AARON W. BOHANNON, MPH, CHES
Public Health Professional
WHO AM I?

- Aaron W. Bohannon MPH
- Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES)
- Public Health Professional
- Expatriate
- Parent
- School Governor
- Toastmaster
MY CAREER PATH

• Chose MPH program because I needed a program that could fit in with my then-current work life and help progress my career.

• I have a BSc and experience in Health Education but needed more comfort with epidemiology and data skills in addition to more developed management training and an actual masters to move my career forward.

• I loved the fact that the program fit around my work schedule and also that it was a generalist program; which allowed me to choose the focus I wanted/ needed for my electives.

• I’m pleased to say that my career went from strength to strength during and following the program and I know that the MPH is directly responsible for me finding work in the UK.

• In UK, have consulted, worked for public sector, taught and started writing. I’m currently looking into a Dr.P.H. program.
So, What's up with UK? What are you doing there?

- When did you move there? How long have you been in the UK?
  - I relocated to the UK in Nov 2006 and have been here 8 ½ years.

- Why did you move there? How did you make the decision?
  - I married a Brit and in 2005 we decided that we wanted a change and she was homesick so we set about planning the move.

- Any regrets?
  - No. Things that are good here aren’t so good there and vice versa. No place is perfect and home really is where the heart is. My heart is with my family and I love public health. Do I get homesick? Yes. Do I want to move back? I don’t think so but it’s always an option.

- Any advice on International move/ moving to England?
  - It worked out for us but we relocated without a job, a place to live long term and with a child (and one on the way)

- Anything else?
  - Yes, I am still a US citizen. I have not become a UK citizen but I am now a resident. I have most of the rights of a UK citizen save voting and holding elected office.
US VS UK
PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

• UK/English PH system:
  • UK is Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. England has national and local level
  • All UK has universal health care but there are differences in each of the 4
  • England has NHS (National Health Service)
  • Public Health moved into NHS in 1974 and recently moved back into Local Authority in 2012
  • Non-profit/ Voluntary sector acts as unofficial support in many cases
  • Director of Public Health leads PH departments
  • A national/ regionally led PH Consultant trainee course: FPH
  • PH dept is focused on health improvement and epidemiology. Environmental health, PH nursing and most admin separate

• US PH System:
  • National (CDC, NIH, etc), state (50 variations) and local level
  • Affordable Healthcare Act is seen as a positive move
  • Health Departments (State, County and local, with number variable)
  • Non-profit/ Voluntary sector acts as unofficial support in many cases
  • US system is quite confusing to people outside US (confusing to many inside US)
  • Health Commissioner leads health departments
  • In US, Health Dept. includes admin, epi, PH nursing, environmental health and often health promotion
  • CPH but no other coordinated program aside from MPH

*Both systems are lacking in funding, staffing and are continually at the whim of politicians.
SO, WHAT’S REALLY OUT THERE?

- I assume that everyone in the program may be employed but not all will have experience in public health. I also assume that most everyone in the program wants to pursue a career in public health; regardless of whether you know in what area.

- For everyone in the program who knows what you want to do: that’s fantastic! Keep focused and take advantage of every opportunity that moves you in that direction.

- For everyone else in the program, almost all employers want at a minimum these 5 things:
  - Someone who can communicate (yes, presentations but can you get your point across, facilitate meetings, listen, etc),
  - Someone who can work well with others (an organizational “fit”),
  - Someone who is adaptable (accept now that change is constant and to succeed is to be able to adjust to change and use it to propel you and not as an excuse to hold you back),
  - Someone who can bring in money, manage money, save money or a combination of the three, and
  - Someone who can manage well or be managed well

- That’s a minimum. To move your career forward, I’d add the following:
  - Make sure you do something you’re passionate about,
  - Always be willing to do more than you’re asked,
  - Make sure you maintain your work-life balance. You’re no good to anyone if you’re burnt out.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Know what you know.** Be confident but honest about your skills.

- **Know who you know.** Knowledge is important. Connections and networks are essential. No one is ever successful without others. Whether it’s a recommendation, advice, or a lead on a job.

- **Know where you’ll go.** It’s possible to develop your career anywhere (it really is a global market) but if you value family and would be miserable moving out of your county (or state) then is it worth it?

- **Take advantage of all opportunities.** The program is designed to fit around your work schedule and offers many opportunities. Learn to recognise them and go for it!

- **Critical skills to develop:**
  - Public Speaking ([www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org))
  - Basic computer skills
  - Time management
  - Ability to confidently network. LinkedIn has so much potential but person to person skills are mandatory
  - Develop an appreciation for other points of view (Clinical, non-clinical, non-profit, etc.)
  - Develop at least a basic understanding and appreciation of politics.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Email aaron.bohannon@gmail.com

LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=31928263&trk=nav_responsive_tab_profile_pic