Kavya Anchuri
Master of Health Science candidate, JHSPH

Kavya is a graduate student at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, pursuing a Master of Health Science in the Department of Mental Health. Hailing from Edmonton, Canada, she recently completed a Bachelor of Science in Physiology from McGill University. After learning about principles of health equity and mitigating health disparities in classroom settings, Kavya is excited at the opportunity to observe and participate in health equity in practice at an organization like Health Care Access Maryland, which services thousands of uninsured and underinsured clients to connect them to health insurance, health care, and community resources. She is immensely grateful to have been chosen to partake in a Baltimore Action Project.

Working Group: Addiction & Overdose

Community Partner: Health Care Access Maryland

Project Title: Treatment Connect

Project Description: HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM) collaborates with Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc (BCRI), to operate the Baltimore City Crisis, Information and Referral Line. The project is funded by Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore (BHSB). HCAM provides the "Information & Referral" services of the project. Although a vitally important service, funding and technical assistance are severely lacking. The project will provide technical assistance to improve the collaboration between HCAM and the substance use treatment providers with the goal of achieving on demand treatment and an improved "show rate" for the clients we connect with an appointment. Historically, Health Care Access Maryland’s show rate has hovered between 45 and 30%. The organization will also look into ways to improve the "Information" side of their services so that concerned family, friends and associates receive the most useful information to assist residents in gaining access to treatment.
Lookman Mojeed
Master of Public Health candidate, JHSPH

Lookman Mojeed is a full-time Master of Public Health student at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Lookman is a native New Yorker and a graduate of Syracuse University where he double majored in International Relations and Biochemistry. Upon receiving his undergraduate degree, he served as a community health specialist for the U.S. Peace Corps in the mountainous grassfields of Cameroon from 2013 to 2015. During his service, he worked to strengthen health equity for his geographically isolated community where he founded an HIV support group for those living with HIV in his community and implemented an antiretroviral treatment (ART) delivery system with the assistance of the Ministry of Health to deliver treatment as well as other services such as TB and CD4 testing to this hard to reach support group on a monthly basis. In addition, Lookman coordinated HIV testing outreach events which tested nearly 1,300 people. Previously, he worked as a case manager where he maintained a caseload of 60+ clients with comorbidities including HIV and provided direct services by connecting them to medical care, mental health care, legal assistance, and other resources while trying to identify his clients’ barriers that so often prevented adherence to their care. Lookman is excited to be working with Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition and the Safer Public Syringe Disposal Project. Lookman looks forward to utilizing what he has learned thus far in his academic journey at Hopkins as well as looking to gain so much from in the field in this position by working in a local community-based organization alongside community members and leaders in order to help assist key populations. For leisure, Lookman is learning to make pottery and makes artisan handcraft goods (soap, lotion, candles) as well as enjoys discovering new music, food, fitness activities, and art.

Working Group: Addition & Overdose

Community Partner: Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition

Project Title: Safer Public Syringe Disposal Project

Project Description: Recently, Baltimore City Councilperson Shannon Snead held a hearing of the City Council Public Safety Committee in which community members were invited to speak to how the opioid crisis was affecting their neighborhoods. One woman passionately advocated for the need to address public drug use in her neighborhood, namely the discarded used syringes and drug paraphernalia that litter her neighborhood (near Eager Park). She and her neighbors are concerned about coming into contact with these syringes, and even more concerned with children coming in contact with them. Her neighborhood association had looked into building sharps containers, but do not have the capacity to build/buy them, replace them when full, or conduct the consistent outreach to maintain community cleanliness.

Through informal conversations with a variety of neighborhoods, it seems clear that resources are needed to clean up and keep public spaces clear of public health hazards such as used syringes. There is also the need for a wider understanding of the risks involved and different tools to access safe disposal. Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition believes this could benefit other advocacy efforts by de-stigmatizing both injection drug use and harm reduction public health approaches, as the coalition continues to advocate for safer drug consumption spaces. This project's goal is to hear the concerns of the neighborhoods hardest hit by the opioid epidemic and meet those concerns head-on by offering concrete solutions. By providing tools, strategies and potential solutions to concerned communities, the coalition hopes that will begin a conversation where the coalition can be a conduit for additional community concerns about the impact they see due to the harms associated with drug use and drug policies.
Ty Pan
Master of Science candidate, JHSPH

Tiffany (Ty) Pan is pursuing a Master of Science in the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology. They are hoping to put their background in ecology to use in the more applied field of medical entomology studying mosquitoes and their ability to transmit disease. They are currently doing research on investigating the use of potential viral phages to affect the mosquito biology through the gut microbiome.

With experience with political activism from working with student groups in undergrad and working with communities during their time with the National Park Service, Ty is excited to start to get to know Baltimore better and to start working with communities around the city.

Working Group: Environmental Challenges

Community Partner: Maryland New Directions

Project Title: Transportation Access and Industrial Redevelopment: Connecting residents to employment opportunities in Sparrows Point and beyond

Project Description: This project is focused on the issues of industrial redevelopment, transportation, and employment, and seeks to explore reliable, efficient, and cost-effective means for transporting workers to a remote industrial redevelopment site that is constrained by complex topography.

The project focuses on Tradepoint Atlantic’s redevelopment of Sparrows Point, which will transform the site of the former Bethlehem Steel Mill into a new manufacturing and transshipment hub, providing jobs and opportunity while mitigating past environmental impact. Initial estimates anticipate that the Sparrow’s Point project could create roughly 9,500 permanent jobs in logistics, cargo handling, and manufacturing. Yet, the isolation that once made this site viable for industrial activity, now presents a real barrier to its successful redevelopment. Without viable transportation access, the new jobs will be inaccessible to many low income job seekers in Baltimore City as well as many residents of the South-Eastern Baltimore County communities surrounding the site.

Recognizing this challenge, there is currently a plan to create a new public transportation line from the Johns Hopkins’ Bayview campus to Sparrows Point to address access for Baltimore City residents. Yet, for many residents of South-Eastern Baltimore County, such as the residents of Turner Station, a historically African American community with ties to the former Bethlehem Steel Mill, there is no direct access via public transportation. This project will focus on researching a shuttle, or other model, that would provide a more direct route to these new jobs for residents of South-Eastern Baltimore County, shortening the commute time, and thereby increasing quality of life and retention of employees in the surrounding communities.

*For additional information, please contact SOURCE at SOURCE@jhu.edu or 410-955-3880. SOURCE@jhu.edu