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UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
Executive Programs in Health Policy & Management

# Quarterly Update – Fall 2026

The latest news about ExecHPM students, faculty, and alumni.

## A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we approach the end of the calendar year, our academic year is just getting started. Twenty-nine students started in our MHA program on September 21st. And our brand new EMPH cohort started the program at the end of August. They will be the special cohort that graduates just as Los Angeles will be buzzing with the 2028 Olympics. It's hard to believe that our very own UCLA campus will be transformed into Olympic Village. Exciting times ahead.

Our second-year EMPH students started their Applied Consulting Projects over the summer, working to address issues on transitional housing, youth programming, and mental health services facing organizations including CRI-Help, Mass Liberation, UCLA Health, ROWI Teen & Parent Wellness Centers, and city governments including South Pasadena and Carson. They submitted their project proposals in the beginning of August, and we are looking forward to Session 7 on Friday, November 20, where they will present their findings during class to both cohorts. If anyone is interested in attending, please reach out. I'd also like to express our appreciation for the preceptors who have been working with our students. Thank you to Michael Whittiker, Ryan Welter, Melissa Snyder, Joelle Kirtley, Phil Loos, Brandon Fernandez, and Erin Quinn.

We are officially underway with the EMPH admissions season for the Fall 2027. The UCLA Graduate Application Portal is now open. Referrals are appreciated, and we would welcome candidates from within your network.

Congratulations to our MHA students who just completed their coursework for their MHA degrees this Summer Quarter. This is our first group of students who will be participating in Commencement 2027 next June! It will come as no surprise that planning is already underway for this much celebrated event.

Don't miss our Faculty Spotlights on Dr. Julie Elginer and Dr. Sophie Snyder this quarter. We are immensely grateful for their contributions to the Executive Programs.

We welcomed Dr. Kaveh Houshmand Azad to our faculty in August. He's teaching HPM 416 Improving Systems in the EMPH program. Currently the Associate Administrator of the Keck Operating System and Continuous Improvement at Keck Medicine of USC, Dr. Houshmand Azad has more than 25 years of experience improving systems across large and complex health organizations.

I hope everyone has a productive fall quarter. Very much looking forward to connecting with you again in the new year with our Winter Newsletter in January. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to me anytime. I love hearing from all of you who make up our wonderful UCLA Executive HPM community.

All my best,

Kyle Sullivan, MSW
Executive Director, Executive Programs in HPM

# IMPORTANT DATES

### Info Sessions

Please spread the word about our upcoming online Info Sessions. It's a great opportunity for interested applicants to learn about our programs in a live Q&A that covers program curriculum, admissions requirements, and application materials.

### EMPH Info Sessions:

November 18, 12pm PT; December 7, 5pm PT REGISTER

### MHA Info Session:

October 14, 12pm PT REGISTER

### EMPH Priority Review:

February 1st. Start your application on the UCLA Graduate Application Portal.

### EMPH Fall Quarter 2026:

August 28, 2026 – November 21, 2026

### EMPH Winter Quarter 2027:

December 4, 2026 – March 6, 2027

### MHA Fall Quarter 2026:

September 21, 2026 – December 11, 2026

### MHA Fall Quarter 2026 Immersion:

October 22-24, 2026

Reminder: MHA Immersion I and II are required courses in the curriculum. You must enroll in the course to participate.

### MHA Winter Quarter 2027:

January 4, 2027 – March 19, 2027

Application Deadline is November 16, 2026. APPLY NOW

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**Health Policy and Management Alumni Mixer: October 23, 2026**

UCLA HPM students, alumni, and faculty are invited to the UCLA University Club on Friday, October 23, 5pm-8pm, for an evening of community at the annual UCLA Health Policy and Management Alumni Mixer, hosted by HPMSA. Appetizers and refreshments will be provided. Please reach out to hpmsasocial@gmail.com with any questions. RSVP by October 19th.

