



UNMCSM

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COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Winter Convocation

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

Thursday, December 18, 2025 | 2:00 P.M.

Strauss Performing Arts Center

CEREMONY

Processional

Marshals

Aaron Yoder, PhD	Sharon Medcalf, PhD
Associate Professor, Environmental, Agricultural and Occupational Health	Associate Professor, Epidemiology

Master of Ceremonies

Nicole Kolm-Valdivia, PhD, MPH
Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

Invocation

Chandra Cummins-Zimmerman, Master of Health Administration

Welcome

Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH, MBA
Dean, College of Public Health

Address to the Graduates

Presentation of Student Awards

Recognition of Doctor of Philosophy Graduates

Recognition of Master of Science Graduates

Hooding of Doctor of Public Health Graduates

Hooding of Master of Health Administration Graduates

Hooding of Master of Public Health Program Graduates

Recognition of Certificate Program Graduates

Presentation of Graduates

Welcome to Alumni

Anthony Blake, DrPH
College of Public Health Alumni Council

Benediction

Kellie R. Waugh, Master of Public Health in Health Promotion

Recessional

INVITED SPEAKER

Jo Giles, MA
Executive Director, Women's Fund of Omaha

STUDENT AWARDS

Outstanding Capstone Award
Kellie R. Waugh, Master of Public Health

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS

Summer 2025

Rishad Ahmed

Health Promotion

Beyond the Bruise: Understanding Injury Risk Factors Among Livestock Workers in Cattle Feedyards and Animal Handling Farms and Ranches

Yuanyuan Ji

Biostatistics

Optimal Two-Stage Phase II Bayesian Design

Krishtee Napit*

Epidemiology

Symptom Clusters and their Association with Health-Related Quality of Life in Pediatric Cancer Survivors After Treatment Completion

Maria Jose Sanchez Roman

Health Promotion

Cardiovascular Disease Risk, Risk Factors, And Healthcare Use Among Male Latino Migrant Farmworkers in Nebraska

Natalia Barbeiro Santos

Health Promotion

Analyzing Food Access: An Investigation of Food Insecurity amongst Latinos in Rural Nebraska

Sarah June Tucker*

Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Toxicology

The Characterization of Per- And Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (Pfas) in Nebraska Drinking Water and Human Health Impacts

Runqiu Wang

Biostatistics

Variable Selection with False Discovery Rate Control in High-Dimensional Data

Rachel Ann Wenzl

Health Promotion

Scientist Perspectives: A Correlation Analysis of Translational Science Competencies
Compared with Principles of Engagement and Knowledge Integration

Fall 2025

Suraj Adhikari*

Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Toxicology

Understanding Agricultural Injury Burden and Prevention: Economic Costs, Military
Service Factors, and Safety Training Challenges in the United States

Alexandra Ann Farfalla

Environmental Health, Occupational Health & Toxicology

Exposures, Protections, and Barriers: Advancing
Understanding of Agricultural Worker Health

Apu Chandra Das

Biostatistics

Variable Selection and Prediction Using Machine Learning
Models in High-dimensional Data

MASTER OF SCIENCE STUDENTS

Fall 2025

Katheryn Taylor Evans*

Biostatistics

DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENTS

Summer 2025

Maman Fathim Kamagate

Epidemiology

Analysis of the Clinical, Socioeconomic, and Sociodemographic
Characteristics of Virally Unsuppressed Children Aged 2-14
Living With HIV/AIDS In the Region of Abidjan 2 – Cote D'ivoire

Fall 2025

Runi Mukesh Patel*

Epidemiology

Honors with Highest Distinction

Enhancing Maternal Health Education: A Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Digitally
Integrated Improved Pregnancy Outcomes Program in Burlington County, NJ

Ester Moses Sikare

Epidemiology

Honors with High Distinction

Impact of the GEEKS Program in Reducing Immunization Defaulters and Enhancing
Timely Investigation of Vaccine-Preventable Disease cases in Uganda

