

Issue # 61

PBRN Week in Review | Jan 10 2011

PBRN Grantees and Affiliates: Please circulate relevant information to your network members. To request additional information or make suggestions for future items, please contact the National Coordinating Center at publichealthpbrn@uams.edu or 501-551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

Notable PBRN Activities

- **Research Implementation Awards.** A second round of Research Implementation Award (RIA) grants have been given to established Public Health PBRNs for large-scale studies developed collaboratively with network participants. RIAs are designed to generate evidence to guide improvements in public health practice while providing an opportunity to learn the most effective approaches for conducting and applying research within public health practice settings. The research theme for this group of awards is "measuring and improving quality in public health practice."

The **Connecticut PH PBRN** will develop and test quality measures related to local health department (LHD) emergency response using the H1N1 experience in 2009-2010 as case study. The study aims are to develop quality measures specific to the H1N1 context; to validate and test measures; to apply measures to compare quality of response across LHDs at various stages of response; and to identify factors that contribute to differential quality of response across LHDs. An especially important aspect of the study will help to address gaps in scientific knowledge by exploring the role of financing and workforce characteristics in influencing quality of LHD performance.

The **Minnesota PH PBRN** will develop and test measures of the quality of implementing quality improvement (QI) processes within state and local health departments in Minnesota relative to a conceptualization of "full implementation" based on models in the professional literature and consistent with professional knowledge. These QI quality measures will then be used in a comparative analysis to examine how contextual variables—including population size served, governance and organizational structure, and staffing and financial characteristics of the health agency—are related to the quality of QI implementation.

The **New York PH PBRN** will identify and test valid and reliable measures of quality associated with delivery of HIV/AIDS and STD prevention and control services through public health settings and use these measures to assess a state initiative to integrate HIV and STD programs and services. Measures will be developed to assess program infrastructure and staff organization, and ascertain the effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability of an integrated service delivery approach. A comparative analysis will be conducted using a novel natural experimental design to estimate the impact of the new, integrated field services model introduced in selected public health settings versus the non-integrated approach used previously. Results of this study will yield validated measures for assessing the quality of New York's HIV/STD Field Services Program, as well as other efforts to integrate public health service programs.

The **Ohio PH PBRN** (known locally as Research Association for Public Health Improvement, RAPHI) will investigate the structures, processes, and outcomes of LHD roles in foodborne illness prevention, investigation, intervention and communication utilizing a mixed methods approach, emphasizing a novel direct-observation methodology. The study will develop and test the direct-observation approach to quality measurement in public health practice, including a multi-method assessment process (MAP) that can be used to understand the complex reality of public health practice. MAP uses a multi-method comparative case study design integrating epidemiologic approaches with qualitative methodology. A sample of up to 35 LHDs representing the state's diverse regions and practice issues will be recruited, and all seven Ohio academic public health programs will participate in the research process.

The **Wisconsin PH PBRN** will measure the quality of state-mandated community health assessment and improvement plans and processes (CHIPP) used in local health departments across Wisconsin. In the first part of a two-phase design, a CHIPP Quality Measurement Tool will be developed. After reliability is established during pilot testing, the tool will be used to measure the quality of Wisconsin's 92 CHIPPs. The second phase will consist of a comparative analysis to identify structural and process factors related to CHIPP quality, with a focus on those processes that move beyond assessment into action. In light of the emphasis on community health assessment and improvement planning as a component of public health accreditation, the development of a self assessment tool for CHIPP quality and new knowledge about the structural and process elements contributing to high quality assessment and improvement processes are anticipated to be important to public health practice.

The first cohort of RIA grantees is one year into their projects examining the comparative effectiveness of strategies for enhancing the adoption of evidence-based prevention practices in public health agencies.

In addition to individual projects, the grantees within each cohort participate in a comparative, cross-network research component of the award. The cross-network studies seek to identify promising approaches and to analyze variations and changes across the diverse public health practice settings represented in the PBRN networks.

- **PRC and PH PBRN Webinar.** CDC's Prevention Research Centers and Public Health PBRNs have numerous similarities in approach and research priorities. The first formal opportunity to begin capitalizing on mutual research interests occurs with a webinar on Thursday, **January 20**, from 2:00-3:15 pm ET. While many of the PH PBRNs have research partners with PRCs, this is not a requirement for fruitful collaboration and all are encouraged to take advantage of this exchange. Affiliate member PH PBRNs are invited to participate as well. Interested participants who do not receive a WebEx invitation by Wednesday, January 12, should contact the [PH PBRN Coordinating Center](#).
- **New PBRN Funding for Research on Quality Improvement and Accreditation.** With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Coordinating Center soon will release a special request for proposals for Quick Strike Research projects devoted to issues of quality improvement and accreditation in public health (tentatively referred to as the *Quality Improvement Quick Strike* [QIQS] research program). Both “core” and “affiliate” members of the Public Health PBRN program will be eligible to apply for awards at two levels, up to \$25,000 for smaller projects and \$50,000 for larger projects. More details and a request for proposals will be released shortly.

