

Issue # 72


PBRN Week in Review | Apr 1, 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 (NCC) at publichealthpbrn@uams.edu or (501)551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

Notable PBRN Activities/Announcements

- ◆ **Congratulations!** William Livingood (FL PBRN), David Gregorio (CT PBRN), and Julie Myhre (MN PBRN) will be presenters for a sharing session at the NACCHO Annual 2011 Conference, which will be held July 20-22 at the Connecticut Convention Center in downtown Hartford. The session title is Practice-Based Research Networks: Applied Systems Research to Inform Local Public Health Policy. If there are other core, or affiliate PBRNs who have been invited to participate at the NACCHO or AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM), please remember to let the NCC know.

- ◆ **AcademyHealth Methods Course Offerings for PH PBRN Grantees and Partners.** Don't forget to take advantage of these new opportunities for learning! The NCC and AcademyHealth have arranged for the PBRN grantees, affiliates and network partners to access, at no cost, some of AcademyHealth's most popular methods courses for health services research (HSR) and public health services and systems research (PHSSR). Course offerings change every quarter, so don't miss this opportunity to learn from some of the leading lights of HSR and PHSSR! You may access the courses at your convenience and view them as often as you like. We encourage you to invite your PBRN partners to watch the webinars and consider scheduling sessions for group participation. If you did not receive, or need another copy of, the email with course descriptions and access instructions, contact the [NCC](#). Or view the [AcademyHealth Professional Development Catalog](#) for a comprehensive list of training opportunities.



Please Note
Date

Winter Quarter Methods Webinars for PH PBRNs – Available through April 3:

- Intro to HSR Methods Seminar Series, Part I: Evidence-based Practice
- Intro to HSR Methods Seminar Series, Part II: Quality and Performance Measurement
- The GRACE Principles: Comparative Effectiveness and HSR
- Methods Matter: Correlation and Causation in PHSSR
- Paper vs. Speech vs. Poster: Different Formats for Communicating Research

- ✦ **Quality Improvement Quick Strike Awards.** Congratulations to the networks selected to receive a *Quality Improvement Quick Strike (QIQS)* award through the Public Health PBRN Program, which is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Competition for the funding was stiff with 14 proposals submitted. The grantees along with the titles and specific aims/objectives of their projects are

- Florida. *The County Health Rankings: Impact on Public Health Systems and Services*

On the heels of the second annual release of the County Health Rankings (CHR) data in 2011, the Florida Public Health PBRN will investigate how local public health organizations across Florida's 67 counties respond to and use the rankings data for public health practice and health improvement activities. A mixed-method approach will be used to characterize and compare the types of responses taken by governmental public health agencies and their community partners, and to assess the success of these responses in terms of proximal measures of implementation. The study will seek to identify organizational and community-level factors that drive variation in the types of responses taken across communities and in the degree of success in implementing these responses. A by-product of this study will be the development and testing of indicators of successful CHR responses that can be used as public health quality measures. This project takes advantage of the time-limited opportunity to study responses soon after release of the 2nd annual wave of ranking data in a diverse population of local public health settings.

- Georgia. *Multi-County Health Department Quality Improvement Collaboratives*

Amid ongoing concerns about the fiscal and operational challenges faced by small and rural public health agencies, the new affiliate public health PBRN in Georgia will study whether and how regional public health delivery models can support quality improvement (QI) activities that enhance the ability of local health departments to achieve national accreditation standards. Regional quality improvement collaboratives (QICs) have been used in health care and in other sectors to stimulate and support the spread of QI activities among participating organizations on a regional level, but the QIC model has not been widely used to date in the field of public health. This quick-strike study will compare the implementation and impact of regional public health QICs organized through Georgia's multi-county health districts, with a specific focus on the ability of small and rural health departments to meet the Public Health Accreditation Board's national accreditation standards for quality improvement activities. A secondary aim of the study is to assess the potential of the newly formed Georgia Public Health PBRN to function as a state-level public health QIC. This project takes advantage of the time-limited opportunity to study how regional QI strategies can be used to strengthen accreditation readiness and attainment just prior to the launch of the national public health agency accreditation program.

