

# **The Hanoi School of Public Health**

## **A Brief History**



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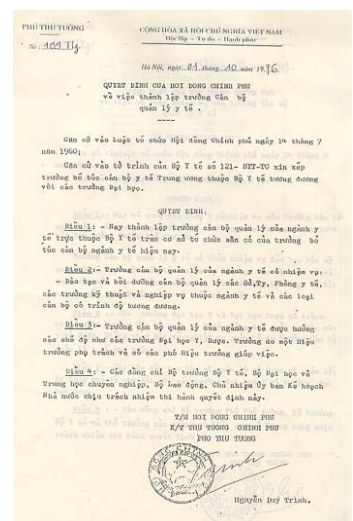
In 20<sup>th</sup> August 1948 the National School for Assistant Physicians was originally founded according to the decree promulgated by the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During the war of national liberation, the School was relocated from Ha Nam to Thanh Hoa and then to a base in Viet Bac. Founded four years after the National School for Assistant Physicians, the Secondary School of Pharmacy was established in Thanh Hoa and relocated to the Bac Viet base as well. Together the two schools trained hundreds of assistant physicians and pharmacists, meeting the health care demands of the people and serving the war of resistance. From this site, 275 assistant physicians and 61 pharmacists were the main force behind the development of health facilities that extended to even the remote areas of northern Vietnam. Many of these cadres went on to become health managers throughout Vietnam. One of them, Doctor Dang Hoi Xuan, even became Minister of Health. After the war, the two schools were combined and the National School for Health Personnel was founded to meet the needs of the nation's development. The mission of the School was expanded to train assistant physicians, pharmacists and dentists and to give supplementary technical training for other health staff. Many of its graduates eventually became heads of provincial health departments during the 1960's and 1970's.

Along with continuing the training work that was started by the previous schools, the National School also offered formal full-time medical and pharmacy courses on a larger scale. The curricula were constantly improved and updated for each stage of the nation's development. The School also offered supplementary courses to help nurses and prescription clerks to obtain higher degrees. Due to the work of the School, after only a short time most of the lowland and mountainous districts in the North had physicians who were able to offer health services that included preventive medicine and contributed greatly to malaria prevention, trachoma reduction, diarrhea prevention, health promotion, environmental sanitation, traditional medicine usage, etc.

From 1956 to 1975, the School offered supplementary courses to hundreds of physicians and trained thousands of physicians and pharmacists, including those from the Democratic Republic of Lao.

During the 1960's and 70's, together with other medical and pharmacy schools, the National School provided the country with a large number of health care staff of different levels. The diversified nature of the health care system requires that health managers be trained well. It is also necessary that health managers who have been in the field a long time be re-trained and provided updated information to adjust their skills to the developmental needs of the nation.

Because of the acute needs of the health system of Vietnam at this time was for health management, the School's name was changed to the School of Health Management was official founded based on the National School for Health Personnel by the Prime Minister on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1976 to assume the following missions:



### **Training:**

- To train doctors and pharmacists in the field of health management
- To offer language training courses to health staff
- To enhance the management capacity of health staff working in management positions.
- To compile and edit materials for training and self-study.

### **Research Focus:**

- Social medicine and health organization
- Develop experimental health models

The School managed to accomplish the following activities from 1976 to 1995:

- Management training for doctors and pharmacists working in key management positions – many of the 446 graduates are managers of pharmaceutical companies and directors of provincial health departments
- Postgraduate training programs of CKI and CKII (first and second specialization degrees) in medical sociology and public health. Most of the graduates (approximately 2000) are key staff members and leaders at various departments and units of the Ministry of Health and other health-related institutions.
- Offering short re-training courses on health management such as Hospital Directorship, Chief Nurse, Management in Traditional Medicine, Pharmacy Management, Administrative Management, etc., to over 8341 students, including students from Laos and Cambodia.
- Foreign language training that initially included English, French, Russian, German, Hungarian and Bulgarian. Later, the training was re-focused to include only English and French. Within 20 years, the School has trained more than 7000 staff with intermediate and advanced foreign language skill.



*Prof. Le Hung Lam, former dean, the 4<sup>th</sup> from the left in the “workshop on the development of postgraduate curriculum in public health”*

The names “Hanoi School of Public Health” (in English) and “Ecole de Santé Publique” (in French) were first registered with WHO by the then Deputy Minister of Health Professor Hoang Dinh Cau in 1980. Until recently, the School still retains the name in Vietnamese as the School of Health Management.

