

Opal Vanessa Buchthal, DrPH



Academic Degrees and Traineeships

DrPH (Community-Based and Translational Medicine) University of Hawaii at Manoa

MSPH (Behavioral Science and Health Promotion), University of California at Los Angeles

BA, Anthropology, San Francisco State University

NIH Pre-Doctoral Traineeship in Cancer Control, UCLA Johnson Comprehensive Cancer Center

US Public Health Service Traineeship

Experience

Dr. Buchthal is a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Undergraduate Public Health Program at UH Manoa, and has been an Assistant Professor of Social/Behavioral Health within the Office of Public Health Studies at UH Mānoa for the past four years. She currently teaches the final capstone course for all undergraduate public health majors, and has previously taught courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level in Health Promotion, Program Evaluation, the Doctoral Teaching Practicum, chaired the Departmental Evaluation Committee and served on the department's CEPH Re-accreditation committee. For the past three years she has been the Principal Investigator for a large state contract providing evaluation services to the Hawai'i Department of Health's Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division. She has worked with a variety of Hawai'i community agencies on formative research and evaluation for nutrition interventions in low-income communities, and is a member of the Hawai'i DOH's Chronic Disease GIS workgroup. She has worked on evaluation and program planning with Hawai'i SNAP-Ed program since 2008, was part of a national group of researchers recruited by the USDA to assist in the development of the national SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, and served for several years on the Evaluation Task Force for the National Association of State SNAP-Ed Administrators.

Dr. Buchthal's research focuses on assessing policy, systems and environmental factors affecting food insecurity and obesity-related behavior in low-income neighborhoods. Current research projects include network analyses of partnership patterns in community-based participatory programs, spatial analysis/GIS mapping of nutrition resources in Hawaii's low-income neighborhoods, and the evaluation of community-based food systems interventions. She also currently works with faculty in the Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene on a research project examining student veterans' experiences and needs in transitioning from military service into Bachelors' degree programs at the University of Hawai'i.