- Minnesota. *The Science of Quality Improvement in Public Health Departments: Developing a Logic Model and Taxonomy for Methods, Techniques and Results*

The study is premised on the idea that the science of quality improvement (QI) is distinct from traditional scientific methods of inquiry, with the former reliant often using an "n of one" design and the latter based on the gold-standard randomized control trial. This feature of QI science is characteristic of public health QI projects, making it a

challenge to apply traditional research methodologies to them. The study's primary aims are to develop a logic model and taxonomy for QI in public health, employing a mixed-methods design in three phases: (1) creation of a database registry of QI projects implemented in public health settings through the Multi-State Learning Collaborative II and the Public Health Collaborative II initiatives, both which were implemented in Minnesota and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; (2) review and comparative analysis the QI projects to develop a preliminary classification system reflecting the QI methodologies used, the operations and processes targeted, the contextual features of the institutional and community settings, and the results achieved; and (3) validation of the taxonomy through an expert panel review of the conceptual model and key informant interviews with public health leaders who conducted the QI projects. Data from the QI registry and key informant interviews will be linked with several secondary data sources including NACCHO Profile data in order to support analyses of institutional and community characteristics that appear to facilitate and inhibit successful QI activities. This study takes advantage of the time-limited opportunity to collect and analyze data on QI projects while these efforts are still being implemented and evaluated.

- Missouri. *Investigating the Impact of Accreditation on the Development of a Quality Improvement Philosophy in Missouri's Local Health Departments*

As the U.S. moves closer to implementation of a national accreditation program for public health agencies, there is an urgent need for evidence to inform how accreditation standards and measures can be used to support effective quality improvement (QI) efforts in public health practice. To generate this evidence, the new affiliate public health PBRN in Missouri will make use of unique data sources to study experiences with the nation's first state-based voluntary accreditation program. Specifically, this study will examine the effects of Missouri's public health accreditation program on local health department efforts to adopt and institutionalize QI practices within their organizations and communities. This project takes advantage of the time-limited opportunity to learn from one of the nation's few state-base accreditation programs and use these lessons to inform the approaching implementation of the national accreditation program.

- Nebraska. *Identifying Effective Quality Improvement Strategies for Nebraska's Regional Public Health Departments*

The Nebraska PBRN will take advantage of the unique regional health department structure used in two-thirds of its local public health jurisdictions to mount a comparative study of the implementation and perceived effectiveness of QI activities in regional vs. single-county public health delivery systems. The Nebraska PBRN will partner with Minnesota's PBRN in order to use the QI classification system and taxonomy under development in Minnesota to study QI activities in Nebraska. A coordinated approach to QI classification and data collection will enable cross-state comparisons of data and key findings. This project capitalizes on an opportunity to rapidly produce new information about regional QI models at a time when public health decision-makers across the U.S. are preparing for accreditation and responding to political and economic forces demanding improved accountability, efficiency, and value in public health.

- **Dissemination Opportunity.** PBRNs that have research findings ready for dissemination are strongly encouraged to consider the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* as a venue. Findings from QIQSs and QSRFs are especially suited for the *MMWR* in that they are intended for rapid impact. Publishing in the *MMWR* will not preclude publication later in a peer-reviewed journal. Every piece submitted to the *MMWR* must have a CDC sponsor and, if possible, a state health agency sponsor. The NCC will be happy to assist in facilitating the CDC connection and advising on the appropriateness of the *MMWR* as an avenue for dissemination. Please visit the CDC [website](#) to review instructions for *MMWR* contributors.