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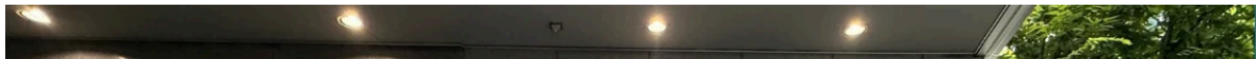

**Japan International Health Scholar Intensive: An Immersive Healthcare Field Study in Tokyo**

Spend 12 immersive days in Tokyo, June 17-28, 2027, comparing the U.S. and Japanese healthcare systems through graduate-level learning, guided educational visits to clinical sites, and direct dialogue with healthcare leaders. Learn more.

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**Paul Torrens Health Forum: October 14, 2026**

Please join MHA Program Director and UCLA Center for Healthcare Management Director Dr. Laura Erskine for the next Paul Torrens Health Forum:
“Chasing Cures: Unpacking Moonshot Medicine"
Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 5:30pm PT
Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center - Tamkin Auditorium*
REGISTER

*This is an in-person event. Recordings of the Health Forums are available several days after the event on UCLA Fielding’s YouTube page.

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**UCLA Center for Healthcare Management Case Competition 2027**

Registration for the UCLA Center for Healthcare Management Case Competition closes Monday, November 9, 2026. Semi-final and Final presentations: Friday, January 29, 2027. Learn more.

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## FACULTY

The Executive Programs in Health Policy and Management draw on the distinguished faculty, programs, and academics of the nationally renowned UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Courses are taught by leading practitioners and researchers in the field of public health, health policy, and healthcare management, as well as faculty from UCLA’s other graduate schools and management-related fields. Their expertise spans clinical practice, applied research, policy analysis, entrepreneurship, and consultation at the local, national, and international level.

**EMPH FACULTY – FALL QUARTER 2026**

EMPH First Year

**Shira Shafir, PhD, MPH**: Principles of Public Health (PUB HLT C201)

**Burt Cowgill, PhD**: Health Systems Organization and Financing (HPM 200A)

**Kaveh Houshmand Azad, Ed.D**: Improving Systems (HPM 416)

EMPH Second Year

**Sophie Snyder, PhD**: Data Analytics – Identifying, Collecting, and Analyzing Data in Healthcare (HPM 441)

**Mike Galper, MPH, CPA**: Summer Applied Project Review (HPM 400)

**Linda Horner, MBA**: Healthcare Financial Management (HPM 436)

**Julie Elginer, DrPH, MBA**: Building Advocacy Skills – Reproductive Health Focus (HPM M434)

**MHA FACULTY – FALL QUARTER 2026**

**Shira Shafir, PhD, MPH**: Fundamentals of Public Health (PUBHLT 201)

**Sangeeta Ahluwalia, PhD**: Healthcare Organization & Financing (HLTADM 401)

**Asya Jones, MS:** Statistics for Health Management Decision-Making (HLTH 412)

**Nahal Sabrkhani, MPH**: Management & Organizational Behavior in Health Systems (HLTADM 402)

**Sandra Potthoff, PhD**: Healthcare Operations Management (HLTADM 413)

**Jean Balgrosky, PhD**: Healthcare Information Systems & Technology (HLTADM 403)

**Mike Galper, MPH, CPA**: Healthcare Financial Accounting (HLTADM 414)

**Ridhima Iyer, MD, MPH**: Healthcare Strategy (HLTADM 404)

**April Kelly, Ed.D., RN, MAOM/MHA**: Healthcare Financial Management (HLTADM 415)

**Lindsay Williams:** Leadership & Ethics (HLTADM 405)

**Kelly Watson, MHA, RN**: Quality Improvement & Performance Excellence (HLTADM 416)

**Hannah Reischl, MPH**: Data Analytics & Visualization (HLTADM 417)

**Dhruv Khurana, PhD**: Capstone Project (HLTADM 400)

**Julie Elginer, DrPH, MBA**: Healthcare Marketing (HLTADM 406)

**Jun Chu, PhD**: Health Reform - Policy & Implementation (HLTADM 418)

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**Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Julie Elginer**

