

## YOUNG ALUMNI INSIGHTS

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## TRANSFORMING AN UNDERGRADUATE INTEREST INTO A CAPSTONE PROJECT

As an undergraduate student in neuroscience, Brittany had the privilege of completing research projects in several clinical laboratories across the country. Through these experiences, she was able to see how clinical scientific research has the ability to impact clinical processes of care and ultimately improve the medical community's capacity to treat neurological illness. As such, Brittany gained a strong interest in research that she carried with her as she started the MPP program at the University of Calgary.

When it came time to find a topic for her capstone project, Brittany decided to draw from her previous experience and attempt to find a public policy issue within the field of health research. This allowed her to complete her capstone project in a field in which she already had knowledge, while simultaneously allowing her to learn about health research from a new perspective.

Through her research, Brittany quickly learned that minimal literature to date had quantifiably measured a link between health research and improved patient care and patient outcomes,

which was surprising given her first-hand experience in the health research world. This literature gap results in a public policy issue in regards to funding allocation, as it is difficult for governments to determine the appropriate level of funding for health research when its explicit social, economic and health benefits are largely unclear. Given these uncertainties, Brittany's capstone project focused on exploring the relationship between health research and patient outcomes in the area of stroke research. Analyses completed in her capstone project indicated that a higher level of research activity is associated with improved patient outcomes across the country.

Brittany is continuing to pursue research in health policy as a Research Associate in the Social Policy and Health division at The School of Public Policy.



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“Drawing from my undergraduate research experience was vital in shaping the direction of my capstone project.”