

Reed Kenny
2020 Reflection Blog

I am very grateful for the opportunities the Margolis Center has provided to me. Throughout the past school year and this summer I have had the privilege of working on a research team drafting recommendations for North Carolina on how to best implement the recently published goals outlined in the NC Early Childhood Action Plan. Through hands-on qualitative research, I have learned so much about both how to conduct qualitative research and the policy levers needed to implement state-wide programs. As a Global Health and Public Policy major, I applied to this internship program because I wanted to explore potential career paths that would allow me to combine my two interests. Through my work at the Margolis Center I have learned a tremendous amount about how policy and healthcare are intertwined and how working in this field requires an understanding of how the two sectors work together. This internship has exposed me to the important work the Margolis Center does and the potential career paths I can pursue after graduating.

Due to the pandemic, it is clear to me that the combination of Global Health and Public Policy is more important than ever. While the internship was remote this summer, working at the Margolis Center during this time has been particularly interesting. Through our weekly seminars and hearing about the key research and recommendations the Margolis Center was working on in response to COVID, I was able to gain a better understanding of how the relationship between health and policy works in the real world and the vital importance of this sector. After this experience, I now have an in-depth understanding of the important role of health in policy and how health needs to be at the forefront of policy decisions. Our lives are dependent upon it.

Throughout both my summer internship and the work I have done at the Margolis Center during the school year, I have been able to work with some truly amazing mentors. This past summer I worked specifically with Dr. Rushina Cholera, Dr. Michelle Franklin, and Dr. Gillian Schmidler who all have unique experiences and skills that they have liberally shared with me. Working on an interdisciplinary team with a wide range of skill levels including undergraduate and graduate students, as well as post-docs and faculty members, has taught me what the research process looks like and has allowed me to learn from those with more experience than me. Not only was I able to learn about the research process, this experience has also helped me to develop and enhance my professional and teamwork skills. Our team focused on collaboration throughout the research project which provided me the opportunity to learn from more experienced researchers and what the research process really looks like, and has allowed me to gain real world experience with health policy research. Overall, I have greatly enjoyed my summer internship at the Margolis Center. While this was an atypical summer, this internship allowed me to continue to learn about policy and how it can shape the future of decision making,

and as an added benefit I have really enjoyed getting to know my colleagues and peers. No doubt I will always remember this time uniquely as the Pandemic Summer.