is the source of learning and understanding.
• The wisdom of practice needs to inform and enrich theory.
• Theory and practice need to be mutually interactive, each building on the other.
• Efficient practice precedes the theory of it”

What Is Public Health Anyway?

• Not a single product or service provided by one type of health professional in one place
• Not a single specialty but trans-disciplinary
• A web of relationships among many different people and organizations about a wide variety of topics – a dynamic system!
• Public health is about each of us taking responsibility for advancing the health of the public, our community’s health!