

Issue #81

## **PBRN Week in Review | June 17, 2011**

**PH PBRNs:** Please circulate relevant information to network members. To request additional information or make suggestions for future items, please contact the Public Health PBRN National Coordinating Center (NCC) at [publichealthpbrn@uams.edu](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uams.edu) or (501) 551-0106. Past issues are available in the [newsletter](#) archive.

### **Notable PBRN Activities**

- **PBRN Research Permeates the Nation's Largest HSR Meeting.** One attendee at this week's 2011 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Seattle noted "the Public Health PBRNs are everywhere!" PBRN research featured prominently in six research sessions and a poster session devoted to public health services and systems research at the main AcademyHealth meeting, and at the two-day Public Health Systems Research Interest Group meeting that followed. The PHSR Interest Group meeting celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and has become the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest interest group at AcademyHealth with over 2000 members (second only to child health services research). PBRN members from Washington, Kentucky, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida, and Missouri presented their research and engaged in a productive series of networking events and discussions with colleagues in the larger field of health services research.
- **June Conference Call.** David Gregorio, Ph. D., a professor in the medical and dental schools and graduate program director in public health at the University of Connecticut, presented early findings of the CT PH PBRN study, "Measuring LHD Responses to Public Health Funding Restrictions" on the June conference call for Public Health PBRNs. The study was funded through the program's Quick Strike Research Fund. In response to the state's "legislating away funding" for smaller health departments, the network examined the implications of the loss of per capita funding on the organization, financing, and delivery of local public health programs and services, including intentions to consolidate or share services. Gregorio discussed the results of the online survey in which responses of LHDs experiencing funding cuts were compared with those not sustaining cuts on questions such as whether the funding cuts have adversely affected service offerings, operating expenditures, and workforce capacity and the likely results of the effort to regionalize. The next step in the study is in-depth interviews with a sample of respondents from each group. Fifty-seven percent of Connecticut's LHDs and 64% of the nation's LHDs serve communities with fewer than 50,000 residents, so the network anticipates the findings may be generalizable to other states.
- **Grantee Quarterly Updates.** A reminder to grantee networks to respond to a recent email from Nancy Dockter in the NCC regarding the quarterly update on PH PBRN work. Using the provided guide, send an [email update](#) or call Nancy (501-686-5820) to give information by phone by June 30.

- **AcademyHealth Methods Courses for PH PBRNs.** Don't miss out. The AcademyHealth Spring Methods Webinars for PH PBRNs are available to access at your convenience and may be viewed as often as you like through **June 30**. Invite network partners to take these courses and/or schedule sessions for group participation:
  - ◆ Causality in Health Services Research
    - Part I: Introduction to Causal Concepts
    - Part II: Estimation Techniques for Causal Modeling
  - ◆ Do You Really Want to Test Whether Two Populations are Equal? The Science of Equivalency Testing
  - ◆ Introduction to Case Studies: A Public Health Methods Webinar
- **RFPs for Public Health PBRNs.** Two requests for proposals (RFPs) limited to *Public Health PBRN Program* grantees and affiliates recently were released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Lead organization contacts should have received an email with a link to the RWJF online proposal system and additional details. Send an email to the [NCC](#) if your PBRN did not receive an email invitation.

Together the RFPs are known as the Research Acceleration & Expansion Supplement Series and are aimed at enhancing the pace and scope of current research:

**Administrative Supplements.** This RFP offers two opportunities for grantees and affiliates to broaden research in response to external developments that have varying effects on public health delivery systems and the populations they serve:

