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Practicum Site: Tennessee Equality Project

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Expanding Education with Tennessee Equality Project



Introduction: This practicum experience was completed during the Tennessee General Assembly 113th session with Tennessee Equality Project adapting and adopting new projects. The goal for this section of the practicum was to nurture and expand the education management role with Tennessee Equality Project (TEP) beyond lobbying and media response and rather focus on direct engagement and public education.

Methods: To means to accomplish this objective includes writing talking points and educational material for advocates and lawmakers by summarizing research, in addition to meeting with people and stakeholders to produce the best instruments. The second objective was to use different forms of media to increase understanding of the laws harming gender-affirming care with the goal of increasing public engagement. This was done by being active in written and recorded media on both statewide and national levels to reach a variety of audiences and create online content via multiple social media platforms such as TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The final objective was to craft classes on transgender health and legislative advocacy by identifying the largest knowledge gap, particularly amongst healthcare providers, and implementing a curriculum to further education opportunities.

Results: Although legislative impact seemed minimal, outcomes included greater engagement from community members and other organizations with TEP. TEP became an official partner with multiple state and national organizations through classroom education, consultation, and engagement. TEP was involved in over 30 interviews in one session, with 5 being live hour-long engagements and 4 being in national publications. TEP's talking points were also quoted in the original injunction of Tennessee Senate Bill 1 which blocked access to gender-affirming care for minors. Challenges involved rapid changes in the validity of certain content in education, engagement, and time management.

Conclusions: Overall, this practicum allowed for a better connection between public health communication, engagement, and political advocacy while balancing partisan ideologies and rapid changes in content.