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**Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Kaveh Houshmand Azad**

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**Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Sophie Snyder**

# EXECUTIVE MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (EMPH) PROGRAM

**EMPH Program Director: Dr. Isomi Miake-Lye**

UCLA Fielding School of Public Health's Executive MPH (EMPH) is a two-year graduate degree program. Students attend classes twice a month on Friday and Saturday, in person on the UCLA campus. Tailored for professionals invested in their careers, the EMPH program provides students the opportunity to work full-time while pursuing a rigorous graduate program.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are conferred a fully accredited Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with an emphasis in Health Policy and Management.

**Introducing the EMPH Class of 2028**

UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Executive Programs in Health Policy & Management

[EMPH Student Spotlight: Miller Finkelstein]

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[EMPH Student Spotlight: Juliane Martinez]

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## MASTER OF HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION (MHA)

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**MHA Program Director:** [Dr. Laura Erskine]

UCLA's online MHA is a flexible graduate degree program. Graduates are conferred a fully accredited Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) degree. Featuring two on-campus immersions and a capstone project, this flexible program offers most course content asynchronously, with the freedom to adjust the number of courses taken each quarter.

**Welcome, New Fall Quarter 2026 MHA Candidates**

One of the highlights of UCLA's online MHA is that students can begin their graduate studies any quarter throughout the year. Congratulations to the following MHA candidates who were recently admitted into the program and began classes this Fall Quarter on September 21, 2026: Bedig Assadourian, Courtney Ballotti, Nicole Brumfield, Charlie Caballero, Colleen Capistrano, Erin Choi, Razi Corne, Marisol Davis, Katherine Do, Katy Downey, Pedro Garay Marin, Antonio Garcia, Charles Golden, June Han, Elizabeth Ignacio, Sahil Joshi, Morgan Maes, Elijah Martinez, Lily Pahlow, Darpan Patel, Ben Podell, Karie Robinson, Sean Salem, Raffi Salibian, Erene Shin, Karla Tovar Aguilar, Malatthy Umashankar, Tim Vints, and Irene Winkler. We look forward to welcoming you to campus at an upcoming Immersion.

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**MHA Student Spotlight: Karla Tovar Aguilar**

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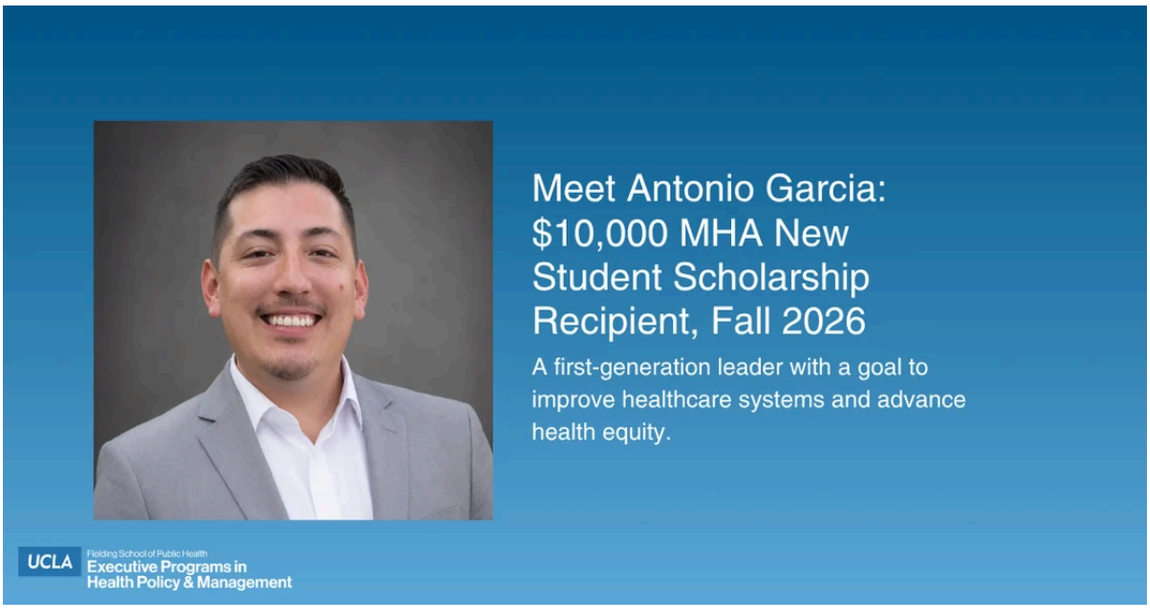