- ◆ *Expanding Diversity, Addressing Disparities and Social Determinants of Health* (Diversity and Disparities Supplement) provides PBRNs with an avenue to examine the public health system's current and potential roles in addressing health disparities and underlying social determinants of health, as well as ways to mitigate inequities in service delivery. PBRNs may apply for funds to support a junior investigator from an underrepresented population group to accelerate the tempo of existing research and/or to develop new lines of research related to health disparities. Four awards of up to \$100,000 each to be used over 18 months are available.
- ◆ *Advancing Methodology* (Methodology Supplement) offers networks an opportunity to address limitations in commonly used public health services and systems research (PHSSR) approaches by developing and applying novel research designs and/or measurement and analytic techniques to ongoing projects. Two awards of \$50,000 each to use over 18 months are available.
- **Research Capacity Supplements:** This RFP provides opportunities for grantees to expand an existing small-scale study or to develop a new line of research that augments ongoing projects. The new or expanded effort should be designed to produce actionable knowledge about the causes and/or consequences of geographic variation in service delivery, quality, and/or outcomes in public health practice. Collaboration with one or more PH PBRNs and senior researcher(s) is a required strategy. Program grantees that have not implemented large-scale research projects are eligible to apply for the \$100,000 awards.

## Activities on the Horizon

QSRF  
Proposal  
Deadline  
Soon



- **QSRFs Available.** PH PBRNs have until July 1 to propose QSRF studies for the current program year. The required one-page proposal should state the research questions and explain how the study will address a time-sensitive public health practice or policy issue. If the brief proposal shows promise, a three- to five-page proposal will be requested.
- **Developing the PHSSR Research Agenda.** Great strides are being made in the effort to develop an updated national research agenda for public health services and systems research, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other major public health stakeholders. Drs. Debra Pérez and F. Douglas Scutchfield reported on this progress at the AcademyHealth Annual Meeting this week, and solicited input and discussion from attendees representing the larger field of health services research. A similar discussion forum is planned for the NACCHO Annual Meeting in July 2011.
- **NAC Conference Call.** The NAC quarterly conference call is scheduled for Wednesday, June 22, from 11:00 a.m. to noon ET. Networks are invited to submit items to be placed on the agenda for discussion by sending an [email](#) to the NCC.
- **National Longitudinal Survey of Public Health Systems (NLSPHS), 2011 Wave.** A third wave of the NLSPHS, also known as the "typology" survey, will be conducted this summer through the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research at the University of Kentucky in collaboration with the Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks Program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Data collected will be linked with data from the 2010 NACCHO Profile Survey and the 2010 Survey of State Health Agencies conducted by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). Among its many benefits for research, policy and practice, the 2011 NLSPHS will provide a broad view of how public health delivery systems are responding to the economic downturn and to the initial implementation of health system reform under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

## Important Developments in Practice and Policy

- **At Last, a Strategy:** Today, members of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council announced the release of the *National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy*, a plan to increase the years of healthy life that Americans enjoy through a coordinated and comprehensive set of actions for government and private-sector stakeholders to undertake. Authorized by the Affordable Care Act, the National Prevention Strategy recognizes that good health requires not just excellent medical care, but also smart policy and environmental strategies to maintain safe and healthy conditions and enable healthy choices. The plan was developed by the National Prevention Council, which comprises 17 federal agencies having policy authority over actions that potentially influence human health. PBRNs could play valuable roles in studying the implementation and impact of these strategies at community levels. For more information click [here](#).
- **From Categorical to Coordinated Funding Mechanisms:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced last week the availability of approximately \$40 million for state and territorial health departments to strengthen and coordinate actions to prevent chronic diseases and promote health across categorical prevention program areas. Created by the

Affordable Care Act, the program will fund coordinated approaches to planning, implementation, and evaluation across program areas for heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis. PBRNs could play valuable roles in studying the implementation and impact of this new funding mechanism. For more information, click [here](#).