With the increasing development of vertical health programs, the public health approach became one of preventive health approach through the hygiene and epidemiology system which played a central role in the health sector. However, this proved

to be insufficient and the MoH gradually recognized that public health must be something more than just the traditional hygiene and epidemiology approach. UNFPA was formally asked by the MoH to assist in developing a public health training program for Viet Nam and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases was invited to support this program. As part of this program, several young Vietnamese faculty staff were sent to London to be trained in public health at the Masters' level. However, the staff came from many different institutions and, in the end, were not able to work together for the goal of developing a public health training program at a single institution.

In 1990, the first Faculty of Public Health was established with the participation of three institutions - the School of Health Management, the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology of the Hanoi University of Medicine and the Center of Human Resource in Health (the precursor to the Institute of Health Strategy and Policy). The Faculty of PH was based the School of Health Management.

Also in 1990, having meet the established criteria for a school of public health, the School joined the ranks of the Asian Pacific Association of Public Health Colleges (APAPHC).

The direction and activities of the School became increasingly more oriented to the public health trends in the region and internationally.

In 1995, recognizing the urgent needs for developing an effective public health

training institution, the Ministry of Health decided to invest the necessary human resources and particularly leadership to the School of Health Management. With the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) and China Medical Board of New York (CMB), many young faculty members were selected to study abroad.

In 1995, another master public health (MPH) curriculum outline was developed with the financial support of CMB, support from APAPHC and particularly the participation of five deans from five public health schools from America, Australia, Thailand and Singapore.

In 1996, The Rockefeller Foundation visited the School and gave its support to the development of a masters' degree level curriculum for which the teaching and learning are connected with the needs of the community – this is termed the “Public Health School Without Walls” (PHSWOW) program – and involved early activities such as assessing the training needs, developing the training framework and the training program in detail. It was then decided that the two-year compulsory training program for a masters' degree curriculum will be divided into two phases: a year of on-campus theoretical training and a year of field studies.



*Dr. Cat Huy Duong, former dean, in graduation ceremony of first class 1978-1981*

Since 1997, the School has been officially assigned by Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Training to give pilot courses for MPH for the very first time in Vietnam. With twenty-four MPH students for the first year, the School embarked on a significant challenge for a beginning program.



*Workshop on curriculum of Master of Public Health  
Oct 1995*

With the technical and financial support of China Medical Board, the Rockefeller Foundation, CDC-Atlanta and Tulane University, the School has made tremendous progress since 1996. The capacity of the faculty staff has been strengthened through sending members to study abroad at well respected public health universities. The School's infrastructure was improved with better physical facilities, the establishment of

eight field sites and two epidemiologic field laboratories in both rural and urban settings such as Ha noi, Hai duong, Hung yen, Bac ninh and Hoa binh provinces. Even more importantly, many students have successfully passed the MPH training courses with the knowledge and skills that are well-connected and pertinent to the needs of the community with PHSWOW approach.

With the demonstrated commitment of the Ministry of Health since 1995 to increase and improve the School's capacity and the steadfast support of organizations such as CMB, the School has entered a new stage development. The first two MPH classes with a total of 44 graduates have returned to their workplaces and applied the knowledge and skills learned in taking care of the health needs of their communities. According to the assessment of their employers, these graduates have far exceeded the worth of their educational investment and represented the best of their departments. Some graduates have been assigned to higher position and have been able to apply the skills learned at the School. These graduates represent the ideals of the School in achieving the goals that they and the School have set out to do from the very beginning. The wheels of progress continues with the third MPH class currently in their field-based training phase, the fourth MPH class is nearing completion of their theoretical training and the School has just recruited the fifth crop of students in May 2001.

For the CKI and the short course graduates, they are also provided regularly with technical support and updated public health knowledge in the course of their work through frequent communications and collaborations with the School.

For the MPH graduates, the School has made special efforts in maintaining the alumni relationship with them through continuing education program and providing technical support. This is being facilitated through the use of portable computers (partially subsidized by the School) and email connections that the students were provided with. Annual workshops also are held for the graduates to share experiences of success and failure, learn about new ideas and opportunities, report on their scientific research conducted and contribute to the continuing improvements of the curriculum.



