

# NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Vikki Franklin  
859-218-2019

## **Grants Enable Next Generation of Researchers to Study How Various Public Health Services Affect Population Health**

*Projects Include Examining Costs of Controlling TB, Health Departments' Social Media Use*

LEXINGTON, KY- Four new \$100,000 grants will enable a small cadre of emerging researchers to explore the effect of the organization, financing and delivery of public health services on population health.

The two-year awards from the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research (PHSSR), housed at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will support the examination of issues including Health Information Exchange; disparities in access to public water and sanitation; costs of controlling tuberculosis; and local public health departments' use of social media tools.

The Mentored Research Scientist Development Awards are designed to produce timely evidence to guide decisions by public health practitioners and policy-makers, while enabling early career investigators to develop the backgrounds and skills needed to establish independent careers in PHSSR and compete for other funding opportunities.

The recipients and their mentors and projects (alphabetized by institution) are:

### **University of Michigan – Collaborative Governance to Support Exchange of Public Health-Relevant Data**

**Principal Investigator: Holly Jarman, Ph.D., research assistant professor, School of Public Health; Mentor: Peter Jacobson, professor of health law and director of the Center for Law, Ethics and Health**

Jarman's research will study implementation of policies supporting Health Information Exchange (HIE) as they relate to the exchange of lab data and immunization records via statewide collaborative networks. Using existing survey data and new interview data, she will construct a simulation model to uncover interventions and incentives to promote incorporation of public health data into HIE.

## **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Disparities in Access to Public Water and Sewer Service in North Carolina: Public Health Impacts and Policy Solutions**

**Principal Investigator: Jackie MacDonald Gibson, Ph.D., assistant professor, Gillings School of Global Public Health, Environmental Sciences and Engineering; Mentor: Jamie Bartran, director, UNC Water Institute**

Gibson's project will study North Carolina disparities in public water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) service access, including: the roles of race and socio-economic status in WASH access; how a lack of WASH access contributes to health disparities and resulting health and economic costs; and policy and institutional barriers that perpetuate WASH disparities, and the potential public health service solutions and benefits.

## **University of North Texas Health Sciences Center – Evidence-based Allocation of Public Health Resources: Using Economic Analysis to Identify Value and Priority in Domestic Public Tuberculosis Control**

**Principal Investigator: Thaddeus Miller, DrPH, assistant professor, Department of Health Policy and Management and the Department of Medicine; Mentor: José Pagán, professor and chair, Health Management and Policy**

Working with the local public health community, Miller will lead a project to look at domestic tuberculosis control costs of public health investments, as well as health and other individual losses. His work will also include looking at new tools for public protection and expected progress toward TB elimination by local, state and regional TB control authorities and public health systems.

## **Washington University in St. Louis – Developing the Evidence Base for Social Media Use in Public Health**

**Principal Investigator: Jenine Harris, Ph.D., assistant professor of public health, Brown School of Social Work, and affiliated with WU's Institute for Public Health; Mentor: Ross Brownson, professor of epidemiology**

Harris' research will examine local health department (LHD) use of social media, and the social media communication network among LHDs, their constituents, and other public health system stakeholders.

The research resulting from these awards will contribute evidence that is urgently needed to improve the population's health and the quality, efficiency and equity in public health practice. Project proposals include dissemination plans to ensure the evidence reaches those who can utilize it in decision-making.

"The field of public health services and systems research must have top-notch investigators, and we are excited about this new initiative to move young investigators

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to a more senior status,” said F. Douglas Scutchfield, M.D., director of the National Coordinating Center. “We anticipate that the recipients of this award will make important contributions to the field.”

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## **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. For 40 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit <http://www.rwjf.org>.

## **About the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research**

The goal of the National Coordinating Center is to grow the field of PHSSR by coordinating current PHSSR investments, supporting real-world applications, and strengthening the capacity of researchers and practitioners. The Center also works to determine the future direction of the field’s research initiatives; translate that research into practice; increase the visibility of the work; and attract other funders to the field. For more information, visit [www.publichealthsystems.org](http://www.publichealthsystems.org).