## Public Health PBRN Presentations

Do you know of an upcoming presentation that features your PBRN's work or its members? [Let us know!](#)

- **NACCHO Annual 2011.** Join the nation's local health officials at the NACCHO Annual 2011 in Hartford, Connecticut, July 20-22. With the addition of a research track to an event known for its interactive learning sessions, this will be a great opportunity for public health practice and research colleagues to explore new ideas, examine strategies, and plan for the future. Don't miss the panel of four PH PBRN representatives:
  - ◆ *Practice-Based Research Networks: Applied Systems Research to Inform Local Public Health Policy.* Three PH PBRN Round II grantees will share on findings from early studies and how this research was utilized to build their networks and develop research agendas that were relevant to public health practitioners.  
**Moderator:** Matt Stefanak (Ohio)  
**Speakers:** David Gregorio (Connecticut), Bill Livingood (Florida), and Julie Myhre (Minnesota)

## Research Dissemination Opportunities

- **PBRN Research Journal Theme Issue:** Will your PBRN have research results ready to submit for publication later this summer or early fall? We are negotiating with journals for a theme issue on public health PBRN research findings, and need a provisional assessment of the volume and type(s) of research studies that may be included. If you are interested in this publication opportunity, please [email us a provisional title and short abstract](#) describing the nature of the research your network will submit, including a brief summary of the data and analytic methods to be used in the paper, **by July 8**.
- **PBRN Research Rapid Dissemination through MMWR:** Does your network have some early data or preliminary findings from a research project that have important implications for public health practice and policy? The CDC publication MMWR provides an excellent vehicle for rapid and widespread dissemination of this information to the public health field. Please let us know your concept and we can help your network develop a submission. Early release of findings through MMWR typically does not preclude publication of final results in per-reviewed journals.
- **Health Affairs Thematic Issue.** *Health Affairs* has announced a [Request for Abstracts](#) for a thematic issue on diabetes to be published January 2012. Abstracts are not to exceed 500 words. Deadline for abstracts: June 22. For additional information please visit [website](#).
- **Science of Community Engagement.** The Clinical & Translational Science Awards (CTSA) has issued a [Call for Papers](#) focusing on the science of community engagement for a special issue of the journal, *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*. The call

Deadline  
for draft  
abstract

specifically invites PBRN contributions and prioritizes papers that are collaborative and co-authored by community members. The deadline for submitting papers is August 1.

- ✦ **Integrating Primary Care and Public Health.** The *American Journal of Public Health* and the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* are planning a joint issue addressing the question: “How do we improve population health and promote health equity through the effective integration of primary care and public health?” The multi-agency [Call for Papers](#) seeks submissions in the areas of science, education, practice, and policy and especially invites submissions co-authored by professionals in the public health and primary care fields. Manuscripts are due by August 1.

## Resources in Research and Practice

### CONFERENCES

- ✦ **APHA Midyear Meeting** in Chicago, Illinois, June 23-25. The theme for the meeting is *Implementing Health Reform – A Public Health Approach*. Learn more about the [APHA Midyear Meeting](#).
- ✦ **NACCHO Annual 2011** in Hartford, Conn., July 20-22. [Registration](#) is open.
- ✦ **NALBOH Conference.** 19th Annual NALBOH Conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, September 7-9. For more information and to register for this event, please visit the [website](#).
- ✦ **APHA Annual Meeting.** Washington, D.C., Oct. 29-November 2. [Registration](#) for the meeting and housing are now open. Learn more about the [APHA Annual Meeting](#).
- ✦ **NASHP Conference.** The [National Academy for State Health Policy](#) (NASHP) Annual State Health Policy Conference is October 3-5 in Kansas City, Missouri.

### REPORTS, BRIEFS AND PUBLICATIONS

- ✦ **Improving Quality and Safety** – This recently released [brief](#) address issues surrounding the need for continual improvement in quality of health services, safety, and costs. Although there has been progress, the author expresses a sense of urgency for building a health care system less susceptible to errors and that “delivers better care.” The brief is one of many health policy briefs produced by the RWJF-supported *Health Affairs* journal. The briefs are available for download or email alerts.
- ✦ **Public Health Pathogen-Food Combinations Burden.** A [report](#), funded by RWJF, has been released that examines foodborne pathogens with the highest disease burdens and the top 10 foods most commonly contaminated by them.
- ✦ **PHSSR Progress Report.** RWJF has published [Strengthening the Performance and Impact of Public Health Departments: A Progress Report](#) highlighting the work of the University of Kentucky, NACCHO, ASTHO, and NALBOH in building the field of PHSSR.

