Evaluation of Public Mental Health Programs
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This summer I worked at the Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research at the Psychiatry Department of the Perelman School of Medicine. The Center is a part of a unique public-academic partnership with the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbilities Services (DBHIDS) through the Evaluation Center. My job specifically was to help researchers at the Center measure the effectiveness and quality of behavioral health programs in the public sector and show policymakers within DBHIDS and external stakeholders, such as state policymakers, the research of the Center.

I specifically conducted literature reviews and created data shorts, which present research findings in a short, visually appealing infographic. These shorts highlight the purpose, main findings, and implications of research in order to create better programs to help those with behavioral health disorders. Some of the topics that the shorts have covered include adult adherence to psychotic and antidepressant medication, psychiatric treatment for children with asthma, and the impact of behavioral health service use on jail recidivism. Working on the data shorts in particular has been extremely informative as it has allowed me to understand and breakdown research in order to translate a single point across in a simple format. In addition to making these shorts, I had the privilege of sitting in on meetings and listening to conference calls with the City to better understand the public-academic partnership and the role that Penn plays within it. Also, I had the opportunity to sit in on seminars for community psychiatry fellows in order to learn more about the history and intricacies of behavioral health care within the United States and Philadelphia’s unique system of behavioral health care.

I have learned so much about the behavioral health care system, public health research, and Penn’s unique public-academic partnership with the City through the Center. I have definitely realized how public academic-partnerships can help in evidence-based practices and improving systems of care. Working at the Center has made me more interested in public health research through public-academic partnerships. It has definitely made me more excited about the role of public-academic partnerships in evidence-based medicine and how partnerships like the Center’s can help improve health outcomes in the public sector.