

Issue # 74

## **PBRN Week in Review | April 22, 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](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uams.edu) or (501)551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

### **Notable PBRN Activities/Announcements**

- ✦ **Evidence-Based Practice Webinar.** The Public Health PBRN Quarterly Webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. ET on the topic of Evidence-Based Practice and Policy. Ross C. Brownson, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology and co-director of the Prevention Research Center at Washington University in St. Louis, will provide an overview of the principles of evidence-based approaches in public health, including the scientific basis for these practices and the practical challenges of implementation. The learning objectives are to:
  1. Understand the definition of evidence-based public health;
  2. Explore various types and quality of evidence;
  3. Explore the uses of various tools and resources;
  4. Review the barriers to evidence-based approaches; and
  5. Understand how we can increase the uptake of evidence-based practices in public health.

**Reminder!**

➔ Please take a moment to [register](#) for the event, and remember to invite your network partners. Participants are encouraged to share connections where possible.

- ✦ **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 QIQS and QSRF studies are especially suited for the *MMWR* in that they are intended for rapid impact. Publishing in the *MMWR* will not preclude later publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Submissions to the *MMWR* must have a CDC sponsor and, if possible, a state health agency sponsor. The NCC is available 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.

### **◆ 2011 Grantee Meeting and Keeneland Conference Highlights ◆**

**Public Health PBRNs Face-to-Face:** Grantees and two affiliate PH PBRNs gathered for the pre-Keeneland Conference annual grantee meeting on April 11-12. Convened by National Coordinating Center Director Glen Mays and the national advisory committee, participants integrated lessons from peer successes and challenges in building infrastructure while conducting research and delved deeper into the expanding PHSSR agenda and implications for PBRNs.

- **PHSSR Research Agenda-setting: Implications for PBRNs.** F. Douglas Scutchfield, MD, summarized happenings at the national level regarding research agenda setting and priority setting in PHSSR. Scutch provided insight into activities at federal agencies, as well as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. He also previewed two calls for proposals announced later at the conference (see Funding Announcements).
- **PH PBRN Program Status: Where Are We Now and What's on the Horizon?** Glen Mays led attendees in a discussion of how PH PBRN research fits into the larger enterprise of public health research. Network research to date has mostly focused on understanding how best to organize, implement, finance, and staff public health activities in the real world of practice, and how to best reach the populations in need with public health strategies. Studies are beginning to move to the broader context of inferential and translational research to understand variation in practice across communities. Mays emphasized the need to answer the “so what” questions, both in PH PBRN research and in the larger field of PHSSR.

Among issues discussed that PH PBRNs face in conducting research through the network mechanism: (1) determining the right research questions to ask; (2) translating the information needs of practitioners into testable hypotheses; and (3) finding the appropriate balance between practice-relevance and rigorous study.

- **Crosscutting, Multi-Network Research Topics.** Working in small groups, participants tackled four cross-cutting issues that have potential for multiple network study, including:
  - measuring adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices in public health;
  - organizing and re-organizing public health delivery through regionalization;
  - understanding resource flows such as budget reductions, stimulus funds, and other drivers of change; and
  - public health workforce and its role in the “production chain” for public health services.

Participants exchanged their views and priorities on each topic and explored next steps and strategies for potential multi-network research projects.

- **Public Health PBRN Assessment Activities.** Nancy Dockter of the NCC presented results of a two-part assessment that gathered information on the status of research projects; lessons learned in PH PBRN development; sustainability plans; and recommendations for improvement. A summary will be distributed among networks for more in-depth examination.
- **Public Health PBRN PHAST Study.** Study leader Betty Bekemeier updated participants on the Public Health Activities and Services Tracking (PHAST) Study. The study team is identifying, gathering, and compiling existing and comparable local health department (LHD) data from participating PBRN states that reflect services delivered by LHDs from 2005 forward. These data will make it possible to explore the impact of programmatic budget cuts to LHDs on vulnerable populations and will provide a foundation for responding to newly emerging opportunities for PBRN research. The ultimate goal of PHAST is the development of an ongoing data repository for comparing the effectiveness of public health efforts on a local level.

Currently the team is pooling LHD service data and linking multi-state data into an expandable GIS repository for comparing variations in service (volume, type, scope and reach) and outcomes in space and over time. Bekemeier showed examples of maps illustrating spatial data of services and population types in Washington, using the NACCHO *Profile* Shapefiles,

Washington State Activities and Services Survey, and census data. PHAST's expanding database will offer a visual way to spatially and statistically analyze data and opportunities for a more in depth analysis of public health services and related outcomes.