MASTER OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

Summer 2025

Rachel Lynn McNerney

Health Administration

Improving Oral Hygiene Practices in a Long-Term Care Setting for Individuals with
Advanced Dementia: A Quality Improvement Initiative

Natalie KaRee McMeen

Health Administration

Marketing in Healthcare: A Scoping Review

Fall 2025

Lani Ngan Bui

Health Administration

Honors with Highest Distinction

Infodemic and Misinformation in Public Health

Chandra Luckie Cummins-Zimmerman

Health Administration

Disparities in Postpartum Maternal Aftercare: A Medicaid Policy Comparison
Between Colorado and Nebraska

Chibuike Ezennaya Nduanya

Health Administration

Honors with Highest Distinction

Outcomes of a Pharmacist-Led Collaborative Drug Therapy Management Clinic on
Type 2 Diabetes Management at a Tribal Health System

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENTS

Summer 2025

Andrew Hills

Emergency Preparedness

An Exploration of Substance Abuse by Healthcare Workers During The COVID-19
Pandemic: A Scoping Review

Jaila J'Nae Randle

Maternal and Child Health

The Impact of Social Media Use on Postpartum Depression

Stephanie Namatama Siyumbwa

Biostatistics

Ocular Surface Squamous Neoplasia (OSSN) Risk Factors in Lusaka Zambia

Sierra Grace Smith

Epidemiology

The Relationship Between Total Serum Cholesterol and Hypertensive Outcomes
Among Women 50-60 Years Old: Findings from the Framingham Heart Study

Cady Anne Walker

Health Promotion

Supporting Autistic College Students' Mental Wellness: A Community Readiness
Model Approach

Samantha Justine Wantz

Environmental and Occupational Health

Program Evaluation of the Zanesville-Muskingum County's Vector Control Program

Kellie Rae Waugh

Health Promotion

Exploring Culture-Based Metacognitive Practices Among the Urban Native American
Elder Population

Fall 2025

Diana Carolina Andrade

Biostatistics

Honors with High Distinction

A Replication Study- Frequent Social Media Use and Experiences with Bullying
Victimization, Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness, and Suicide Risk
Among High School Students- Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States (2023)

Kiersten Astarita

Public Health Administration and Policy

Honors with High Distinction

Evaluating the Impact of Medical Dental Integration on
Periodontal and Diabetic Health Outcomes

Allison Ferro

Epidemiology

Honors with Distinction

The Association Between Daily Periconceptional Folic Acid Intake and Gastroschisis
in The Slone Epidemiology Center Birth Defects Study From 1998-2015

Sarah Nicole Foss

Health Promotion

Honors with High Distinction

The Relationship Between Food Insecurity and Adolescent Mental Health

Holly Margaret Johnson

Maternal and Child Health

Honors with Distinction

Utilization of TRICARE's Childbirth and Breastfeeding Support Demonstration:
Access to Lactation Services Among Military Families

Destinee King

Health Promotion

Honors with Highest Distinction

A Comprehensive Review of Universal Decolonization Strategies to Reduce
Multidrug-Resistant Organism Carriage in Long-Term Care Settings

Brandy Marie Leaver

Maternal and Child Health

The Effectiveness of Interventions in Reducing Sexually Transmitted Infections
Among African American Adolescents: A Comprehensive Literature Review

Macy Jo Lloyd

Emergency Preparedness

Honors with High Distinction

Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response - Region 7

Lauren Josephine Maskin

Health Promotion

Honors with High Distinction

Reducing Sleep Related Infant Death in Douglas County

Skye Marie Medcraft
Environmental and Occupational Health
Politicosis: A Literature Review of the Political Influences
on the Updated Silica Standards

Hind Murad
Maternal and Child Health
Honors with Distinction
Unheard Voices: Mental Health Outcomes of Yazidi Females in the
Aftermath of the Genocide by ISIS: A Literature Review

Emily Ha-Phuong Nguyen
Epidemiology
Honors with Distinction
Maternal Smoking and the Odds of Gastroschisis: A Case-Control Analysis from the
Slone Epidemiology Center Birth Defects Study (1998–2015)