**MHA Student Spotlight: Antonio Garcia**

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**MHA Student Spotlight: Charlie Caballero**

**Summer 2026 MHA Capstone: Audrey Saada, Henry Phan, and Joleen Cambe Place First**

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**Summer 2026 MHA Immersion Recap**

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**Summer Quarter 2026 MHA Graduates**

Congratulations to the following students just completed their coursework for their MHA degrees, our first group of students who will be participating in Commencement 2027 next June: Zachary Ambroziak, Deanne Do, Stephanie Estrada, AnnaRose Etra, Shawn Jacob, Adrianna Lawrence, Mineh Markarian, Julianne Neuweiler, Amy Ngo, Gisela Nieto Loa, Rosie Oganesian, Karina Ortiz, Francis Pelayo, Jazmin Ramos, Brigith Rivas, Crystal Salinas, Vanessza Sebok, Jenevieve Segura, Joyce Tong, and Erin Warren. Go Bruins!

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# ALUMNI UPDATES

**The UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Executive Programs in Health Policy and Management Alumni Network** includes over 1,000 professionals committed to making a difference in the field of public health. Nothing brings us more joy than sharing your important work with our community. Please notify us of your career updates for an opportunity to be featured. Just send us an email at exechpm@ucla.edu or feel free to DM or tag us on LinkedIn.

**EMPH Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Neeraj Wadhwa Publishes Scientific Research**

**EMPH Alumni Spotlight: Kyle Horne Inducted Into UCLA Fielding School Hall of Fame**

## EMPH Alumni Career Updates

**Emily Brown, MPH** (EMPH 2026) has been promoted to Senior CLS Specialist,

Ambulatory Point of Care at UCLA Health.

**Chris Chin, MPH** (EMPH 2021) is now the Director of Applications at MemorialCare.

**Mikele (Bunce) Epperly, PhD, MPH** (EMPH 2003) is now Vice President, Brain Health Transformation at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB).

**Sofia Fernando, RN** (EMPH Candidate) is now a seasonal Immunization Nurse at CVS Health in addition to being a Clinical Registered Nurse in the Nethercutt Emergency Department at UCLA Health.

**Tanya Ferrer, MPH** (EMPH 2021) has been promoted to Associate Director of Clinical Support Services at Optum.

**Kyle Horne, MPH, CNP** (EMPH 2022) has been inducted into the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Hall of Fame, honored with the 2026 Emerging Professional Award.

**Ayesha Lee, MPH** (EMPH 2024) started a new position as Consultant IV Care Experience at Kaiser Permanente.

**Jonathan Martinez Vargas, MPH** (EMPH 2020) is now an MBA candidate at UCLA Anderson in the FEMBA program, with an expected graduation in 2029.

**Maite Medina, MPH, RN** (EMPH 2026) started a new position at Cedars-Sinai Medical Network as Quality Improvement Coordinator RN.

