



Issue #94

## **PBRN Week in Review | October 7 2011**

**PBRN Grantees:** 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@uky.edu](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uky.edu) or (859) 218-2094. Past issues are available in the [newsletter](#) archive.

### **Notable PBRN Activities**

- **New Phone and Email Contact for the PBRN Coordinating Center.** The Public Health PBRN Coordinating Center will be activating its new contact information at the University of Kentucky starting next week. Beginning on Monday October 10, please use the new email address [PublicHealthPBRN@uky.edu](mailto:PublicHealthPBRN@uky.edu) and the new telephone number **(859) 218-2094** to reach Coordinating Center staff and to send along your questions, comments, requests, ideas, updates, and products. The previous telephone and email account will remain active for a few more weeks, but please begin using the new contact information right away.
- **Opportunities for Research Related to the HHS Public Health Quality Framework.** The Coordinating Center's Glen Mays began a dialogue this week with Dr. Peggy Honoré and her staff at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services concerning next steps in the development and operationalization of the HHS *Framework for Quality in the Public Health System*. The Framework and a related set of priority areas for quality improvement were developed by a federal forum convened by Dr. Honoré in 2008, and was the subject of a recent article in [Health Affairs](#) by Honoré, Assistant Secretary of Health Dr. Howard Koh, CMS Administrator Don Berwick, and other federal officials. Logical next steps in this initiative include the development, validation, and implementation of a set of metrics that can be used to identify gaps in quality across the public health system, to study the causes and consequences of variation in quality across the system, and to evaluate the effectiveness of quality improvement strategies. Public Health PBRNs are positioned to play important roles in these types of activities. Dr. Honoré and Mays will be developing plans and strategies for moving this effort forward in the coming weeks, so contact the [Coordinating Center](#) if your network has interests and ideas related to this effort.
- **PBRN Network Analysis Survey Underway:** The Coordinating Center has launched the network analysis survey of participants in the Round II and affiliate public health PBRNs. This survey allows us to obtain a snapshot of patterns of interaction between researchers and practitioners in the PBRNs, and will help us better understand – and ultimately improve – how the networks function as mechanisms for producing and translating evidence for practice. This survey will replicate the survey completed with Round I PBRNs in 2010. As a learning organization, the Public Health PBRN Program occasionally must focus the research lens on ourselves to take full advantage of opportunities to produce useful evidence. If you are a Round II or affiliate PBRN, please encourage all of the participants and collaborators in your network

to respond to the survey at their earliest convenience. Data and findings will be shared with each participating network to stimulate further analysis, interpretation, and brainstorming of ways to improve research production and translation processes. Contact the [Coordinating Center](#) with any needs or questions related to the survey.

- **Research on NACCHO Model Practices:** Leaders from Public Health PBRNs convened by conference call last week with leaders at NACCHO, other public health researchers and “pracademics” around the country to discuss opportunities for research involving NACCHO’s compendium of Model Practices. Model Practices are public health strategies that have been ground-tested in local public health agencies, subjected to evaluation, and vetted by peers through a review process administered by NACCHO. There is considerable interest in moving at least some of these practices “up the evidence hierarchy” by subjecting them to more rigorous scientific study and also conducting research on the implementation and impact of these practices in different public health settings. If you are interested in learning more about this effort, contact staff at the [Coordinating Center](#).
- **New RWJF Guidelines and Policies for Projects Involving Surveys/Polls:** The Foundation has released new guidelines and policies for projects that include the implementation and reporting of surveys or polls. Make sure to review these carefully before undertaking new data collection activities. Access the guidelines [here](#).
- **End of Project Year Updates and Reporting:** The Coordinating Center is approaching the end of its program year on October 31 and will be compiling reports on the status of all PBRN research activities. Please make sure that your network has submitted any research products completed during the year via email to the [Coordinating Center](#) (manuscripts, briefs, reports, presentations, instruments, data sets, guidelines, decision aides) and also make sure to submit these to the RWJF following its submission guidelines. We will be in contact with each network this month to make sure we have the latest updates on the status of your network’s projects.
- **Publication Opportunity: Theme Issue Devoted to PBRN Research:** We are closing in on a set of manuscripts to submit for a special theme issue of AJPM devoted to research of the public health PBRNs. If your network has a research manuscript that **will be ready to submit by October 28, 2011** and you have not let us know yet, please contact the [Coordinating Center](#) ASAP and send us a brief abstract and title for the paper. For those who are planning to submit a manuscript, please keep this deadline in mind and let us know if you need assistance.

