



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

**CDPHP SCHOLARS PROGRAM
2020-2021**

CHRISTOPHER GIL

Christopher Gil is a first-year student from Rensselaer, New York. He completed his undergraduate degree at SUNY Cortland, majoring in community health.

“I chose public health because of the wide scope of opportunities in the field,” says Gil. “Some of my primary interests include genetic epidemiology, pharmacoepidemiology and environmental health.”

Gil is looking forward to a practical public health education and growing his professional network. His goal is to work for a state health department or a university.

“When I was awarded the CDPHP scholarship, a lot of stress was alleviated. This award will help me now and set me up for my future. I am very thankful for the CDPHP Scholars Program.”

- Christopher Gil

“Opportunities like this make my education possible. I was never economically stable enough for a solid education. I made it to Rutgers because of a scholarship and I am here today because of donors who care about education and empowering individuals through education. You make this possible for myself and so many other students who are looking to ensure a better future for ourselves and our future generations.”

- Kacey Griffin

KACEY GRIFFIN

Kacey Griffin is a first-year student from Rochester, New York. She earned her undergraduate degree from Rutgers University, majoring in genetics with a double minor in political science and public health.



“I truly did fall in love with reproduction and empowering women in their reproductive and sexual health in my undergraduate experience,” says Griffin. “I wanted to continue that path and public health is a great means of enjoying community engagement and education while promoting women's health on a large scale.”

Griffin intends to pursue a career that involves advocating for better sexual health resources and education, specifically for women, and better sex education in schools, specifically for students in special education classes and students with disabilities. She is already enjoying the exchange of ideas and perspectives with classmates at the School of Public Health.

"It's an honor to be a CDPHP Scholar because there are people like myself out there who share the same views and insights and willingness to help fellow beings and make connections. With this support, I am able to continue my education so I can bring knowledge and change to my community."

- Paris Martin

PARIS MARTIN

Paris Martin is a first-year student from Albany, New York. She earned a bachelor of science degree in public health from UAlbany.

"I've always wanted to help people, and being able to do so on a larger scale means I can change the world for the better," says Martin. "I'm interested in the social and behavioral aspects of public health. I want everybody to have their basic needs met: food, water, shelter."

Martin looks forward to applying what she learns in class in the real world. After graduation, she plans to serve in the Peace Corps, then use her experience to help people in the U.S. who are suffering.



ALYSSA POCHKAR

Alyssa Pochkar is a first-year student from Binghamton, New York. She earned her undergraduate degree from UAlbany, with a major in human biology and a minor in public health. A service-learning trip to Haiti influenced her decision to pursue a career in public health.

"After this trip, my career goals shifted from providing individualized care in the medical field to ensuring the health of a population," says Pochkar. "My primary areas of interest are epidemiology and global health. I believe that epidemiology is so important, as the research done in this field offers insight on how to solve public health problems, and not just temporarily fix them."

After graduation, Pochkar plans to pursue a career that includes a focus on global health disparities. This year, she is looking forward to building a foundation of epidemiological skills and taking courses that will familiarize her with the principles of epidemiology, statistical inference and computer programming basics.

"Given the current financial situation of the United States, I know that my family has not been the only ones impacted. As my sister and I are both college students, any form of aid would help us all out right now. I am very grateful and fortunate to be a CDPHP scholar."

- Alyssa Pochkar



RIDA SAEED

Rida Saeed is a first-year student from Clifton Park, New York. She earned a bachelor of science degree in public health with a minor in sociology from UAlbany.

“I’ve always been passionate about public health and the social and environmental aspects that affect health and health outcomes in populations and communities,” says Saeed. “I currently am working for New York State and getting to see firsthand the role and importance of policy and management. I hope to build on that experience and back it up with the best tools through my education.”

Saeed is looking forward to studying the impact of COVID-19 on a state, national and global level through her coursework this year, with a particular interest in how it will affect policy in years to come.

“I am grateful to be receiving the support through the CDPHP Scholars Program because as a first generation immigrant and the first person in my family to be going to graduate school, the financial burden was a big aspect while making my decision to go back to school. The support helps me know I can go back to school and focus on my education with less stress!”