Activities on the Horizon

- **PH PBRN Research at Preventive Medicine 2011.** The previously mentioned opportunity to reach stakeholders at the American College of Preventive Medicine annual meeting, [Preventive Medicine 2011](#), is finalized. On Thursday, **February 17**, a luncheon panel featuring RWJF and PH PBRN speakers will explore advances in PHSSR occurring through the PBRNs and will highlight applications in the context of health reform implementation. Many thanks to National Advisory Committee Chair Michael Caldwell for his key role in this effort.
- **PERRCs Presentation.** Several PH PBRNs have university partners that house Preparedness and Emergency Response Centers (PERRC) and hold potential for collaboration in preparedness research. An interactive session involving the PERRCs at [CDC's 2011 Public Health Preparedness Summit](#) in Atlanta may be of particular interest. Entitled "Assessing Public Health System Preparedness to Strengthen Capacity, Adaptation, Response, and Resilience," this session will be Wednesday, **February 23**, from 1:30-3:00 pm. The summit is February 22-25.
- **NIH Conference Presentation.** A panel proposed by **Julie Marshall (CO PH PBRN)**, **Betty Bekemeier (WA PH PBRN)**, and **Rebecca Wells (NC PH PBRN)** has been accepted for presentation at the [NIH Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation](#). The conference is March 21-22 in Washington DC with the theme Policy and Practice. The panel is entitled "The Science of Public Health Practice: Using PBRNs to Conduct Implementation Research in Public Health Settings."

Calls for Abstracts/Proposals/Presentations/Review

Deadline! ➤ **AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM).** The [Call for Abstracts](#) for panels, posters, and presentations for the 2011 ARM in Seattle closes this week. **Abstracts due: January 13, 2011.**

Deadline! ➤ **Keeneland Conference.** Abstracts for the 2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference are due **January 14**. Visit the [PHSSR website](#) to download submission forms and for more information. The conference is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12 to Thursday, April 14, 2011 in Lexington, Kentucky.

- **NACCHO Annual 2011.** The [Call for Sharing Session Proposals](#) is open for the NACCHO Annual 2011 Conference, July 20-22, in Hartford, Connecticut. According to conference guidelines, proposals submitted for the research track should feature the following:
 - ◆ Research studies in which LHDs played an important role as a research partner
 - ◆ Research studies that have important practice or policy implications for LHDs
 - ◆ Demonstrations of how LHDs have applied research findings in their agencies
 - ◆ Practice-relevant research using NACCHO's Profile data

Proposals due: January 21.

- **APHA 2011 Annual Meeting.** The APHA [Call for Abstracts](#) is open. Scheduled from October 29 through November 2 in Washington, DC, the 2011 Annual Meeting theme is "Healthy Communities Promote Healthy Minds and Bodies." Deadlines for abstracts range from **February 7 to 11**, depending upon the entity within APHA.

- **2011 Annual NALBOH Conference.** The [Call for Presentations](#) is open for the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) 19th Annual Conference scheduled for September 7-9 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Proposals are sought on the topics areas of governance and leadership, board development, public health policy, and public health priorities for 60-minute breakout sessions, two-hour interactive workshops, and posters of model practices. **Due date: March 1.**

Resources in Research and Practice

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **County Health Rankings.** Two new tools are available on the [County Health Rankings](#) website. Check out the feature allowing *all* of a county's measures to be compared side by side with one or two other counties within the same state. Also, for an individual measure, counties now are sortable by z-score.

The near-term webinar schedule for utilizing County Health Rankings data is:

- ◆ Jan 18 - *Rankings* 101
- ◆ Jan 25 - Putting County Health *Rankings* into Action
- ◆ Jan 27 - *Rankings* Methodology
- ◆ Feb 15 - *Rankings* 101
- ◆ Feb 23 - Putting *County Health Rankings* into Action

Times for all webinars: 3-4 pm (E); 2-3 pm (C), 1-2 pm (M), 12-1 pm (P)

- **IOM Report: Measurement in Public Health.** The IOM's new report on measurement for public health improvement is featured on the cover of [Modern Healthcare](#) and includes quotes from a number of colleagues and stakeholders.

Update...

To begin showing improvement in the health of communities, states, and the nation as a whole, "the health system" must be measurable. One of three major topics being examined by the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Public Health Strategies to Improve Health, measurement is the focus of a report released this week that "recommends changes in the processes, tools, and approaches used to gather information on health outcomes and to assess accountability." [For the Public's Health: The Role of Measurement in Action and Accountability](#) may be downloaded as a four-page Report Brief that highlights the committee's seven recommendations or the full report (uncorrected proofs of the forthcoming book) that provides the richly referenced supporting evidence for each recommendation.

