



**HARVARD**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# Doctor of Public Health Student Biographies 2014–2015



Lead.  
Change.

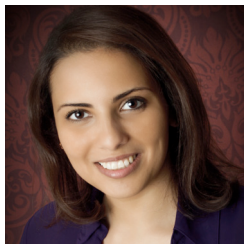
DrPH

The Doctor of Public Health degree is for exceptional individuals with proven potential who seek the knowledge and skills to drive change and make a difference on the front lines of health, anywhere in the world.

We are pleased to introduce our inaugural class of 15 DrPH candidates, known as the Centennial Fellows, who boast a broad range of accomplishments but a single goal: to lead organizations that will help people live longer, healthier lives. The Centennial Fellows are an extraordinary group of talented and diverse candidates from across the United States and around the world.



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## Nurah Alamro

**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**MBBS, King Saud University**

**MPH, University of Alberta**

*Last position: Policy Fellow, Saudi Arabia's Legislative Parliament of Majlis-as-Shura and Opinion Writer, Al Watan Newspaper*

While she is a physician with emergency medicine training, Saudi Arabia's Nurah Alamro is driven by a larger-scale vision of improving health and health care for millions of people. Just a few months after women were first allowed to become members of Saudi Arabia's consultative assembly, which also proposes laws to the King and cabinet, Nurah became the body's first-ever health policy fellow. In this role she was given the unique opportunity to propose health care legislation and observe the unique power dynamics of her home country's legislative processes. In addition to her role with the assembly, Nurah authors a weekly column on contemporary health affairs for a major Saudi newspaper, bringing the issues she works on to a broader audience with an accessible voice. No mere idealist, her vision for health care improvement globally and in her home country is grounded in a desire to use validated value-based metrics to assess specific, measurable goals such as improving health care cost and quality. Nurah's dream is to be among the pioneers of health systems improvement and digitization, and she is confident that HSPH will provide her with the best preparation possible for achieving this goal.



## Yadira Almodóvar-Díaz

**Arecibo, Puerto Rico**

**BA, University of Puerto Rico**

**MPH, George Washington University**

*Last position: HIV Policy, Advocacy, and Capacity Building Senior Advisor for the Futures Group*

Yadira Almodóvar-Díaz grew up in a rural community in Puerto Rico and remembers the challenges her parents faced getting health care because they had neither enough money nor adequate health insurance to pay for it. As a result, she spent over 10 years working with non-governmental and public sector organizations managing programs that help other underserved people gain access to high-quality care. Yadira cites her time leading the design and implementation of the \$3.5 million AIDSTAR-Two project in Honduras as a

formative experience. Leading a team in improving the delivery and quality of HIV/AIDS services that included peer education, community outreach, condom distribution, counseling and testing, and antiretroviral therapy, she was driven to tackle challenges head-on with resilience and a thoughtful decision-making process. After overseeing the transition of this project from being a donor-funded operation to being operated by the Honduran ministry of health, she became aware of how challenging these transitions can be when serving marginalized groups such as those at high risk for HIV infection. Yadira envisions her experience in the DrPH program preparing her to more effectively design and implement HIV and AIDS programs as either a high-level government leader or leader of an international development organization. She is fueled by a passion for improving the quality of life and health of vulnerable people throughout the world.



## Guilherme Andrade

**Belo Horizonte, Brazil**

**BS in Physical Therapy, Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais**

**MPH/MBA, Johns Hopkins University**

***Last position: Global Workplace Experience Fellow, Sodexo***

A physical therapist and academic turned entrepreneur, Guilherme Andrade seeks to develop a higher understanding of the global health landscape through the DrPH program in order to change the trajectory of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the developing world. In 2008, Guilherme co-founded B.well, an enterprise providing health promotion services to organizations, and he spent five years as its CEO. While most of his work focused on business development and management of contracts, he was also able to use his background as a health care provider and clinical professor in Brazil to contribute to the design and implementation of population health programs that served tens of thousands of people in dozens of cities. Through his combined experiences as a clinician and health promotion entrepreneur in Brazil, he developed a keen awareness of the burden of chronic diseases. Hoping to leverage these experiences for far greater public health impact, Guilherme left B.well to pursue a joint MPH/MBA program at Johns Hopkins University, and now sees the DrPH program at Harvard School of Public Health as a way to learn the skills he needs to become a global leader facilitating collaborations that will alleviate the toll of NCDs in many countries around the world.