### WEBINAR

- ✦ **Climate Change and Public Health.** The fourth and final webinar of the series, “Climate Change: Mastering the Public Health Role,” is on June 29, 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. ET. The series is hosted by APHA. June 29, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. ET. [Registration](#) is free and required.

## New Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

### Hot Off the Press: Three Studies that Elucidate the Emerging PHSSR Community of Practice

In the July issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* is a series of articles on the growth and development of public health services and systems research (PHSSR) as a field of scientific inquiry. The studies upon which the articles are based were supported by RWJF, which since 2004 has been the primary funder of studies in PHSSR. The series provides a descriptive analysis of the growing PHSSR community of practice, as well as researchers' challenges and opportunities.

The series opens with an [introduction](#) by Douglas Scutchfield, director of the Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research at the University of Kentucky and his colleague, Robert Shapiro. They identify three critical issues to be addressed if PHSSR is to progress as a viable discipline that contributes to a stronger public health system and improved population health: dedicated and consistent funding, research that is trans-disciplinary, and effective translation of findings to public health practice.

- In their study, [Jacqueline Merrill](#) et al identified individuals comprising the growing PHSSR community of practice and then surveyed them in order to understand their challenges and attributes (e.g., areas of expertise, funding sources, collaboration, and publications).
- In a study by [Jenine Harris](#) et al, network analysis of literature citations stemming from 11 seminal works and the most highly cited articles in PHSSR was employed to illuminate the multi-disciplinary nature of PHSSR.
- The study by [Michael Bales](#) et al conducted a network analysis of scientific literature co-authorship in PHSSR from the 1980s to 2010 to identify primary foci of research and collaboration in order to gain perspective on the field's research community of practice.

## Funding Opportunities and Announcements

The NCC maintains a [list of funding opportunities](#) of interest to its networks. Grant opportunities with recurring deadlines are tracked and updated.

### PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED LISTINGS

- **Public Prevention Health Fund: Community Transformation Grants.** These grants are a key piece of the ACA that are yet to be implemented through the Public Prevention Health Fund and represent an important expansion of the nation's investment in evidence-based, cross-cutting public health work. The reach, implementation and impact of these new programs will need to be evaluated. Public health PBRNs should keep an eye on the emerging programs as excellent PHSSR opportunities.

According to the [announcement](#), "the purpose of the program is to create healthier communities by: 1) building capacity to implement broad evidence- and practice-based policy, environmental, programmatic and infrastructure changes... and 2) supporting implementation of such

interventions in five strategic areas aligning with Healthy People 2020 focus areas.” Application deadline is July 15.

- **Building Capacity and Research Infrastructure.** The NIH has released a [Request for Applications](#) for the NIMHD Endowment Program for Increasing Research and Institutional Resources Capacity. According to the RFP, “the purpose of this program is to build capacity and research infrastructure and to facilitate minority health and health disparities research at eligible institutions, but not to directly support the research projects itself.” Total program funding is \$15 million. The deadline for letters of intent is June 28. The application deadline is July 28.
- **RWJF Healthy Eating Research.** The RWJF *Healthy Eating Research: Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity* program has released its 2011 [Call for Proposals](#). Concept papers for rapid-response awards are due August 2.
- **RWJF Public Health Law Research Rapid Response Studies.** Proposals accepted online on a rolling basis. Details available in the [CFP](#).

## Key Dates

July 8	PBRN Research Journal Theme Issue Abstract Due
July 20	Quarterly Webinar
July 20-22	NACCHO Annual 2011, Hartford
July 21	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
Aug 18	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
Sept 15	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
Oct 20	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET
Oct 29-Nov 2	APHA Annual Meeting 2011, Washington, D.C.