Erin Rose Noga
Health Promotion
Honors with High Distinction
Meal Timing and Metabolic Health: Insights for Military Health Promotion

Nesta Nsembene-Ntoutoume
Environmental and Occupational Health
A Literature Review: Back Injuries Affecting Certified
Nursing Assistants in Nursing Facilities

Nicole Elizabeth Placke
Health Promotion
Honors with Highest Distinction
Creating Actionable, Culturally Appropriate Interventions from Survey
Data: A Community Driven Capstone Pilot Project

Jeremy John Poell
Environmental and Occupational Health
Honors with Distinction
Wildfire Smoke and Public Health: Comparing 2023 Canadian Wildfire Events with
Hospital Admissions in Douglas County, Nebraska

Fizza Raza
Epidemiology

The Association between Elevated Systolic Blood Pressure
and Hospitalized Myocardial Infarction

Quinton George Schnier
Maternal and Child Health
Honors with Highest Distinction

The Impact of Parental Military Separation on Depression and Anxiety Outcomes
Among Children and Adolescents: A Comprehensive Literature Review

Clare Antoinette Schutte
Epidemiology

Impact of Maternal Age on Gastroschisis Cases: A Case-control Study

Caroline Renee Smetanka
Maternal and Child Health
Honors with Highest Distinction

Acceptability of Corticosteroid Use in the Treatment of Infant Bronchiolitis: Utilizing
the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability to Design Research Protocols

Jeanne Marie VanOrsdal*
Maternal and Child Health
Honors with High Distinction

Linking Training to Confidence: A Literature Review on Advancing
Nutrition Environments in Child Care Programs

Amrina Shafi Wani
Environmental and Occupational Health
Honors with Distinction

Herbicide Glyphosate (Roundup) Usage and Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL)
Incidence in Rural vs. Urban Counties: A Population-Based Study in Nebraska

Tempie Louise Wyatt
Epidemiology

Does Younger Maternal Age Increase the Risk of Gastroschisis
Among Infants, Compared to Older Maternal Age Groups

Aisha Zahid
Emergency Preparedness
Honors with Highest Distinction
Evaluating Knowledge of Emergency Procedures for
Top Hazards Among Hospital Staff

CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Summer 2025

Claire Covert-ByBee
Public Health

Paige Miranda Greckel
Maternal and Child Health

Vasisht Karri
Public Health

Eric J. Ramirez Lopez
Public Health

Simeon Sawadogo
Emergency Preparedness

Timothy Wilson
Public Health

Fall 2025

Nikkola Joanna Bales
Emergency Preparedness

Paige Berman
Public Health

Ryan Allen Daly
Emergency Preparedness

Jason Lawrence Hutchison
Public Health

Natalie Liu
Public Health

Margaret Caroline Mills
Biostatistics

Mia Elizabeth Parker
Biostatistics

Matthew Michael Sterns
Emergency Preparedness

Nicole Tuzicka
Public Health

Hannah VanderPutten
Public Health

**Inducted into the Gamma Omicron Chapter of the Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health. Inductees don a salmon-colored stole bearing the symbols of the honor society.*

Academic Honors

To recognize outstanding academic achievement of graduating students in College of Public Health professional degree-seeking programs, honors are awarded to those who have shown special proficiency and have excelled in their studies.

Graduation with honors is conferred in the following way:

The degree with **highest distinction** is awarded to students with a UNMC cumulative grade point average of 4.0.

The degree with **high distinction** is awarded to students with a UNMC cumulative grade point average of 3.85 or above.

The degree with **distinction** is awarded to students with a UNMC cumulative grade point average of 3.75 or above.

Final semester grades are not included and total hours at the College must exceed 30.

Delta Omega Honor Society

Gamma Omicron Chapter of the Delta Omega Honor Society in public health members are inducted to the chapter through a highly selective process that assesses their outstanding performance and devotion to the field. To maintain the credibility of this prestigious society, chapters are limited in the number of members they may induct each year.