### **Related Developments in Research and Practice**

- **Evidence Review on Obesity Screening and Management:** The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently commissioned a review to identify and assess new available evidence on screening for and management of obesity and overweight in adults. The evidence report was published in the October 4 issue of Annals of Internal Medicine and is available on the [USPSTF Website](#). The USPSTF used the evidence report to inform its draft recommendation statement on screening for and management of obesity and overweight in adults, which will soon be available for public comment on the USPSTF Web site.
- **A Step Forward for Evidence-Based Cancer Screening Policy:** Late-breaking news indicates that the USPSTF next week will issue a recommendation against routine screening of healthy

men for prostate cancer using the PSA test, according to today's New York Times. Strong evidence, including two recent large longitudinal trials, suggests that the tests do not improve survival rates for prostate cancer and produce significant harms related to unnecessary evaluation, treatment and complications.

- **Proposed Changes to Research Regulations May Impact PBRN Research:** HHS is inviting comments on proposed changes to the federal Common Rule -- regulations governing research involving human subjects -- including several changes with direct relevance to PHSSR and PBRNs. Among the proposed changes are: (1) revising the "exempt" category for low-risk studies to include new protections and cover a broader array of studies; (2) revising review criteria for *quality improvement research, public health research, and program evaluation* activities; and (3) streamlining IRB review for *multi-site studies*. Make sure to review these proposed changes and provide your feedback to HHS. Click [here](#) for the Federal Register notice.
- **Advancing the field of mHealth with mEvidence:** NIH recently hosted a workshop on strategies for producing and translating evidence regarding the use of mobile health technologies in improving public health and health care. These technologies promise to transform how we practice public health and also how we collect data and conduct research for public health practice. The meeting was sponsored by RWJF's Pioneer Portfolio. The workshop archive and related materials are available [here](#).
- **Campaign to Save a Million Hearts:** CDC Director Tom Frieden and CMS Director Don Berwick describe a new large-scale federal campaign to increase the uptake of evidence-based clinical and public health interventions and thereby prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years in last week's [NEJM](#). Research opportunities abound with this effort.

### Activities on the Horizon

- **PH PBRN October Research Conference.** The Public Health PBRN Monthly Research Conference will be on Thursday, October 20 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. ET. Representatives of the Massachusetts PH PBRN will present findings from their ongoing research. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the study results. The Massachusetts Practice-Based Research Network (MA PBRN) is comprised of local and state public health practitioners, public health association leaders and academics that are working together to improve the equitable and efficient provision of public health services in the Commonwealth. One of the first research projects developed by the MA PBRN is the Local PHACTS (Public Health Activities, Capacities and Technical Skills) study. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between local context, organization of local public health service delivery, core public health capacities and the delivery of evidence-based public health services in Massachusetts. Methods entail a statewide telephone and web-based survey of local public health directors, agents or board of health chairs in each of the 351 municipalities in the Commonwealth. Data collection is ongoing. Preliminary findings will be presented, including an overview of the public health organization and infrastructure in Massachusetts as well as strengths and gaps in core public health capacities. The MA PBRN also will present early findings on the relationship between multi-jurisdictional service sharing and core public health capacities. The presentation will conclude with a summary of lessons learned from conducting collaborative research in Massachusetts. Please submit agenda items for the administrative part of the monthly research conference call to the [Coordinating Center](#).

- **AcademyHealth Methods Courses for PH PBRNs.** The AcademyHealth Summer Methods Webinars for PH PBRNs are available until October 15. Invite network partners to take these courses and/or schedule sessions for group participation:
  - Best Practices in Designing and Analyzing Internet Surveys for HSR
  - Analysis of Social Networks Part I: The Network Perspective and Network Data
  - Applied Propensity Score Analysis I
  - Multilevel Modeling: A Public Health Methods Webinar
- **APHA Mix & Mingle.** Perennial collaborators at the PHSSR and PBRN coordinating centers are planning an informal get-together at APHA. Stay tuned for more on this developing opportunity... If your network is presenting PBRN related research at the meeting, make sure you let us know the details by emailing the [Coordinating Center](#).