Activities on the Horizon

- **PH PBRN Dine-Around for PH PBRN Annual Grantee Meeting.** The NCC staff is organizing a PH PBRN Dine-Around for grantees to participate in stimulating topical conversation during a casual dinner after Monday's grantee meeting. Reservations for groups will be prearranged by NCC staff, and a dinner host will help coordinate travel to destinations and lead the discussions. Each attendee will be responsible for his or her own bill and gratuity.
- **PH PBRN Annual Grantee Meeting.** The Annual Grantee Meeting is set for Monday and Tuesday, April 11 and 12, in Lexington in conjunction with the Keeneland Conference. The Annual Grantee Meeting is a prime time to collaborate and learn about a wide array of topics germane to public health practice-based research or the broader field of public health systems and services research (PHSSR). We plan to have a good mix of meeting formats and subjects to optimize these one and a half days together.
- **PH PBRN Research Panels at the Keeneland Conference.** The PH PBRN NCC has reserved three panel sessions for Round I and Round II Grantees to present RIA, QSRF, or small-scale projects' preliminary research findings at the 2011 Annual Keeneland Conference on Wednesday, April 13. The NCC has compiled all abstracts submitted by participating PBRNs and has organized the PH PBRN grantee research panels based on common themes across networks. The times and presenters for the panels are listed below. If you have any questions, please contact the [National Coordinating Center](#).

Wednesday, April 13

PH PBRN Research Panel 1 • 9:15 a.m.-10:45 p.m. • Scientific Session 2.E

Moderator: Patricia M. Sweeney, JD, MPH, RN

Kentucky PH PBRN-Angela Dearing, MD, MPH

Minnesota PH PBRN-Kim Gearin, PhD

Florida PH PBRN-Nancy Winterbauer, PhD, MS

PH PBRN Research Panel 2 • 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Scientific Session 3.A

Moderator: Glen P. Mays, PhD, MPH

Washington-Betty Bekemeier, PhD, MSN, MPH

New York-Chris Maylahn, MPH

Colorado-Julie Marshall, PhD

North Carolina-Dorothy Cilenti, DrPH, MPH, MSW

PH PBRN Research Panel 3 • 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. • Scientific Session 4.A

Moderator: Michael Caldwell, MD

Florida-Michael Morris MPH, MPA, CPH

Massachusetts-Justine Hyde, PhD
Ohio-David Bruckman, MS, MT(ASCP)
Wisconsin-Susan Zahner, DrPH, RN

- ◆ **PH PBRN Program Keeneland Conference Exhibit.** The 2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference will begin Tuesday, April 12 and continue through Thursday, April 14, in Lexington, Kentucky. Join other researchers, practitioners and policymakers there and share innovative ideas on how to improve the public health system. If you will be at Keeneland, be sure to visit the PH PBRN Program Exhibit. The exhibit will be located in the Thoroughbred Pre-function space at the Lexington Convention Center.
- ◆ **Keep Us in the Loop!** Please remember to include the NCC on all reporting of dissemination products to RWJF, by cc'ing the [NCC](#). Keeping abreast of PBRN dissemination via presentations at national, regional, and state meetings; written reports, webinars, research briefs, journal articles, as well as web-based communication channels, will enable the NCC staff to more effectively support all the networks and spread the word about their accomplishments.
- ◆ **PBRN Research Publication Opportunities.** The Coordinating Center is in discussions with several leading journals in PHSSR and HSR about the possibility of a special issue or theme issue dedicated to research from the PBRNs. Details will be forthcoming, but manuscripts likely would need to be ready for submission by May or June 2011. We encourage networks to consider what findings they may have ready to disseminate, and let us know any thoughts you may have on content, timing, venues, etc.