*The first MPH class graduated from the school in 1999*

Other collaborative activities include the exchanges of MPH students from other public health institutions such as Tulane University, Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, etc. in the US that share experience and perspective from other regions of the world. The public health students from those schools come to HSPH to work on their practicum, dissertation and/or conduct community-based research with the support from HSPH faculty members.

### ***Scientific Research***

In the beginning, the School only conducted a few studies assigned by the Ministry of Health. At the present, however, many studies have been carried out at the eight field sites in Hanoi and the two field epidemiological laboratories located in Bac Ninh and Hoa Binh provinces. At these field sites, the students performed priority setting of the health problems, researched and formulated approaches to solve these problems with the purpose of improving the health of the population. Each year there are about forty such community-based studies, the results of which have been applied in the improving and caring for the health of the population.

At the same time, the school also proceeded with many public health studies on reproductive health, public health functions, strengthening primary health care skills of the peripheral level health workers, blood transfusion, and evaluating the disease burden using mortality data. Recently, some of the study results have contributed importantly to the

formation of health policy in a long run (e.g. findings from injury studies are highly appreciated by policy makers as well as international donors in Vietnam).

In addition to the collaboration with organizations and universities from the United States, the School also has excellent working relationship WHO, the Dutch government, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, etc. As a result, the School has developed other specialized training programs beyond the MPH and the specialization degrees such as:

- Strengthening management skills for primary health care at the peripheral level
- Basic health economics
- Reproductive health
- Hospital economic management
- Preventive health management at the district and province level
- Health financial management
- Pharmaceutical production quality management
- Hospital pharmacy management
- State management of market oriented pharmaceutical supply
- Management of occupational safety and health in health sector.
- Improving the administrative capacity for government health staff
- Improving the administrative capacity for administrative health staff
- Hospital equipment management

Besides that, the distance learning approach has been recognized as a strategic development of the school, thus it has been piloted for some CK1 courses recently. The School, then has commitment to advance distance learning courses in the near future.

In the last five years the scientific research activities have developed more substantially than any other previous period.

### ***Personnel***

In 1996, there were only twenty lecturers; currently, there are over forty full-time faculty with more than 100 part-time faculty staff who represent the ranks of professors and PhDs with expertise in diverse fields such as economics, social sciences, epidemiology, environmental health, reproductive health, etc. During the last five years, the School has recruited twenty new faculty staff, has sent seven (five abroad to the US and Australia) for PhD study and eight faculty members (6 abroad to the US, Australia, the Netherlands, and Thailand) for masters' level study.

### ***The Infrastructure***

The total area of the school is about 15,600 squared meters, of which 11,000 squared meters is for the general working area and dormitory and about 4,600 squared meters of common ground.

The lecture halls are located in a five-storey building with 2,000 squared meters and are equipped with advanced audio-visual equipments for interactive teaching and learning activities. A seven-storey building funded by the Ministry of Health is due to be completed

in the second half of 2001 and will house the new lecture halls, computer facilities and library space. A computer room equipped with thirty terminal consoles is used for teaching, self-learning and the research activities. There is also a language lab with thirty fully equipped listening stations and a computerized self-study room.

The administrative area included office space for all the departments and meeting rooms in two three-storey buildings covering 2,000 squared meters each and are equipped with computers and communication equipments including internet connectivity. The School also has a Local Area Network (LAN) and uses the Internet to constantly explore new ways to access information for teaching and learning.

The School has a library facility with relatively adequately number of public health books for reference. The library also has Medline and Popline systems that are updated quarterly. The School has published a number of public health textbooks, which represent the first complete set of text on public health in the country.

Transportation is available to take the students and faculty to and from the field bases.

The 60-unit dormitory with 2,500 squared meters is built to adequately house visiting students for training and research both from outside and inside the country.

Since its inception, the School has affirmed its position as the leading public health training institution in Vietnam. The School's strategy has been in line with the policy for health care development of the government as well as the streamline of the world. The School aims to maintain this status is clearly shown in the its strategic plan for the development of the School:.

### ***Mission***

- Maintain and strengthen its position as the leading public health and health management training institution in Viet nam.
- Improve the training, research and consultation capacity for public health and health management in Viet nam
- Strive to be a high quality public health and health management training center
- Contribute meaningfully to the improvement of public health as a profession and develop public health networking for research and training purposes.