Bekemeier lauded participants on their success in locating and providing retrospective data. Findings to date suggest an "astonishing" amount of LHD service data and intense interest among PBRN states in obtaining good data in relation to accreditation plans, grant-seeking, and concerns about the budget crisis that prompt calls for data-related accountability.

- ✦ **Roundtable Discussion on Quick Strike Research:** Glen Mays opened the discussion of Quick Strike Research Funding (QSRF) acknowledging that there are always emerging issues that create time sensitive research opportunities. The NCC has had three cycles of QSRF awards, including a special call for proposals on quality improvement and accreditation. The NCC can fund three additional QSRF projects this program year, which runs through October 31. Grantees may apply prior to July 1 by submitting a one-page proposal to [publichealthpbrn@uams.edu](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uams.edu). Mays challenged the networks to propose QSRF projects with the potential to have a life beyond the study and lead to larger scale research.

Discussion included opportunities to include students in research and develop their interests in PHSSR and the challenges of conducting research in the limited timeframe.

- ✦ **National Advisory Committee Meeting:** The national advisory committee (NAC) examined ongoing and emerging practice and policy issues ripe for network research, including technology in LHDs, the impact on critical services of personnel and funding changes, Quality Improvement, the life course movement in maternal and child health and its potential for melding with chronic disease research, and accreditation. The committee also discussed strengthening relationships with PHSSR and PH PBRN stakeholders.

Glen Mays gave an update on the networks' more than 40 research projects and their dissemination through such fora as the annual meetings of NACCHO, ASTHO, AcademyHealth, American College of Preventive Medicine, APHA, the NIH Dissemination and Research Conference, and the Keeneland Conference. NAC members brainstormed other dissemination outlets and noted the importance of "going where the practitioners are" to share findings.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH PBRNs AT THE KEENELAND CONFERENCE**

- ✦ **PH PBRN Research Panels at the Keeneland Conference.** Grantee research findings presented at the Keeneland Conference were organized by common themes.
  - **PBRN Scientific Session Panel I.** NAC member Patt Sweeney moderated a panel that included **Kim Gearin of Minnesota** presenting "Authority, Structure and Change: A Descriptive Study of Minnesota Local Health Departments," **Robin Pendley of Kentucky** presenting "Quality Improvement in Local Health Departments: Individual, Departmental, and Public Health System Orientation to Improving Diabetes Services," and **Nancy Winterbauer of Florida** presenting "Building a Research Agenda for Florida Public Health: Survey of County Health Department Leadership on Practice-Based Research Needs, Interests and Capacity to Conduct Research."

- **PBRN Scientific Session Panel II.** Representatives from four PH PBRNs participated in a panel moderated by NCC Director Glen Mays. **Betty Bekemeier of Washington** presented “Public Health Services Delivery under Pressure: Factors Influencing Local Public Health Decisions Made during a Financial Crisis,” **Julie Marshall of Colorado** presented “Factors Affecting Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices,” **Chris Maylahn of New York** presented “Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Local Health Departments: Preliminary Findings,” and **Dorothy Cilenti of North Carolina** presented “How Local Health Departments in North Carolina are Sustaining Maternal and Child Care Coordination in the Face of Changing Medicaid Policies.”
- **PBRN Scientific Session Panel III.** Representatives from four PH PBRNs participated in a panel moderated by **NAC Chair Michael Caldwell**. **David Bruckman, Ohio PH PBRN**, presented “Variation in Enforcement of the Ohio Smoke-Free Work Place Act by Local Health Departments,” **Justeen Hyde, Massachusetts PH PBRN**, presented “Building the Capacity of Local Public Health Practitioners to Access and Use Data,” **Michael Morris, Florida PH PBRN**, presented “Funding of Essential Services for Local Public Health,” and **Susan Zahner, Wisconsin PH PBRN**, presented “Local Health Department Financial Practices and Outcomes During Economically Challenging Times.”
- **Public Health Policy.** In a session on Public Health Policy, **Colorado PH PBRN’s Lisa VanRaemdonck** presented, “The Political Implications of Accreditation, Regionalization, and County Health Rankings.”
- **Organization and Structure of the Public Health System.** **Justeen Hyde, Massachusetts PH PBRN**, presented “The Structure and Organization of Local and State Public Health Agencies in the United States: A Systematic Review.”
- **Technology, Data, and Methods.** **Scott Frank, Ohio PH PBRN**, presented “Health Information Technology in Ohio and its Applications for Quality Improvement, Community Assessment, and Performance Measurement.”
- **Population-Level Health.** **Mary Jo Baisch, Wisconsin PH PBRN**, presented “A Longitudinal Study of Population-Level Health Problems and Interventions.”
- **Preparedness Capacity.** NCC Director Glen Mays presented “The Local Health Department Preparedness Capacity Survey Results: Comparing North Carolina with a Matched National Sample,” from a study examining preparedness and response capabilities of local health agencies.
- **Poster Session.** **Wisconsin PH PBRN** presented a poster: Public Health Systems and Services Research Inventory.

