

# Andrew Hasenzahl, MD/MPH

## Concentration in Health Policy and Management

### What brought you to the field of Public Health?

Physicians practice individualized, one-on-one medicine. I wanted the opportunity to learn about population and community-based factors that can impact health in an effort to become a better and more aware physician. I also hoped to learn how to create effective health changes in my community, not just with my future patients.

### Why was SUNY Downstate SPH the school for you?

SUNY Downstate SPH has amazing diversity, not only in terms of race/ethnicity, but more importantly in life experiences and professional backgrounds of students and professors. These different perspectives on situations discussed in class have been tremendously helpful to giving me new outlooks on public health issues.

### What would you say to students considering studying public health at SUNY Downstate?

I would tell them to go for it! It's a very interesting program that covers topics in all public health disciplines. Additionally, there is a great balance between strong foundational courses in your concentration of study and the flexibility to take several electives in other fields. The professors are extremely helpful and very responsive. They truly want every student to succeed. The program timing is also flexible, allowing for either full-time or part-time study. Also, I have been happily surprised to learn how many different career paths and job opportunities can benefit from an MPH.



Legislator William Spencer, MD and Andrew Hasenzahl at the Suffolk County Legislature after a Health Committee meeting.

### Could you tell us about your fieldwork?

My field experience was with Suffolk County Legislator William Spencer, MD. As a pediatric ENT and the first physician-legislator in Suffolk County, Legislator Spencer serves as the chairman for the Suffolk County Health Committee. I primarily worked on two pieces of health policy: one pertained to synthetic marijuana, and the other addressed plastic bag use in Suffolk County. I performed policy research on these topics and met with stakeholders for this legislation to create policy recommendations, alternatives, and areas for compromise that were presented to Legislator Spencer. It was very rewarding knowing that I had a hand in crafting health policy and building support for the proposed laws. I strongly recommend this type of field work to students interested in health policy because it offers hands-on experience in how laws are actually crafted, as well as invaluable experience with working on a team with politicians and legislators.

### How has studying at SUNY Downstate prepared you for a career in Public Health?

As an MD/MPH student, I am confident that the MPH will compliment my development as a physician. By learning how to recognize health problems in my community and, more importantly, create potential solutions, I will be able to help my community in a much broader way than through clinical medicine alone. My field experience has also opened up a potential political career path that I didn't previously consider as another way to be able to improve community health.