### ***Goals***

- Satisfy the training needs through improving the quality of the faculty , curricula and students
- Increase research activities and quality to meet the practical needs of the community

- Provide high quality consultancy services for the MoH, local health authorities and international agencies
- Develop public health collaboration and public health network nationally and internationally
- Increase extra-budgetary support for the School
- Develop community-based system to well serve the training and research needs.

To develop public health sector in particular and promote health care activities in general in Vietnam in the new era, the Primer Minister has signed decree number 65/2001/QĐ-TTg on the 26 of April 2001 to upgrading the status of School to the first university of public health in the country with the English name: Hanoi School of Public Health.

*Hu: A/amy*

CHÍNH PHỦ  
CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM  
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc  
Số: 65/2001/QĐ-TTg  
Hà Nội, ngày 26 tháng 4 năm 2001

**QUYẾT ĐỊNH CỦA THỦ TƯỚNG CHÍNH PHỦ**  
Về việc thành lập Trường Đại học Y tế công cộng

**THỦ TƯỚNG CHÍNH PHỦ:**

Căn cứ Luật Tổ chức Chính phủ ngày 30 tháng 9 năm 1992;

Căn cứ Luật Giáo dục ngày 02 tháng 12 năm 1998;

Căn cứ Nghị định số 43/2000/NĐ-CP ngày 30 tháng 8 năm 2000 của Chính phủ quy định chi tiết và hướng dẫn thi hành một số điều của Luật Giáo dục;

Xét đề nghị của Bộ trưởng Bộ Y tế tại công văn số 824/TU-BYT ngày 15 tháng 02 năm 2000, Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo tại công văn số 3211/TCB ngày 24 tháng 4 năm 2000.

**QUYẾT ĐỊNH:**

**Điều 1.** Thành lập Trường Đại học Y tế công cộng trên cơ sở Trường Cán bộ quản lý y tế thuộc Bộ Y tế.

**Điều 2.** Trường Đại học Y tế công cộng có nhiệm vụ:

Đào tạo cán bộ y tế trình độ đại học.

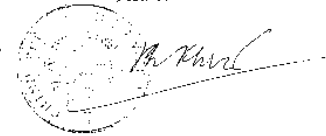
Nghiên cứu khoa học phục vụ sự nghiệp chăm sóc và bảo vệ sức khỏe cộng đồng.

**Điều 3.** Trường Đại học Y tế công cộng trực thuộc Bộ Y tế chịu sự quản lý nhà nước của Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo và các Bộ, ngành khác theo chức năng được Chính phủ quy định. Trường có tư cách pháp nhân, có con dấu riêng, tài khoản riêng. Trụ sở của Trường đặt tại Hà Nội.

**Điều 4.** Quyết định này có hiệu lực sau 15 ngày, kể từ ngày ký.

**Điều 5.** Bộ trưởng Bộ Y tế, Bộ trưởng Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo, các Ủy ban, Thủ tướng cơ quan ngang Bộ, Thủ tướng cơ quan thuộc Chính phủ, Chủ tịch Ủy ban nhân dân các tỉnh, thành phố trực thuộc Trung ương và Hội đồng Trường Cán bộ quản lý y tế chịu trách nhiệm thi hành Quyết định này.

**KT. THỦ TƯỚNG CHÍNH PHỦ**  
**PHÓ THỦ TƯỚNG**



Phạm Gia Khiêm

- Nơi nhận:*
- Ban Bí thư Trung ương Đảng,
  - Thủ tướng, các Phó Thủ tướng CP,
  - Các Bộ, cơ quan ngang Bộ,
  - Cơ quan thuộc Chính phủ,
  - UBND, UBND các tỉnh,
  - Thành phố trực thuộc Trung ương,
  - Văn phòng Quốc hội,
  - Văn phòng Chủ tịch nước,
  - Văn phòng Trung ương và các Ban của Đảng,
  - Viện Kiểm sát nhân dân tối cao,
  - Tòa án nhân dân tối cao,
  - Cơ quan Trung ương của các đoàn thể,
  - Trường Cán bộ quản lý y tế,
  - Công báo,
  - VPCP: BTCN, các PCN, các Vụ, Cục, các đơn vị trực thuộc,
  - Lưu: KG (50), VT.

*The decree issued by Prime Minister to upgrade the status of the  
Hanoi School of Public Health*