#### **OTHER KEENELAND CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS**

- **The PHSSR Roll-Out:** During her Tuesday evening keynote address **Debra Pérez, RWJF senior program officer**, officially launched the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research. Pérez emphasized the role of PHSSR in building the evidence base for prevention practice and policy. The new center is directed by faculty of the University of Kentucky.

## Calls for Abstracts/Proposals/Presentations/Review

PBRN  
Special  
Invite

- **Science of Community Engagement.** Clinical & Translational Science Awards has issued a [Call for Papers](#) for a special issue of *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*. This publication opportunity specifically invites PBRN contributions and prioritizes papers that are collaborative and co-authored by community members. The deadline for submitting papers is Monday, August 1.
- **Integrating Primary Care and Public Health.** A joint AHRQ-HRSA-CDC-NIH [Call for Papers](#) seeks submissions to a special journal supplement on primary care and public health. Manuscripts are due to *AJPH* by August 1. For further information, please contact the guest editors at [AJPH-AJPMpapers@hrsa.gov](mailto:AJPH-AJPMpapers@hrsa.gov).
- **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 by 5:00 p.m. EDT.
- **HORA Conference.** The 13th Annual Healthcare Organizational Research Association (HORA) Conference will convene June 9-10 in Seattle. Abstracts are being accepted and should be prepared in the general format set forth by AcademyHealth for their Annual Research Meeting and emailed to [dconrad@uw.edu](mailto:dconrad@uw.edu). Please visit conference [website](#) for more information.
- **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 a quick [email](#) to us with your updates.
- **Keep Us in the Loop!** When reporting products to RWJF, remember to copy the [NCC](#). Keeping abreast of PBRN presentations at national, regional, and state meetings, written reports, webinars, research briefs, journal articles, and web-based communication channels enables the NCC staff to more effectively support all the networks and spread the word about your 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 September. 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.



## Resources in Research and Practice

### PUBLICATIONS, REPORTS, AND TOOLS

- **Measurement Resource.** The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences has published a manual of metrics for its grantees that could serve as a resource for PH PBRNs using logic models to measure partnership, coalition participation, community engagement and the like. PBRNs may find funding opportunities serving as evaluators of public health interventions, and tools in publications similar to the [Draft PEPH Evaluation Metrics Manual](#) may be useful for planning and evaluation if sufficiently rigorous.

## 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 Services and Systems Research.** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has released a [Call for Proposals](#) for PHSSR. Approximately \$2.7 million has been made available in this round of funding for up to 14 awards. Grantees will receive up to \$200,000 each to be used over a 24-month period. Brief proposal deadline: May 24, 2011. Full proposal deadline: August 23.
- **Assuring the Future.** RWJF has released a [Call for Proposals](#) for the Assuring the Future of Public Health Systems & Services Research: Dissertation Grant Program for pre-doctoral dissertation applicants. Deadline for receipt of online proposals: June 1.
- **MATCH.** RWJF has released a [Call for Proposals](#) for the Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health: Community Grants Program. Up to 14 grants will be awarded with grantees receiving awards up to \$200,000 for up to a 24-month period. **Brief proposal deadline: April 27, 2011.** Full proposal deadline: July 13, 2011.
- **HHS Preparedness.** CDC's [Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement Program](#). Note eligibility requirements and opportunities for collaboration. Deadline June 17.
- **SIPS.** CDC's Prevention Research Centers [Special Interest Project Competitive Supplements](#) (SIPS) are available to universities housing PRCs. Letter of Intent due date: April 29. Application due date June 1.
- **Accreditation Preparation.** NACCHO has announced a new funding opportunity for LHDs to engage in community health assessment and community health improvement plans. The program will award 12 competitive grants of \$35,000 each. Please visit the NACCHO [website](#) for additional information. Application due date: May 23, 2011.
- **Junior Investigators.** New Connections-Junior Investigator Program has released a [Call for Proposals](#). RWJF will give up to 13 awards of up to \$75,000 each for 24 months. Brief Proposal Deadline: May 5 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** and applications: May 23.

- **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. Deadline: May 23.
- **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. Final applications are due by June 16. Further information about the competition and the application process can be found on the [Digging into Data Challenge](#) website.
- **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](#).

## Key Dates

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