

# Leah Timbang, MPH

## Concentration in Community Health Sciences

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

Wanting to go into the medical field to serve disadvantaged populations. In order to provide the best and most efficient care for my future patients, I knew that I needed to understand the social, political, and cultural context they were in. So I decide to obtain my master's in public health in order to learn these concepts in an academic setting and gain experience working in these situations.

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

I decided to attend SUNY Downstate because of its dedication to serve vulnerable populations. Because I want to work in an urban setting and with immigrant populations, Brooklyn was the perfect place to learn about the issues affecting these specific communities. Also, SUNY's focus on hand-on training by completing a field experience in addition to a thesis was the type of experience I was interested in gaining.

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

SUNY will prepare you to work well with all the diverse communities of NYC. Utilize the resources provided to students, not only in the school of public health, but for the entire SUNY Downstate campus. Take advantage of the small sized and discussion-based classes. Get to know your professors; they will be able to assist you in learning the relevant material as well as connecting you to other organizations for your future career. It's what you make out of your experience.

### Could you tell us about your fieldwork?

I am completing my field work at NYU Langone Medical Center as an intern in the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health For Asian AmeRicans (REACH FAR) program. I work closely with the project coordinator as she implements a multi-pronged intervention program aimed at lowering the incidence of hypertension among the Asian American communities in New York City. This experience allows me to apply knowledge from my MPH courses of program planning, evaluation, and statistical analyses to real life settings. In particular, I have learned the importance of culturally tailoring interventions for diverse ethnic groups. The work from REACH FAR has been especially important to me since it aligns with my career interests and passion in understanding and alleviating health disparities within Asian communities and it has inspired the topic for my Master's Thesis.

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

I am particularly appreciative of the culturally diverse student body and patient population. I am going on to medical school, and I will use the knowledge I have gained, theoretically and practically, from my academic courses and research experience in order to practice evidence-based medicine and provide culturally sensitive care for my future patients.