Public Health PBRN Leaders' Presentations

Do you have an upcoming presentation at a conference or other venue that features your PBRN's work with the *Public Health PBRN Program*? [Let us know!](#) Recent and coming events that put public health practice-based research in the limelight:

- ◆ **Keeneland Conference**
 - ◆ Colorado PH PBRN's Lisa N. VanRaemdonck, MPH, MSW will be on a panel entitled: The Political Implications of Accreditation, Regionalization, and County Health Rankings.
 - ◆ Wisconsin PH PBRN Quick Strike project, "A Systematic Method to Document Population-Level Nursing Interventions in an Electronic Health System," will be presented by Dr. Mary Jo Baisch.
 - ◆ Florida PBRN co-principal investigator Bill Livingood will present findings of the network's study of county health department leaders' perceptions of funding for essential services.
 - ◆ Ohio PH PBRN Quick Strike project, "Variation in Enforcement of the Ohio Smoke-Free Work Place Act by Local Health Departments," will be presented by David Bruckman.
 - ◆ Wisconsin PH PBRN project, "Local Health Department Financial Practices and Outcomes during Economic Challenging Times," will be presented by Susan Zahner.
 - ◆ Wisconsin PH PBRN's "Public Health Systems and Services Research Inventory" will be presented as a poster.

- ✦ **Webinar Updates CDC Officials on PHSSR and PBRN Progress:** This week leaders in the PHSSR enterprise and in the Public Health PBRN Program briefed federal public health officials via a CDC-wide webinar organized by RWJF and the CDC's Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (OSTLTS). The Affordable Care Act charges CDC with expanded federal roles in stimulating and supporting PHSSR to inform policy and practice. The webinar on March 23 was designed to help CDC officials understand recent progress in the PHSSR field, priority research needs, and the roles being played by the Public Health PBRNs in expanding the volume and quality of research in this field. Speakers included CDC OSTLTS Director Dr. Judy Monroe, also a member of the PBRN National Advisory Committee; RWJF Senior Program Officer Dr. Debra Pérez; NCC director Glen Mays; and University of Kentucky professor Dr. Douglas Scutchfield, also an affiliate with the Kentucky Public Health PBRN.
- ✦ **PBRN Research at NIH's Dissemination & Implementation Science Conference:** Research underway within the public health PBRNs helped to inform the NIH's ongoing foray into delivery system scholarship at the NIH's fourth annual meeting on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Policy and Practice held in Bethesda, MD this week. Scholarly research on D&I processes in health has become a growing priority for NIH and other federal health agencies as the U.S. strives to realize greater health impact and value from its investments in health research. A full 90-minute session at the conference on March 21 was devoted to work of the Public Health PBRN Program and featured Research Implementation Award (RIA) studies underway by the PBRNs in Washington, Colorado, and North Carolina. Dr. Julie Marshall of the University of Colorado described work by the Colorado PBRN to examine the formation and operation of local community coalitions charged with implementing evidence-driven policy and environmental strategies for chronic disease prevention in Colorado. Dr. Betty Bekemeier of the University of Washington profiled a study underway through the Washington PBRN to examine the role of evidence in informing decisions by public health officials in response to the economic downturn and resulting budget cuts for public health services. Dr. Rebecca Wells of UNC-Chapel Hill presented preliminary results from the NC PBRN's study examining the effects of a state policy change that reduces local health department responsibilities in delivering evidence-based maternal support services for high-risk families. The NCC's Glen Mays began the session with an examination of how public health PBRNs function as mechanisms for evidence production, dissemination, and implementation in public health settings using results from the 2010 Round I PBRN network analysis. PBRN presenters had a packed room of attendees and colleagues studying D&I issues across the continuum of health services. The PBRN D&I session complemented a range of other scientific sessions at the conference, including perspectives from new NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research director Dr. Bob Kaplan, AHRQ director Dr. Carolyn Clancy, NCI senior scholar Dr. Russ Glasgow, and Washington University professor Dr. Ross Brownson (PBRN National Advisory Committee member).
- ✦ **PBRN Research at the 2011 APTR Meeting:** The work of the Public Health PBRNs featured prominently at one of the nation's leading forums for prevention research and training this past week. Prevention scholars from across the U.S. convened in Washington, D.C. on March 18-19 for the 2011 meeting of the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). Dr. Scott Frank of Case Western University, one of the leaders in Ohio's Public Health PBRN, organized a scientific session that examined recent progress in public health services and systems research (PHSSR) and the contributions being made by PBRNs. Dr. Frank's presentation showcased the multiple research methods being used in Ohio's PBRN to elucidate the "black box" of public health practice, and drew analogies to the progress made in primary care research through PBRNS over the past two decades. NCC director Glen Mays profiled