## Research Dissemination Opportunities

- **Preventive Medicine 2012 Call for Presentation Proposals.** *Preventive Medicine*, the annual meeting of the American College of Preventive Medicine, is accepting presentation abstracts on the topics of public health practice, clinical preventive and lifestyle medicine, prevention policy, and medical quality for its February 2012 conference. [Call for Proposals](#). **Deadline: October 24**
- **NIH D&I Conference Call for Proposals.** The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation is accepting abstracts in the categories of individual and panel presentations, poster presentations, and think tanks. The conference theme is Policy and Practice, and applicants are encouraged to use this theme in preparing abstracts. Topic domains and complete details for submitting abstracts are available [online](#). The Public Health PBRN program presented a panel at last year's meeting on work of the PBRNs that was quite popular. **Deadline: November 12**
- **PHLR Request for Abstracts.** The RWJF Public Health Law Research (PHLR) program is accepting abstracts for presentation at its annual meeting January 18-20, 2012, in New Orleans. Abstracts may be in the themes of communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, and injury prevention. Abstracts not accepted for oral presentation will be considered for posters. See full details at the [PHLR Annual Meeting](#) site. **Deadline: November 15**

## Resources in Research and Practice

### WEBINARS

- **Using Social Media for Research Dissemination:** Members of AcademyHealth can participate in a free webinar on using social media to translate and disseminate your research to policy and practice communities. Date: Thursday, November 3, 2011. Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. EDT. Format: Live webinar, audio with PowerPoint. Faculty: Austin Frakt, Ph.D., Health Services Researcher; Boston University and Boston VA; Founder, The Incidental Economist Blog. Lou Rossiter, Ph.D., Research Professor, College of William & Mary; Chair, Coalition for Health Services Research. *The webinar is free and open only to AcademyHealth members. Registration is limited to the first 150 participants – [register today](#).*

## REPORTS, BRIEFS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Evidence-Based Policy and HIV Screening:** A new paper in this week's [NEJM](#) analyzes the controversies surrounding the evidence for recommendations of routine testing for HIV among adolescents and adults in the U.S. Why are the IOM, CDC, and USPSTF seemingly at odds over the evidence?
- **Weight Loss Intervention Could Cut \$15B from Medicare:** A new analysis by Ken Thorpe and Zhou Yang published in this month's [Health Affairs](#) estimates that Medicare costs could be cut by as much as \$15 billion if it funded weight-loss programs for overweight and obese people, ages 60 to 64, with certain other risk factors, were routinely offered (based on the Diabetes Prevention Program intervention and its translation into YMCAs).
- **Enhance Translational Research with Moratorium on RCTs:** In a recent [AJPM](#) article, Kessler and Glasgow suggest a 10-year moratorium on federally-funded randomized controlled trials, with the freed-up research funding going to support implementation research, comparative effectiveness research, and related translational studies that will speed the application of evidence in routine health practice.

## CONFERENCES

- **APHA Annual Meeting.** Washington, D.C., Oct. 29-November 2. [Registration and hotel info.](#) [APHA general meeting info.](#)
- **2012 Public Health Preparedness Summit.** [PHP Summit](#) in Anaheim, February 21-24, 2012
- **2012 PHSSR Keeneland Conference.** Lexington, **April 17-19.** Keeneland Conference [general information.](#)

## 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.

## NEW LISTINGS

- **Applying Behavioral Economics to Perplexing Health and Health Care Challenges.** RWJF announces a new research funding initiative to study solutions to health and health care problems using the principles and methods of behavioral economics. More [here](#). Brief Proposal Idea Deadline: November 2, 2011 3:00 PM EDT. Full Proposal Deadline: December 21, 2011 3:00 PM EDT.
- **Quality Improvement in Public Health Practice Exchange.** RWJF is seeking an organization to build and operate an expanding web-based database of QI efforts conducted by governmental public health departments across the country, to help users find QI interventions and tools relevant to their own health department and community needs, and to provide a forum for dialogue and learning about QI in public health. More [here](#). Application Deadline: November 9, 2011 5:00 PM EST
- **PCORI Pilots.** In an August newsletter, we mentioned that the [Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute](#) (PCORI), an independent, non-profit organization established by the ACA was soliciting comments on its initial research priorities. We noted that even with the focus on patient care, PCORI's mission of studying *prevention* and treatment options and comparing *delivery system* innovations and clinical interventions leaves the door ajar for PHSSR oriented studies. This week PCORI announced a [Pilot](#)



