

Luis Eduardo Torrens, MPH

2012 HSHPS/HRSA Fellow, 2011 HSHPS/FRONTline Fellow
Public Health Associate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Luis Eduardo Torrens spent his summer of 2009 at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine as an undergraduate intern researching comorbidity effects of HIV/ Obesity with Hepatitis C, an unlikely choice for a history major.

“I always knew I wanted to do health but I was unsure,” said Luis, 26.

The internship solidified his interest in public health (“I really enjoyed the problem solving component of the field”), but a week after completing the internship Luis had to leave for Florence, Italy, as part of a study abroad program for his history major. He was gone for four months but not even Florence could convince him to stick to history.

In 2011, Luis began his public health career as a student at the CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter College. While at Hunter he parlayed his early internship at Albert Einstein into a full-time research position. It was at Albert Einstein, an HSHPS member school, where he found out about the HSHPS Graduate Fellowship Training Program (GFTP). He participated in two HSHPS programs, the 2011 FRONTline Border Health Research Training Program in Tucson, Ariz., and the 2012 HRSA Fellowship Program in Rockville, Md.

Working in Arizona along the U.S.-Mexico border was vastly different than any experience he had working mostly in urban areas. It exposed him to how public health research could be used as a tool for advocacy.

“The nature of the topic was so political. No one really wanted to tackle that,” said Luis. “We advocated for a population [undocumented border crossers] no one, frankly, cared about.”

He and fellow HSHPS FRONTline trainee, Zoila Sanchez, documented their research, day-to-day activities, and reflections on their time in Arizona through a joint blog they updated as they went through the program.

Since July 2013, Luis has been working as a public health associate for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the New Jersey Department of Health as a CDC field staff. He is currently implementing a statewide health and wellbeing assessment development plan to connect individuals who continue to experience health needs as a consequence of Hurricane Sandy to health and wellbeing long term care services. He is also helping the department establish public health coalitions focused on strengthening the public health emergency preparedness structure in the state.

He credits HSHPS for leading him to his position at the CDC. As a HRSA fellow, Luis was able to attend a

Health and Human Services forum on workforce environment where he was exposed to Pathways, a program focused on helping students and recent graduates seeking federal careers.

In five to 10 years, Luis sees himself still working on a federal level but holding a more leadership position.

"I want to continue to make a tangible impact on improving public health services around the country and making sure it's always done in a culturally competent way if it's applicable," said Luis. "The federal government holds the most power in making that."

This month Luis started Talk Public Health, a blog for young public health professionals. He hopes it will be a space for individuals to share their thoughts on today's public health issues, and develop a strong public health network.

"There is a great demand for public health thinkers. Public health is an interdisciplinary field and today's biggest health issues do not have traditional medical cures - they require population based health approaches."

*You can read Luis and Zoila's blog at <http://2011frontline.blogspot.com>.
Follow Luis at Talk Public Health at <http://talkpublichealth.wordpress.com>.*