- Rida Saeed

“As a pharmacy technician, I come across many people who are insured by CDPHP. This program means community and advocacy to me. The support I am receiving is helping me educate and better myself for my family and community to give forward and succeed. ”

- Ishmeet Sekhon

ISHMEET SEKHON

Ishmeet Sekhon is a first-year student from Saugerties, New York. She earned her undergraduate degree from UAlbany, double majoring in biology and human development. Her goal is to go on to medical school and practice internationally.



“I am interested in accessibility, awareness, and preventative health care in communities and countries that have been affected by colonization,” says Sekhon.

During the first year of her MPH program, Sekhon looks forward to gaining experience and expertise in public health and advocacy.

“The CDPHP Scholars Program means so much to me because it shows how much they believe in me and the future of the field. I really appreciate this honor and look forward to making CDPHP proud.”

- Harshal Shet

HARSHAL SHET

Harshal Shet, a first-year student, graduated in May from UAlbany’s Honors College. He double majored in public health and biology, with a minor in economics.



“Public health is a multi-disciplinary approach that considers preventative practices to keep people safe and healthy,” Shet says. “I am particularly interested in health disparities and infectious diseases.”

Shet looks forward to making a positive difference in improving people’s health and intends to pursue a career in the field of medicine.



NAW EHKU

Naw EhKu is a second-year student and refugee from the Thai-Myanmar border who has lived in Albany, New York since her resettlement with the United Nations Refugee Agency in 2010.

She graduated from Siena College in 2019, choosing to pursue a masters degree in public health at UAlbany, with a concentration in Health Policy, Management and Behavior because she is interested in population health and the betterment of health disparities, both locally and internationally.

Naw EhKu hopes to influence policy change through her career, perhaps with a state health department, the World Health Organization or the UN Refugee Agency.

“The support I received from CDPHP Scholars Program means so much to me and my education. I can worry less about my tuition and other costs, and focus more on my studies. It lifted off a huge burden from my shoulders. Graduate studies requires so much time and attention and I would not be able to do it without the support from CDPHP Scholars Program. Thank you so much!”

- Naw EhKu

MOLLY HAYDEN

Molly Hayden is a second-year student from Clifton Park, New York. She completed her undergraduate degree at SUNY Oneonta.

“Coming from a social science background and understanding the importance of multi-sector cooperation, I believed that it was important to employ my skills as an anthropologist to public health in order to help repressed and disadvantaged communities to have a voice,” she says. “Additionally, health is not just a clinical/biological aspect of life. It is important to contextualize the social, economic and political factors that influence our health. I hope to further the field in this aspect.”

Over the summer, Hayden interned at Helgerson Solutions Group, a boutique healthcare consulting firm, as a project manager. Through this, she was able to further her understanding of organizational structures within the healthcare sector. Hayden also had the opportunity to conduct and co-write a paper on birth control disclosure among college students, which will be submitted to a conference this fall.

“Without the help of the CDPHP Scholars Program, I would have had to have focused on financing my education, rather than actually applying myself to learning. Because of this opportunity I can fully focus on learning all of the skills of a public health professional.”

- Molly Hayden



“It means a great deal to have the CDPHP Scholars Program's support because it is truly the reason why I chose to come to UAlbany. I was dead set on attending school in Colorado, but their financial support changed my path and I couldn't be more grateful. ”

- Brynn Stopczynski



BRYNN STOPCZYNSKI

Brynn Stopczynski is a second-year student from New Hartford, New York. She completed her undergraduate degree at SUNY Brockport.

“I have found a passion for maternal and child health, as well as women's health. This is the path for me!” she says.

Stopczynski completed an internship with the NYSDOH Bureau of Women, Infant, and Adolescent Health. She helped make recommendations for enhancing the Sexual Assault Forensic Program, which ensures that nurses and physicians are specially trained to collect evidence from sexual assault patients that present to emergency departments. She is continuing with this bureau for her fall internship.