[Projects Grant Program](#) that will be used to continue development of the research agenda. According to the news release, "With this program, PCORI is interested in the development of research methods, patient-oriented outcomes instruments, patient-provider communication and other decision-making strategies, building collaborative research teams with stakeholders, translating research findings into clinical practice, stakeholder engagement, and research agenda setting strategies that can be used in future comparative effectiveness research." Deadlines: Letter of intent-November 1; Application-December 1.

- **NIH Director's Transformative Research Awards.** This R01 from the NIH Common Fund was mentioned by Glen Mays during the September research conference. According to the announcement, "The NIH Director's Transformative Research Awards complements NIH's traditional, investigator-initiated grant programs by supporting individual scientists or groups of scientists proposing groundbreaking, exceptionally innovative, original and/or unconventional research with the potential to create new scientific paradigms. Little or no preliminary data are expected. Projects must clearly demonstrate potential to produce a major impact in a broad area of biomedical or behavioral research." [Full Announcement](#). Application Deadline: January 12, 2012
- **NIH Common Fund: Economic Incentives for Prevention.** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund has released the following FOA for [Economic Research on Incentives for Efficient Use of Preventive Services \(R01\)](#). Letter of Intent deadline: October 15. Application Deadline: November 15.
- **NIH Systems Science and Health Research.** Proposals are being solicited from multiple NIH institutes for R01 behavioral and social science research projects, both basic and applied, that use methods of systems science (e.g. network analysis, agent-based modeling, etc) to understand complex processes that affect human health. Includes an interest in studies that elucidate the relationships between health service delivery processes and health outcomes across the entire system of care, multi-level effects of health promotion and disease prevention interventions, and mechanisms underlying health disparities. Details available in the [FOA](#) and standard application dates for R01s apply.

## PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED LISTINGS

- **Junior Investigator PHSSR Awards Program.** The National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research has announced the 2011 [Call for Proposals](#) Dissertation and Junior Faculty Awards. The PHSSR Awards Program is open to doctoral candidates or junior faculty who received their initial appointment within the past 3 years. Up to 10 awards of \$10,000 each will be awarded. *Deadline for proposals: October 13.*
- **Funding for Doctoral Students.** A reminder to PH PBRNs with doctoral students collaborating in research projects that these students can pursue dissertation funding to support their research activities. The three biggest and best federal sources for doctoral students pursuing HSR and PHSSR research projects are [NIH NRSA awards\(F-31s\)](#), [AHRQ's R36 awards](#), and [NSF's Dissertation Research Improvement awards](#). And of course, the University of Kentucky National Coordinating Center for PHSSR offers [dissertation support](#) through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The eligibility criteria and deadlines vary.
- **RWJF Public Health Law Research Rapid Response Studies.** Proposals accepted online on a rolling basis. Details available in the [CFP](#).

## Key Dates

**Oct 20** Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 p.m. ET (MA PH PBRN)

<b>Oct 29-Nov 2</b>	APHA Annual Meeting 2011, Washington, D.C.
<b>Nov 17</b>	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET (NE PH PBRN)
<b>Dec 15</b>	Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 p.m. ET (NC PH PBRN)
<b>April 17-19</b>	PHSSR Keeneland Conference 2012, Lexington

### **The Last Word**

In the spirit of healthy culture change, at press time many Kentuckians were preparing to head out for the [Great Bourbon Chase](#), a 200-mile overnight relay race that traces the historic route of the bootleggers across the Bluegrass region from still to still, now passing some of the most famous bourbon distilleries in the world. Although the race starts Friday night at the famed Jim Beam distillery, there will be no time for sampling the product along the way – the 250 teams and 2500 runners are vying to be the first to make it to town in Lexington by Saturday afternoon. The Coordinating Center’s Glen Mays, who joined a team with several other colleagues from public health agencies in the area (a different kind of research-practice partnership), has only one concern: where to find caffeine to get through the overnight sections of the race. “I don’t think there is a Starbucks in Perryville,” said Mays.



The Public Health PBRN Program is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, now co-located with the PHSSR National Coordinating Center at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY.