

From March 1-14, 2014, a group of senior University of Vermont nursing students traveled to Maastricht, Netherlands to study public health nursing and learn about the health care system and to increase our cultural awareness. We learned about public health from a European perspective and compared it to the United States. We visited health facilities, clinics, government agencies, other field sites, held daily classes, completed a community assessment, and visited various historic sites and museums.

We conducted a community assessment using the *Community as Partner* model (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011) to assure a systematic collection of community information. We used observations, perceptions, community member interviews, and research on the Maastricht area to assess the community core, which included the history, demographics, ethnicity, and values and beliefs of the community. We also assessed subsystems, which include the physical environment, health and social services, economy, transportation and safety, politics and government, communication, education, and recreation of the Maastricht community.

Following analysis of the data (both subjective and objective) we discovered many strengths such as public transportation, universal health care, and education. The one area of improvement we are recommending is smoking cessation as smoking affects health both of the individual and the people who come in contact with them. We observed that smoking is still allowed in pubs and cafes as well as in outside seating areas. Adolescents and adults smoked in many public spaces. To address this concern would involve a multi-faceted approach such as education (individual, group, and public), legislation, and enforcement of policies already in place.

By completing a community assessment while in Maastricht, the Netherlands to study public health nursing, University of Vermont nursing students were able to develop recommendations on a public health issue that is of concern around the world: smoking. Addressing this issue will add to the many strengths already found in this community.