several prominent avenues of inquiry within the PHSSR field, including research on organizational structure and financing, and noted the expanding roles of PBRNs in advancing these lines of research. The session was moderated by Dr. David Gregorio of the University of Connecticut, a contributing scholar within Connecticut's public health PBRN. The session was well attended and contributed directly to the meeting's overarching theme of realizing greater synergy among prevention research, practice and policy. Other speakers at the meeting included Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Howard Koh, Institute of Medicine president Dr. Harvey Fineberg, Trust for America's Health executive director Dr. Jeff Levi, and the University of Wisconsin's Dr. Patrick Remington (a member of the PBRN National Advisory Committee).

Calls for Abstracts/Proposals/Presentations/Review

- **Health Impact Project.** A [Call for Proposals](#) (CFP) has been issued for the *Health Impact Project: Advancing Smarter Policies for Healthier Communities*, a collaboration of RWJF and The Pew Charitable Trusts. This CFP is for organizations that wish to undertake a health impact assessment as a way to demonstrate their value in policymaking. Grants will range from \$25,000 to \$125,000 and must be completed within 18 months. Up to eight projects will be awarded. Deadline for brief online proposals: June 1, 2011 5:00 p.m. EDT.
- **Call for Policy-Relevant PHSSR Findings:** Will your research produce evidence regarding the effectiveness and value of investments in the public health system? Several Public Health PBRNs are studying related issues such as uses of funding streams, responses to economic shocks, and efforts to reconfigure delivery systems for improved capabilities and efficiency. As your network gathers early findings and preliminary evidence, please let the NCC know so that we can help you think through dissemination opportunities with policymakers. There are some very effective vehicles for rapid release of early findings that will not preclude subsequent opportunities for publication of scientific articles. Send us a quick [email](#) with your updates.

Resources in Research and Practice

PUBLICATIONS, REPORTS, AND TOOLS

- **Investing in America's Health.** Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) have released an annual report, [Investing in America's Health: A State-By-State Look At Public Health Funding And Key Health Facts](#) and new [state pages](#). The annual report explores public health funding and health key facts in states around the country. The state pages provide state-specific public health data and information on funding, preparedness and compare states on each specific health indicator.
- **New Data Confirm Job Losses and Program Cuts in LHDs Continue.** Results from NACCHO's Job Losses and Program Cuts Survey show that local health departments (LHDs) lost 29,000 jobs to layoffs and attrition between January 2008 and December 2010, roughly 19 percent of the 2008 nationwide LHD workforce. In 2010, 18,000 LHD employees were subjected to reduced hours or mandatory furloughs. State-level analysis of budget, staffing, and program cuts data from the 2010 National Profile of Local Health Departments Survey will be available in early April. More info is available at www.naccho.org/jobloss.

- **U.S. Life Expectancy Increased and Infant Mortality Dropped.** The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics has released a preliminary [report](#) of U.S. data on deaths, death rates, life expectancy, leading causes of death, and infant mortality for 2009 by demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. The 2009 report is based on nearly all the death certificates for that year. A final report is due later this year.
- **Building Healthier Communities.** [Highlights](#) from the CDC's *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* program, funded under both the ARRA and ACA, present strategies undertaken by the landmark initiative to create healthier communities through innovative and proven approaches that address physical activity, nutrition, obesity, and tobacco use.
- **County Health Rankings.** The 2011 [County Health Rankings](#) report will be released on March 30. The Rankings report is a collection of 50 state reports that rank every county according to health outcomes and health factors. Public health practitioners can use the rankings report to appraise the health in their communities and the changes that have taken place over the last year. The County Health Rankings are a part of the Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH) project which is a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.
- **National Healthcare Quality & Disparities Reports.** The 2010 National Healthcare [Quality](#) & [Disparities](#) Reports have been released by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Although the reports focus on clinical care, there are lessons for Public Health.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT

