



BA Certificate in

Health Communication



Department of Communication

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER**

Welcome

“ Health communicators have a unique opportunity to provide meaningful input in improving and saving lives. ”

--Rajiv Rimal & Maria Lipinski, *Bulletin of the WHO*

The Undergraduate Certificate in Health Communication benefits learners who are preparing for careers as health communicators and those whose careers require clear, accurate, culturally sensitive and ethical health communication. Weberling McKeever (2014) asked over 300 health communication professionals “what core skills and knowledge are to be the most important for employment in health communication?” Respondents listed campaign planning as the most essential, followed by writing skills, social marketing, presentation skills, patient communication, media relations, and web design/technology. Our coursework offers students the opportunity to learn all of these skills and concludes with an experiential capstone.



Page of **Contents**

● About Health Communication	3
● About the Certificate	5
● Learning Objectives	6
● The Requirements	7
● The Team	8
● Careers	10



About Health Communication

Health communication is a dynamic and growing field dedicated to using and studying methods that influence individual and community decisions that enhance health. Our program emphasizes the *communication* aspects of health communication, with strong training in the theories and practices of the field.

Every sector of the health care industry needs strong health communicators, from clinical practice to public health. The field of health communication grew out of real-world needs and health care expansion in the last part of the twentieth century and is necessary for patient satisfaction. Effective health communication is linked to better health outcomes. High impact health communication can move a community to adopt healthier lifestyles, motivate individuals to take steps to improve their health, change public opinion about health issues, and encourage behavioral changes that promote health. Effective health communication is accurate, readily available, culturally sensitive, credible, evidence-based, balanced, and reliable.

Our Vision

To serve as a gateway for internships and careers related to health, wellness, and medicine, preparing students to accept meaningful roles as health communicators across a variety of settings.

Our Mission

The Department of Communication at CU Denver seeks to cultivate the knowledge and ability to use communication to create a more equitable and humane world.

Learning Objectives

The undergraduate Certificate in Health Communication seeks to impart the knowledge and skills necessary for creating, analyzing, and assessing health communications in a diverse and global world, where health occupies an increasingly prominent portion of our public life.

Specifically, students who complete our program will be able to:

1. Articulate the key assumptions and purposes of major theoretical models of health communication
2. Explain key methods of conducting health communication research
3. Locate and assess current research related to health communication
4. Analyze culturally diverse stakeholder needs for and interests in health messaging
5. Develop a plan for community participation in health message design
6. Employ digital, visual, oral, and textual information to influence audiences about health and wellness
7. Use storytelling to convey health messages across a variety of platforms
8. Design, critique, and assess health communication messages and campaigns utilizing a variety of communication tools
9. Create participatory, process-oriented, systemic health campaigns designed to change health behaviors



Requirements



COMM 2500 (3 credits) Introduction to Health Communication

The health industries are among the fastest growing sectors of the U.S. economy; this class enables students to begin thinking about their health, the health of their communities, and the health of the nation as systems of language and power.



COMM 4575 (3 credits) Designing Health Messages

Examines the roles of communication in the design and impact of health messages/campaigns. Learners will design and assess health communication messages/campaigns in a participatory, process-oriented way using varied communication tools.



COMM 4500 (3 credits) Advanced Health Communication

Examines the role of communication in a wide range of health contexts. Topics include cultural constructions of health and illness, public health communication campaigns, client-provider interactions, telemedicine, community-based health programs and medical journalism.

Requirements continued



Elective (3 credits)

Choose from a wide list of interdisciplinary coursework related to health and wellness. Talk to an advisor about which class would be right for you. Please note students may not count a course toward more than two graduation requirements.



Capstone (3 credits)

Choose the best option for you:

- COMM 3660 Social Media for Social Change (Service Learning)
- COMM 3939 Internship (in Health Communication)
- COMM 4051 Advanced Strategic Communication (Service Learning)
- COMM 4525 Health Communication and Communities (Service Learning)
- COMM 4550 Rhetorics of Medicine and Health (Writing Intensive)



= 15 total credits.

*Students must earn a "B" or better for the course to count toward the certificate.

*Students should apply for the Undergraduate Certificate in Health Communication after the completion of the required courses.

*Certificates are mailed after completion of the semester in which the requirements are met.

Main Team



Dr. Tamara Powell, Certificate Coordinator

PhD, University of California San Diego

Teaches : COMM 4500, COMM 4240

collaboration in healthcare teams, patient/provider interaction, patient/family education, experiential and service learning, qualitative research methods



Dr. Lisa Keranen, Department Chair

PhD, University of Pittsburgh

Teaches: COMM 4550, COMM 4588

rhetorics of health and medicine, virus discourses, health discourses, biotreats, bioethics, experiential and international learning, rhetorical and critical analysis



Dr. Yvette Bueno Olson, Department Advisor

PhD, University of Miami

Teaches : COMM 2500, COMM 4525

mental health, chronic illness social support, health disparities, health communication interventions, effective family communication

Main Team Continued



Dr. Jenna Reno, Anschutz Medical Campus

PhD, University of Kentucky

Teaches: COMM 4575

health campaigns, social media, dissemination and implementation science, health-care services research, HPV vaccine promotion



Dr. Megan Hurson, Internships Director for Communication

PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Teaches : COMM 3939, COMM 3660

media studies, social media, experiential learning and internships, public relations, strategic communication


The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) predicts a 16% growth in the need for health communicators/educators between 2016 and 2026.

+16%

Growing Careers

- patient advocate
- communications director for health organization or advocacy group
- health care marketing professional
- health public relations professional
- health journalist
- pharmaceutical sales
- health project manager
- patient navigator
- digital strategist for health messaging
- health communication officer
- development and fundraising professional
- crisis communication officer
- internal health communications specialist
- patient experience officer
- case manager
- health literacy manager
- health educator
- health campaign professional
- health social media strategist
- health content creator



An illustration of a hand holding a megaphone. The hand is wearing a black suit sleeve and is holding the handle of a red and white megaphone. The megaphone is pointing towards the right, where the text is located. The background is a teal color with a white speech bubble shape containing the text.

“The Health Communication Certificate will help me with my career because I can learn more about educating others about health, as well as promoting health.”

—Katherine Phillips,
COMM and PBHL major



University of Colorado **Denver**



CU IN THE CITY