



## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### PATHWAY: HEALTH EQUITY

#### Initiative Description

Environmental Health is an educational and awareness initiative where students learn about the various environmental factors that can affect people's health and how to minimize those environmental factors. The students also participate in various restoration projects to help the environment and communities in the Hampton Roads Area.

#### Annual Student Activities

- 8 students per cohort
- 2018 – partnership formed with ODU to provide EVMS students with access to laboratory & equipment
- 2019 – students conducted well water sampling in Suffolk that tested for contaminants
- Field trips to various local sites
- Environmental Health Speaker Series: lunch talks with field experts on topics including vector- and water-borne illnesses, occupational health, and climate change

#### Community Outcomes/Results

- ↑ Improve potable water quality in rural areas, areas prone to flooding, or areas with inadequate wastewater treatment facilities
- ↑ Students understanding of needs assessment, risk communication, and risk management
- ↑ Environmental quality
- ↑ Student understanding of how environment impacts health
- ↓ Disease related to environmental health issues

#### Facilitators

Maryanne Gathambo, MPH  
Alan J.N. Enjetti, MD

#### Partners

- Old Dominion University
- Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action
- Virginia Department of Health
- EVMS Environmental Health Safety

#### The Need

- Environmental health directly impacts overall health
- Environmental factors can often be controlled or mitigated to improve health outcomes and reduce harm
- Those living in rural or low-income areas are more likely to experience health disparities
- 8.2 million out of 12.6 million deaths annually are caused by non-communicable diseases linked to environmental factors (WHO)
- Patients frequently look to their health professionals for guidance related to environmental health and its consequences, necessitating increased awareness of among clinicians