



Braun School of Public Health  
and Community Medicine  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Hadassah Medical Organization



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים  
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

## **Making Public Health the Students' Choice Israel's "This is Public Health" Campaign Project Proposal**

### **Lead University:**

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem – Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine

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### **Additional project collaborators from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Prof. Yehuda Neumark, Director, Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine

Dr. Hagai Levine, Chair, Israeli Public Health Physicians Association; Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine

### **Additional project collaborators from other Schools of Public Health**

Prof. Nadav Davidovitch, Director, School of Public Health, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Prof. Orna Baron-Epel, Director, School of Public Health, University of Haifa

Prof. Yariv Gerber, Director, School of Public Health, Tel-Aviv University

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## **Rationale, approach and potential impact**

### **Background**

In Israel, similar to other countries, awareness of the public health profession and the importance and impact that public health has on an international, national, community and personal level, is limited. In a 2016 national survey of Israeli adults, 60% of respondents were unaware that there are physicians who specialize in public health and one-third (32%) could not identify the areas of work that public health professionals are involved in. Those that did provide an answer, for the most part mentioned communicable disease prevention in general. Even more concerning, are results of a 2017 national survey of nearly 1,500 medical interns, wherein only 2 (!) reported that public health residency would be their first choice – there are about 1,100 medical internship positions available nationwide annually. In the last decade (2008-2018), only 4-5 physicians, on average, began their residency in Public Health each year.

Nationally, there are approximately 60,000 master-level students and 190,000 bachelor-level students, of whom 6,000 and 11,000, respectively, study in the Hebrew University. There are, on average, 70 applications each year for the Master of Public Health (MPH) program in each of the Schools of Public Health, of whom approximately 80% list public health as their first preference for a master-level degree. Of these, 40-45 are accepted per year (in each School of Public Health) - two-thirds with a background in medical sciences (physicians, nurses, pharmacists, etc.). Additionally, there is only one Bachelor of Public Health degree program in Israel. While we do not anticipate that all bachelor-level students in the country will be interested in pursuing a career in public health, regardless of how successful the proposed project may be, the pool of potential students of public health in Israel is very large. To date, there has not been a concerted national campaign to raise students' awareness about public health as a career choice, and to recruit larger numbers of applicants to enrol in master-level public health programs.

### **Project Goals**

This project aims to increase the numbers of students applying to study in a public health program - mainly MPH, from all bachelor level professions, and increase interest in Public Health residency for medical doctors.

A secondary aim is to strengthen current collaborations between all schools of public health in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and enhance the public health workforce in the country/region.

### **Target Audience**

1. Students in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of Bachelor-level studies in all professions across all universities and colleges in Israel
2. Medical students in their clinical years of studies, including interns, across all medical schools and hospitals in Israel

### **Collaborators**

This initiative will seek collaboration with all schools of public health in Israel, including those serving predominantly the Palestinian population such as the Al-Quds University. We have reached out to the directors of the other schools of public health and received positive responses from Ben Gurion University, Haifa University, and Tel Aviv University. We are waiting

for Al-Quds University response. In addition, we will reach out to the Ashkelon Academic Collage who offers a Bachelor degree in Public Health. We will also closely collaborate with the Israel Medical Association, and primarily the Public Health Physicians Association. Dr. Hagai Levine, a senior faculty member of the Braun School is Chair of the Public Health Physicians Association, and Prof. Nadav Davidovich is the former chair and currently chairs the Public Health Forum in the Israel Medical Association (which unites multiple public health organizations in Israel) and heads the Ben Gurion University School of Public Health.

### **Student and Public Health Professionals Involvement**

We will form a steering committee with two representatives from each collaborating school – one a current student and one a public health professional. The social media campaign (see project description) will involve numerous students and public health professionals.

### **Project Description**

A media campaign will be designed and advertised on web-based platforms, including mainly social media (Facebook and Instagram). This is the most suitable strategy as Israel has one of the world's highest levels of smartphone ownership (nearly 100% among young adults) and social media use (overall 76%; 86% among 18-34 year old). The three leading social platforms are Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

For the campaign, short video clips will be produced focusing on:

**Public Health in Society** – these clips will highlight the scope and centrality of sound public health in everyday life of Israeli society (and beyond) focusing on topics that would be of interest to young adults.

**Public Health Professionals** in various positions (e.g., district health officers, health promotion program coordinators, community health nurses) describing what inspired them to choose public health as a career and describing a meaningful moment in their career. The videos will also feature current MPH students and public health residents.

**Public Health Victories** – these video clips will highlight recent wins in the local public health arena and the role played by public health professionals in these victories (e.g., recent advances in national tobacco control, which were recognized by the WHO 2019 World No Tobacco Day Award; the rapid and successful national vaccination campaign response to polio threats).

The videos will utilize culturally-responsive messages in both Hebrew and Arabic and be disseminated using multiple media channels including a paid social media campaign actively targeting bachelor-level and medical students and a dedicated internet site for this project with links to all schools of public health.

### **Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation will be based on three parameters:

1. Number of MPH applications in the various Schools of Public Health for the 2020-2021 academic year compared to the previous 3 years (overall number and number of successful applicants).
2. Number of physicians starting a residency in public health in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 compared to 2017-2019
3. Social media indicators:
  - a. Engagement with content – measured through standard key performance indicators number of link clicks, likes, shares, comments, etc.
  - b. Reach – number of followers, percentage of traffic to webpage coming from social media platforms



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### **Support within the university for project sustainability**

We anticipate that each of the partner Schools of Public Health will secure necessary institutional infrastructure support from their university such access to the university website and databases of bachelor-level students. If necessary, the Braun School (as the lead partner) and perhaps other partner Schools of Public Health will provide supplementary monetary support to fill unanticipated budget gaps to carry the project forward until end of the application period for the 2020-2021 academic year.

### **Matching/in-kind support**

We will request partial-matching/in-kind support from the Head of the Public Health Services of the Ministry of Health, and from the Israel Medical Association.