**Negar (Sapir) Scimeca, MPH** (EMPH 2008) is now a Program Analyst at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

**Neeraj Wadhwa, DrPH, MBA, MPH** (EMPH 2019) recently published a scientific article, “Fentanyl Overdose Harm Reduction Intervention: A Pretest-Posttest Study Among High School Students in Southern California,” in the journal *Health Promotion Practice*.

**Stephanie Wally, MPH** (EMPH 2019) has completed the Advanced Management Program 2.0, a leadership development experience through Kaiser Permanente at the USC Marshall School of Business.

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## Alumni Spotlight: Mina Jasovic Ognajnovic (MHA ’23) Publishes Research On Lactation Access in the NICU

Her latest research, “Improving Access to Hospital-Grade Breast Pumps for Women with Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit,” was published in journal *Breastfeeding Medicine*.

UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Executive Programs in Health Policy & Management

**MHA Alumni Spotlight: Mina Jasovic Ognajnovic Publishes Research On Lactation Access in the NICU**

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## MHA Alumni Career Updates

**Todd Alba, Jr., MHA** (MHA 2026) started in a new role at California Air National Guard as CBRNE Defense Specialist (163rd Attack Wing).

**Zachary Ambroziak, MHA** (MHA 2026) has been promoted to Senior Consultant - Payer Performance at UnitedHealth Group.

**Fady Bekheet, PharmD, MBA, MHA** (MHA 2024) is now the Home Infusion Pharmacy Manager at BayCare Health System.

**Jade Bermudez, LVN** (MHA Candidate) has started a new position as Case Management Compliance Specialist (Epic Implementation Lead) at PIH Health.

**Jasmene del Aguila, MHA** (MHA 2026) started a new position as a Program Manager with Central California Asthma Collaborative.

**Deanne Do, MHA** (MHA 2026) has been promoted to Director of Operations, Growth & Strategic Initiatives at The How Clinic.

**Mina Jasovic Ognajnovic, MHA** (MHA 2023) recently published a research article, “Improving Access to Hospital-Grade Breast Pumps for Women with Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit,” in the journal *Breastfeeding Medicine*.

**John Jones, MHA, RN** (MHA 2025) is now Quality Coordinator - Medical ICU at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

**Karisa Kanachki, MHA** (MHA 2025) is now the Chief of Clinical Quality, 15th Medical Group at Defense Health Agency.

**Madison Knight** (MHA Candidate) has a new position as Product Operations Lead at Junction.

**Shanna Lee** (MHA Candidate) started a new position as Client Intake Coordinator/Practice Administrator at Ivy Creek Therapy.

**Nallely Leyva-Diaz** (MHA Candidate) is now a Certified Phlebotomy Technician at Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics.

**Parfait Migisha, MBA, MHA, RN** (MHA 2025) is now a Quality Nurse Consultant at Kaiser Permanente.

**Saumya Nigam, MHA** (MHA 2025) is now an Instructor at University of the People.

**Summer Sanchez, MHA** (MHA 2026) is now a Channel Sales Representative at MiniMed.

**Pablo Santos** (MHA Candidate) started a new position as an Administrative Intern at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) CHAMP program.

**Nari Shin, MHA** (MHA 2026) is now a Master's Intern in Southern California Permanente Medical Group (SCPMG) Quality & Strategy, at Kaiser Permanente.

**Elizabeth Tapia, MPH** (MHA Candidate) is now a Health Policy Advisor for Congressman Raul Ruiz, M.D. (CA-25) with the U.S. House of Representatives.

*Please notify us of your professional updates for an opportunity to be featured. Email us at exechpm@ucla.edu or tag us on LinkedIn.*

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*U.S. News & World Report* has announced their 2026 best college rankings, and we are proud to say that **UCLA is the #1 public university**. We are in the top 10 for best schools of public health and also ranked in the top 10 for best health policy and management programs.

*Follow us on LinkedIn to stay engaged with UCLA's Executive Programs in Health Policy and Management and our community.*

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