## Nicole Dickelson

Washington, DC

BA, Spelman College

MPH, University of Michigan

*Last position:* Special Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health at Office of Minority Health, US Department of Health and Human Services

Nicole Dickelson has committed her career to addressing health disparities and shaping how health care is provided to communities most in need. After earning an MPH at the University of Michigan, she has spent the last four years at the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), serving in four different roles as part of the leadership team responsible for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Her first assignment, working in policy implementation at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, was particularly gratifying for this first-generation college graduate and former Medicaid beneficiary. In subsequent jobs she coordinated public affairs and messaging related to the ACA, with a special focus on reaching populations of color. She then became the primary advisor to the deputy assistant secretary for minority health at the HHS Office of Minority Health, working to implement both the ACA and the first-ever collective federal strategy to address health disparities, the HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. In her most recent role, she staffed Secretary Sebelius' senior advisor on healthcare.gov, helping to provide critical management and oversight for the website's performance in enrolling millions of Americans. Following the DrPH program, she plans to pursue a leadership position where she can direct and develop interventions, policies, and services that improve access to quality, affordable, and culturally competent health care for medically underserved populations.



## Jessica Flannery

Atlanta, Georgia

BA, Marlboro College

MPH, Emory University

*Last position:* Program Officer for Guinea Worm Eradication Program, The Carter Center

After working in South Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jessica Flannery wants to dedicate her career to improving the effective-

ness of public health programs in areas that have limited resources and infrastructure. Since 2007, Jessica has worked in remote communities in East Africa with The Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program. There she witnessed firsthand the potential to effectively implement successful public health programs by working with communities in these areas. In her various roles with The Carter Center, she has overseen implementation of surveillance programs and interventions to stop Guinea worm disease transmission and has worked extensively on logistics, management, and data analysis to support programmatic activities. By collaborating with government partners and engaging with local communities, the teams she has worked with have seen dramatic reductions in the number of cases of Guinea worm disease. In the process, she has developed skills to implement effective public health programs in rural areas with little infrastructure. Jessica aspires to expand upon these skills through the DrPH program, hoping to move from analyzing and implementing existing programs to designing new ones to eradicate diseases in low-resource areas in the future.



## Christin Gilmer

**Yuma, Arizona**

**BA, Northern Arizona University**

**MPH, Columbia University**

***Last position: Research Team Project Manager at University of Oxford***

A native of southern Arizona, Christin Gilmer spent several years working in public health organizations near the Mexican-American border. She became the founder of Sonoran Health Alliance (SHA)—then known as the International Healthcare Development Agency—to serve border communities impacted by violence and other adverse obstacles. Faced with the vast operational challenges of creating an international organization and the responsibility of primary leadership, Christin gained and used significant leadership skills—but she also became keenly aware of the ways in which she still needed to learn and grow, leading her to pursue a DrPH at Harvard. She still works with SHA, with several partners at the organization, to incorporate HIV/AIDS medical care and services into existing health facilities and further define the organization's future. In her short career, she has already led research projects and policy analyses at the World Health Organization, United Nations Population Fund, University of Oxford, and Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation and provided health policy advising for multiple statewide election campaigns. For her next

challenge, Christin plans to use the skills she gains in the DrPH program to tackle the lack of access to mental health services and the stigma surrounding them by developing efforts to integrate these services into primary care.



