

2025 - 2026

IPHA Student Advisory Group

Bijal Patel

Bijal Patel is a PhD student in Epidemiology at Indiana University School of Public Health in Indianapolis. Her research focuses on cancer, physical activity, sports, and other chronic conditions, with a recent focus on the genetic and molecular aspects of cancer using genomic data analysis. Driven by a passion for interdisciplinary collaboration, Bijal strives to create meaningful community impact through her work.



Funmilayo Abudu

Funmilayo Abudu is a doctoral student in Public Health at Purdue University. Her research interests focus on sleep and mental health in underserved populations. Funmilayo is interested in assessing sleep disparities in vulnerable populations, developing and implementing evidence-based interventions to address these disparities, and exploring the role of sleep in preventing chronic diseases and mental disorders. Funmilayo is passionate about community impact.



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Jenny Sheets

Jenny Sheets is a 2023 graduate from Indiana University Kokomo with a degree in Public Administration and Healthcare Management. She is currently finishing up a second undergraduate degree in nursing. In Fall 2025, Jenny is starting at the IU Fairbanks School of Public Health, working towards a Master's degree in Healthcare Administration. Jenny has served on the Student Advisory Group since its inception in 2022, and she continues to serve on the group because it allows her to collaborate with students from across Indiana in a wide variety of degree programs.



Jessica Kaur

Jessica Kaur is a first-year Exploratory student at Butler University. Recently, she has gained an interest in public health and took a class over it. Jessica absolutely loved that course, and now she is actively looking for opportunities to get more involved in the public health space! Some of Jessica's hobbies are watching sunsets, listening to music, traveling, and going on long drives. She is looking forward to her first year with the IPHA Student Advisory Group!

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Jonathan Parackattu

Jonathan Parackattu is a sophomore at Wabash College. He is majoring in Biochemistry with a minor in either Global Health or Spanish. After my time at Wabash, he plans on going to medical school to pursue a career in healthcare. Outside of classes, Jonathan enjoys singing, spike ball, fashion, and volunteer work. He is excited to begin collaborating with and learning from the other members of the SAG and the IPHA!



Kelly Cortez

Kelly Cortez is a graduate student at Indiana University Bloomington pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) with concentrations in Behavioral, Social, and Community Health and Epidemiology. Her work focuses on reducing health disparities among vulnerable populations, with a particular interest in obesity prevention, chronic disease management, and caregiver support. As a first-generation Latina, she is passionate about promoting health equity through research, community-based programs, and advocacy for underserved communities across the United States.

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Lucy Cummings

Lucy Cummings is a Master of Public Health candidate in Family and Community Health at Purdue University. Lucy has a passion for Health Education and Sexual Health. She currently works in Dr. Randy Hubach's Sexual Health Research Lab. She hopes to provide future generations with the tools they need to create healthy habits for their overall and sexual health. Her passion for promoting informed, healthy choices is rooted in her commitment to advancing public health and giving individuals the confidence to take charge of their own health.



Maria Klein

A lifelong Hoosier, Maria earned a BS in youth and family services at Purdue, an MPA in public policy at IUPUI, and is currently a PhD student in epidemiology at IU Bloomington. Her prior work experience includes promoting healthy youth development at the Indiana Youth Institute and Camp Challenge Indiana.

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McKenzi Bowen

McKenzi Bowen is a graduate student at Indiana University Bloomington in the M.S. of Athletic Training program. Her future goal is to become a professor in an athletic training master's program. A fun fact about McKenzie is that she has a pet chinchilla named Apollo. McKenzie looks forward to being a part of and contributing to IPHA and the public health of Indiana.



Russell Kleiner

Russell Kleiner is a Master of Public Health Candidate in Biostatistics at Purdue University. His enduring passion for emergency medicine and prehospital care has fueled his dedication to public health and medicine. Russ's lifelong commitment to patient centered care drives his aspirations to become both an ER and EMS Physician. By integrating his EMS and MPH training, Russ aims to improve emergency care accessibility and health equity in local communities.



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Sope Koya

Sope Koya is a current senior at IU Bloomington studying Community Health with minors in Spanish and Caribbean and Latin American Studies. Sope has always had an interest in public health and healthcare and is excited to continue with the Student Advisory Group to advocate for equity and diversity in both fields. After graduation, Sope looks forward to working in healthcare as a CNA and applying to the Fulbright Scholar program.



Tenzin Desel

Tenzin Desel is a Master of Public Health (MPH) student in Epidemiology with a second concentration in Community Health at Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington. A recipient of the prestigious Tibetan Scholarship Program, he is passionate about health equity and bridging culturally rooted healing practices with modern public health. He currently contributes to the Hoosier Sports Research Team and brings years of research and community advocacy experience to his work in Indiana and beyond.