



## **Wub Belay, M.D.**

*M.P.H. Candidate, Global Health Track*

[wubishet.l.belay@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:wubishet.l.belay@vanderbilt.edu)

### **Practicum Site:**

Tennessee Department of Health  
Nashville, TN

### **Practicum Site Supervisor:**

Jackie Johnson, M.P.A.

## **Health Disparities and Unequal Treatment: Developing a training curriculum for the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH)**

**Introduction:** Health disparities and unequal treatment are long-standing public health problems in the United States of America. Understanding the historical evolution of racial and ethnic health disparity and unequal treatment is a crucial skill for public health workers (HWs). Training HWs on health equity, cultural competence, and implicit bias is one way of capacity building in the race to reduce health disparity and inequality. This practicum aimed to develop a curriculum and a webinar on health disparity and unequal treatment which will be used by the TDH, Family Health, and Wellness (FHW) division.

**Methods:** An extensive literature review on the history of racial and ethnic health disparities was conducted. Important historical milestones on racial and ethnic health disparities were identified. The historical evolution of health disparities and unequal treatment were carefully summarized. Modules on history of unequal treatment, racial and ethnic data collection and classification, the status of unequal treatment, refugee and immigrant health issues, minorities in health training and workforce, and strategic solutions were developed. The PowerPoint slides were changed into a 45-minute long webinar format. Pre and post-test questions are prepared to assess pre- and post-training knowledge of the FHW staff.

**Results:** A 45-minute long training webinar has been developed. A curriculum containing all the important topics and areas of focus is outlined in detail. References from the current literature are collected and stored. Pre and Post-test questions are designed. All members of the FHW division members at the TDH will be trained using these materials.

**Conclusions:** Improving the competency of HWs is vital to reduce health disparities and unequal treatment. Standardized curricula and training modules play a major role in filling the knowledge gap. Future efforts on expanding this type of training are needed to eradicate health inequality at all levels.