## Zina Jarrah

**Boston, Massachusetts**

**BA, Wellesley College**

**MPH, Boston University**

***Last position:* Technical Advisor at Management Sciences for Health**

Growing up in Syria, Zina Jarrah witnessed the crippling effects of a health system that catered to people with means and neglected those without. Seeing people struggle to access basic health care services, she felt compelled toward a career in health care, and began her undergraduate studies on a pre-medical track. But her desire to return to Syria to improve its health system led her away from medical school and instead down the path of public health, where she could develop interventions for improving health on a broader scale. Zina is now a technical expert in health care financing on a global scale, working with Management Sciences for Health, and has developed cost models and financial forecasting tools for over 15 countries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Her most significant accomplishment has been the development of a costing tool for community-based service delivery programs, which use community health workers to deliver proven curative interventions in remote areas. Working with the people who deliver these programs, Zina began to understand the real-world impact of her theoretical knowledge and saw how crucial it was to support frontline health workers with strong leadership. She comes to the DrPH program to grow into such a leader, and aspires to combine her technical knowledge with new leadership skills to influence economic policy towards universal health coverage and improved health outcomes—in Syria and across the globe.





## Jeremy Lapedis

**Boston, Massachusetts**

**BS, University of Michigan**

**MSPH, Johns Hopkins University**

***Last position: Program Evaluation Manager at AIDS  
Action Committee of Massachusetts***

Jeremy Lapedis spent several years doing frontline work for nonprofits such as Kiva, Partners in Health, and Health Leads in both Latin America and the US, and most recently worked as program evaluation manager with AIDS Action Committee (AAC) of Massachusetts. In this role, Jeremy was tasked with a cultural shift: Moving AAC from an organization that collects data chiefly for reporting purposes to one that uses these data to improve programs and effectiveness. These work experiences have led him to several key beliefs: first, that community-based organizations and community health workers, who are chosen from the communities in which they live to provide basic health and medical care, can play a much more important role in health care systems than they currently do; and second, that good data is critical to changing and improving complex health and social service systems. After documenting the clinical effectiveness of community health workers in his work with AAC, Jeremy now wants to use solid analysis to demonstrate their value in a variety of contexts in order to ensure that they have a sustainable and integrated place in health systems in the US and around the world. To do this, he is pursuing the DrPH to develop his skills and knowledge in health policy, administration, and economics, as well as to build his leadership abilities to make him more effective as both a consensus builder and public health practitioner.



## Jennifer Leigh

**Baltimore, Maryland**

**BA, University of Virginia**

**MPH, Johns Hopkins University**

***Last position: Proposal Consultant at Community Partners International***

Jennifer Leigh has spent over a decade working in global health, from assessing HIV seroprevalence in street youth in St. Petersburg to assisting tsunami-affected villages in India to assessing health care quality and access for Iraqi refugees in Jordan. Most recently, Jennifer spent more than four years working along the Thai/Burmese border with the Global Health Access Program (now Community Partners International), providing technical support and training to community-based organizations implementing health interventions in communities that have been affected by the long-running civil war. Through all of these experiences, she has come to believe that the most effective humanitarian aid is that which helps build the capacities of affected communities, that aid efforts should utilize existing local resources rather than relying only on external assistance, and that aid should emphasize accountability to the people and communities receiving assistance. Driven by these convictions, Jennifer plans to use her DrPH training in research and evaluation to improve standards and practices in humanitarian aid around the world.



## Usman Munir

**Karachi, Pakistan**

**BSc, Lahore University of Management Sciences,  
Pakistan**

**MSc, Imperial College London**

***Last position: Consultant at Risk Management Solutions***

Usman Munir moved from Pakistan to the UK eight years ago—and six years later learned just how important universal health coverage can be when his father, who like most Pakistanis had no health insurance, needed coronary artery bypass surgery in Karachi. His family had to collectively pool their resources to cover the cost of treatment out-of-pocket. Out-of-pocket payments dominate health care financing in most low- and middle-income countries and often lead to impoverishment and inequity. The experience inspired Usman to want to learn how he could lead the implementation of universal health coverage in low- and middle-income countries such as Pakistan. Usman already holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's in epidemiology, affording him quantitative and public health knowledge that he believes will be pivotal to his ultimate success. He has honed these skills while working as a health economist at United Biosource Corporation, and more recently as a senior consultant at Risk Management Solutions, where he advised life and health insurers on managing pandemic and longevity risk. This work has given him an appreciation of the practical applications of epidemiology and health economics research in the insurance industry. Usman chose Harvard as he is inspired by Dean Julio Frenk's work establishing national health insurance in Mexico. He is confident that the DrPH will help him become a leader in health care financing and reduce the inequity in health care systems of developing countries.