- **Midyear Meeting.** The American Public Health Association (APHA) will have its first-ever Midyear Meeting in Chicago, Ill., June 23-25, 2011. The theme for the meeting is *Implementing Health Reform – A Public Health Approach*. Visit the website for a full description of the [meeting](#) and [registration](#). **Early-Bird Registration Deadline is April 15! Advanced Registration Deadline: May 20.**
- **NEW Analysis of Social Networks Webinar Series.** AcademyHealth is offering a new three-part webinar series on social network analysis taught by Robert Hanneman, Ph.D. The three sessions are:
 - 1) Analysis of Social Networks Part II: Basic Network Analysis
Thursday, April 14, 2011, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (ET).
 - 2) Analysis of Social Networks Part III: Beyond the Basics
Thursday, April 28, 2011, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (ET).

Please contact [PH PBRN NCC](#) if you are interested in these seminars or have any questions.

Funding Opportunities and Announcements

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

- ✦ **Public Health Law Research (PHLR) Program.** The 2011 [Call for Proposals](#) – Round 3 from the PHLR program has been released, with \$2.85 million available. The PHLR Program is a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. **Deadline for receipt of brief proposals: April 20, 2011 (3 p.m. ET).**
- ✦ **Junior Investigators.** New Connections-Junior Investigator Program has released a [Call for Proposals](#). RWJF will select up to a total of 13 *Junior Investigator* grants of up to \$75,000 each for 24 months. Brief Proposal **Deadline: May 5, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. EDT.**
- ✦ **AHRQ Research Centers for Excellence in Clinical Preventive Service.** AHRQ has made \$4.5 million available to fund three research centers with a focus on one of the following programmatic areas: patient safety, health equity, or health care system implementation. The project period is for three years with a \$1.5 million annual budget for each year. For more information, click on [RFA-HS-11-005](#). **Deadlines: Letters of intent: April 29, 2011 and applications: May 23, 2011.**
- ✦ **HRSA Affordable Care Act – Public Health Training Center (PHTC) program.** This program will provide funding for a four-year project period. Estimated total program funding is \$6.5 million with an award ceiling of \$650,000. Please view the funding announcement, [HRSA-11-142](#), for more information. **Deadline: May 23, 2011.**
- ✦ **Round Two: Digging into Data Challenge.** Eight international research funders have announced their joint support for round two of the Digging into Data Challenge, a grant competition designed to encourage cutting edge research in the humanities and social sciences. Further information about the competition and the application process can be found on the [Digging into Data Challenge](#) website. **Final applications deadline: June 16, 2011.**
- ✦ **RWJF Healthy Eating Research.** The RWJF *Healthy Eating Research: Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity* program has released its 2011 [Call for Proposals](#). The **Rapid-response award concept** papers are due **August 2.**
- ✦ **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

- ✦ **APHA Public Health Fellowship.** Applications for the APHA Public Health Fellowship in Government for 2012 are now being accepted. APHA is looking for candidates with strong public health credentials who wish to spend one year in Washington, D.C., working in a congressional office on legislative and policy issues such as health, the environment or other public health concerns. The deadline for submission is **April 4, 2011**. For more information, please go to this [link](#).

Key Dates

April 10-12	2011 Annual Grantee and NAC meetings in Lexington
April 13	Round I and Round II Grantees Keeneland Conference Research Panels
April 12-14	2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference in Lexington

April 26 Evidence-Based Practice and Policy Webinar! | 2:00 p.m. ET
May 19 Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
June 12-14 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting
June 16 Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
July 20-22 NACCHO Annual 2011 Conference