Monash University
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

2017 Summer Vacation Program
Report

The Summer Vacation Program has been an insightful immersion into the world of public health. In the 4 weeks at the SPHPM I am grateful to have been able to meet fantastic people and gain a wide range of skills; from EndNote to Medline to navigating federal legislature.

Under the supervision of Associate Professor Ken Harvey, I delved into the issues and shortcomings of the current regulatory framework of complementary medicines. The current lack of consumer protection is alarming and requires a significant effort in order to rectify. Through extensive research, meeting with practitioner's, submitting formal complaints, writing an article for Croakey, and preparing senate enquiry submissions I have experienced a plethora of different ways to engage with public health.

However, the culmination of the 4 weeks was the opportunity to present alongside fellow student Amy Vaux and Prof. Ken Harvey at a Civil Society Hearing regarding the currently debated Therapeutic Goods Amendment Bill. We were able to engage with major stakeholders including consumer advocates and policy experts who are at the forefront of the push for better consumer protection measures. It was an insightful experience that demonstrated the intersection of politics and medicines that is public health and highlighted the importance of health advocacy.

Prof. Harvey was an inspiring mentor whose dedication, work ethic and infectious enthusiasm made the 4 weeks both engaging and enjoyable. Outside of the work focused on regulatory medicine, the numerous seminars and other learning opportunities at the SPHPM were also invaluable.

Michael Dong