- **Public Health Quality.** The Office of Assistant Secretary for Health, Howard Koh, has issued [Priority Areas for Improvement of Quality in Public Health](#), a report of the recent efforts of Koh and the Public Health Quality Forum (PHQF) to develop priority areas for improving quality in public health.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT

- **Academic Health Departments.** The Council on Linkages is establishing an Academic Health Department (AHD) learning community to facilitate communication among those interested in developing, sustaining or expanding an AHD. A workgroup has taken the initial steps of exploring topics, format and desired outcomes for the learning community and has developed a [concept paper and bibliography](#). A [web page](#) for the AHD learning community also has been created. The workgroup is asking for PH PBRN feedback on the documents and encourages

sharing the links with partners. Suggestions are invited and may be addressed to [Kathleen Amos](#), who also can provide more information about the initiative.

- **National Prevention Strategy.** The 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA) created the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council chaired by the Surgeon General and tasked with developing the [National Prevention Strategy](#). The eight-page draft recommendations are posted online and comments may be submitted on a feedback form until **January 13**.

New Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

- **Social Determinants of Health.** Six articles and a collection of commentaries in a [supplement](#) to the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation discuss the recommendations of the Commission to Build a Healthier America to address the social determinants of health. Of particular interest to PH PBRNs will be a [commentary](#) by Scutchfield and Howard of Kentucky that discusses the role of public health departments in addressing sociological determinants of disease and an [article](#) by Braveman and colleagues that explores methodological issues.

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- **Risky Networking:** Public health scholar and Ohio PBRN co-leader **Scott Frank** had his research on teen texting and risky health behavior profiled in a recent [New York Times](#) article. The study finds that urban Ohio highschoolers who spend more time texting and on social networking sites face elevated risks of engaging in harmful health behaviors.

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- **Communication Efforts among Local Health Departments.** In the January-February issue of the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, Dearing and colleagues present findings from their PH PBRN Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF) analysis of the effectiveness of communication between local health departments, physicians and pharmacists in Kentucky during the initial H1N1 outbreak. The article is entitled "[Community Efforts Among Local Health Departments and Health Care Professionals During the 2009 H1N1 Outbreak](#)."

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- **QI and Performance Measures.** In the [November/December 2010](#) issue of *Public Health Reports*, check the Local Acts section for a paper co-authored by **Ohio PH PBRN's Susan Kovach, Wesley Vins, and Matt Stefanak**. Kovach, Stefanak and their local health department colleagues at Mahoning County District Board of Health used a RAND protocol to test telephone response time to disease reports against the 30-minute standard recommended by CDC, and then used business process analysis and redesign methods to make improvements. In introducing the article, section editor Lorna Thorpe (CUNY-Hunter) writes, "The development of performance measures is a critical step toward improving preparedness, but these measures are only useful when routinely evaluated. Although this evaluation was small, Kovach et al. are to be commended for prioritizing the full quality improvement cycle." Among their conclusions, the authors give a nod to public health pbrns as mechanisms for linking researchers with multiple practice settings to test variation across contexts.

Funding Opportunities and Announcements

The Coordinating Center maintains a [list of funding opportunities](#) of interest to Public Health PBRNs. Grant opportunities with recurring deadlines are tracked and updated.

➤ **NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research [PA-11-063](#)**

Translating Basic Behavioral and Social Science Discoveries into Interventions to Improve Health-Related Behaviors (R01)

This Funding Opportunity Announcement "seeks highly innovative Research Project Grant (R01) applications that propose to translate findings from basic research on human behavior into effective clinical, community, or population-based behavioral interventions to improve health. Specifically, this FOA will support interdisciplinary teams of basic and applied biological, behavioral and/or social science researchers in developing and refining novel behavioral interventions with high potential impact to improve health-promoting behaviors (e.g., healthy dietary intake, sun safety, physical activity, or adherence to medical regimens), and/or reduce problem health behaviors (e.g., smoking, tanning or physical activity or alcohol or substance use, abuse or dependence)."

Key Dates: Application due February 5.

Next cycle: Letter of Interest due May 5 and application due June 5, 2011

➤ **Funding for Post-Docs and Junior Faculty.** Applications are being accepted for the [2011 Pfizer Fellowships](#). Clinical and research fellowships are available in various areas, including global health, health disparities, and public health, for post-docs and junior faculty in medicine, osteopathy, nursing, pharmacy, and public health.

Key Dates: The application deadline is February 11. Awards will be announced April 15, and funding begins July 1, 2011.

➤ **RWJF Public Health Law Research Rapid Response Studies**

Proposals are accepted online on a rolling basis. Details about the solicitation and the application process are [linked here](#).

Career Opportunities

➤ **PHSSR Faculty Search.** The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is seeking candidates for a tenure-track, open-rank faculty position in the Health Policy and Management Department to advance its research program in public health systems and services research. Candidates should have a successful record of research relevant to the organization, financing, and delivery of public health services or the ability to develop such a record. For more information contact gpmays@uams.edu.

Key Dates

Jan 20	PRC – PH PBRN Webinar 2:00-3:15 ET
Feb 8	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Feb 17	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
Mar 8	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Mar 17	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
April 10-12	2011 Annual Grantee and NAC Meetings in Lexington
April 12-14	2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference in Lexington