## Jeffrey Reynoso

**San Diego, California**

**BA, University of California, Los Angeles**

**MPH, University of California, Berkeley**

***Last position: CAO Staff Officer Management Fellow,  
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency***

As a son of immigrants from Mexico, Jeffrey Reynoso pursued public health to empower and integrate the voices of his community into policies and programs that prevent disease and promote health for today's increasingly multicultural

populations. After serving for a year as an AmeriCorps member working as a health educator for AltaMed Health Services, a network of community health centers in East Los Angeles, he earned an MPH from the University of California, Berkeley in Health and Social Behavior with a specialization in Multicultural Health. During his MPH internship he was placed at Kaiser Permanente National Community Benefit, where he planned a Health Equity Summit and assessed the impact of interventions aimed at improving quality and achieving health equity at community health centers and public hospitals. Seeking government experience after graduation, Jeffrey took a position as a management fellow for the County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency Executive Office, where he worked on efforts to implement the Affordable Care Act in California's second-largest county. His future plans are informed by his yearlong policy advocacy service-learning experience at PolicyLink and his final MPH research paper in which he examined how engaging communities in "place-based" interventions can help address root causes and narrow the gaps in health inequities. Once he completes his DrPH, he hopes to be a leader for the "place-based" health equity agenda and bring about systems-level change by working for a nonprofit advocacy organization or a health-focused foundation.



## Gabriel Seidman

**Boston, Massachusetts**

**BA, Yale University**

***Last position: Consultant at the Boston Consulting Group***

When Gabriel Seidman joined the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), he knew immediately that he wanted to focus on the firm's health care clients. In that role he has advised senior decision-makers in the pharmaceutical industry as well as major global health organizations. His most recent project involved working with the Gates Foundation to develop ways they could accelerate adoption of "kangaroo mother care," a practice emphasizing regular skin-to-skin contact between parents and premature or low-birth-weight newborns to promote warmth, breastfeeding and bonding, as well as adequate support for the mother. The project involved field research in Malawi, epidemiological analyses, and facilitating collaborations between dozens of leading stakeholders in the field of newborn health globally. In his work with BCG, Gabriel observed that the landscape of international aid is in transition, and believes that global development work has much to learn from the private sector. He hopes to use

his DrPH training and his experience working with health care organizations to develop market-based solutions to public health problems. While at HSPH he hopes to participate in Project Antares—a joint effort with Harvard Business School that seeks marketplace solutions to global health challenges. A recent graduate of Yale University with dual majors in psychology and women's, gender, and sexuality studies, Gabriel is also involved in LGBT leadership and activism, having served as co-chair of Yale's 2nd LGBT Reunion and as an LGBT Recruiting Specialist for BCG.



## Daniel Vigo

**Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**BA, MD, University of Buenos Aires**

***Last position: Coordinator, Assertive Community Treatment Department for Proyecto Suma***

Daniel Vigo began his academic career in Argentina with a combined bachelor's/master's degree in psychology, but after concluding he needed a more complete understanding of human health to properly understand mental health, he entered medical school, naturally gravitating toward a specialty in psychiatry. During his psychiatric training he developed an interest in community mental health and has worked on program design, implementation, and evaluation while also continuing to provide direct care. While leading a mental health day program at a hospital in Buenos Aires, Daniel observed that the patients with greatest need were the ones left out of most care because of their struggles to meet the requirements of a structured treatment program. To bridge this gap, he created a community mental health treatment department, shepherding the process from conception to its current form as the first assertive community treatment department in Argentina that provides intensive, around-the-clock mental health services to the severely mentally ill in their homes and communities. This experience helped cement Daniel's conviction that in order to meaningfully change health outcomes—especially for the populations most in need—individual efforts must be channeled into the work of building effective health systems. The DrPH program will provide him with the proficiency he needs to address health problems at a population level and the ability to put his skills to work to be a force for change in mental health.

**For more information on the DrPH program,  
visit <http://hsph.me/drph>**



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