

Issue #98

PBRN Week in Review | December 19 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 or (859) 218-2094. Past issues are available in the [newsletter](#) archive.

Notable PBRN Activities

- **New Opportunity for Multi-PBRN Research.** Ten Public Health PBRNs have applied to participate in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's multi-network study of practice variation in public health. The *Multi-network Practices and Outcomes Variation Examination Study (MPROVE)* will allow participating PBRN networks to use a common research protocol and standardized data collection strategies to examine the causes and consequences of practice variation in public health. This opportunity will support up to 6 participating networks with grants of \$50,000 each to support data collection and analysis activities. Applications submitted on December 7 are currently under review, and award recipients will be announced in early 2012. For more information, contact the [PBRN Coordinating Center](#).
- **PBRNs Share Lessons from Research on Public Health QI:** The National Network of Public Health Institutes hosted a meeting earlier this week to support and expand the use of quality improvement (QI) techniques in public health practice, which include a session devoted to QI research underway in the public health PBRNs. Among the highlights of this session: Glen Mays gave an overview of research needs and complexities associated with the study of public health QI; the University of Minnesota's Dr. Bill Riley gave an update on the Minnesota PBRN's Quick Strike project to develop a taxonomy and registry of public health QI projects; Dr. Dave Palm of the Nebraska Division of Public Health presented findings from the Nebraska PBRN's study of local capacity to implement QI in public health settings; and Dr. Bill Livingood of Duval County Health Department (FL) and Georgia Southern University shared early findings from the Georgia PBRN's project to test the implementation of a QI Collaborative model in small and rural public health settings using regional health department structures. Dr. Livingood also presented findings from research projects underway in the Florida PBRN to examine the effects of funding sources on local public health capacity, and to test QI interventions to improve immunization coverage. A number of other leaders and collaborators in the Public Health PBRNs participated in the meeting and presented insight from their QI work, including Colorado's Lisa VanRaemdonck, Connecticut's Jennifer Kertanis, Kansas' Gianfranco Pezzino, Kentucky's Georgia Heise, Minnesota's Deb Burns, Missouri's Janet Canavese and Katherine Stamatakis, North Carolina's Mary Davis, New York's Sylvia Pirani, and Ohio's Matt Stefanak, among others. This meeting is part of a new NNPHI initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation entitled Strengthening the Community of Practice for Public Health Improvement (COPPHI). Slides from the PBRN session will be available on the [Public Health PBRN website](#).

- **North Carolina PBRN Studies Effects of Policy Change on MCH Care Coordination:** At the December Public Health PBRN monthly virtual meeting last week, Drs. Dorothy Cilenti and Rebecca Wells presented early findings from the network's Research Implementation Award examining the effects of state policy change on MCH care coordination. Beginning in 2009, the state Medicaid agency reduced payments to local health departments for providing care coordination services to high-risk mothers and children, and began moving to a capitated medical homes model of delivery. The network is using a mixed-method approach to study the effects of this policy change, including analysis of Medicaid claims data along with surveys of health department staff and interviews with clients. Early findings indicate that health departments have not reduced MCH service volume despite the payment cuts, suggesting that agencies are tapping other resources and/or using more efficient delivery strategies to maintain service levels. Moreover, the researchers have found no evidence of increases in ambulatory care sensitive hospitalizations and emergency department use following the policy change. Interviews with health department staff revealed wide variation in implementation of the new medical home model and identified some concerns that the tighter client eligibility criteria based on medical risks may exclude some women who need support. A recording of the research-in-progress presentation will be available on the [Public Health PBRN website](#). You can track the progress of the North Carolina Public Health PBRN on its own [website](#).
- **Sage Advice on Mixed-Method Research.** Dr. Shoshanna Sofaer of Baruch College School of Public Affairs in New York City joined the Public Health PBRN monthly meeting this week to discuss tips and strategies for conducting mixed-method research designs in public health settings. This session was a follow-up to the AcademyHealth webinar on mixed methods that Dr. Sofaer conducted earlier in the month, and referenced the recently released NIH [Best Practices on Mixed Methods](#). Several additional AcademyHealth webinars on this topic are planned for later in the year. Contact the [PBRN Coordinating Center](#) for information on how to access archives of these sessions.
- **New PBRN Funding Opportunities:** See announcements below under "Funding Opportunities" for information about PBRN Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF) projects and a new mentored research award specifically for Public Health PBRNs.
- **New Dissemination Opportunity for PHSSR:** An upcoming issue of the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* will be dedicated to advances in PHSSR, with a special focus on approaches for translating findings to policy and practice audiences. The issue, tentatively titled, "The Science of Public Health Practice: Advances in PHSSR" is being guest-edited by the PBRN Coordinating Center's Glen Mays and the National Coordinating Center for PHSSR's Doug Scutchfield. Invited manuscripts will be due in February 2012, with a final publication date of November 2012 to be released in conjunction with next year's APHA Annual Meeting. Contact the [PBRN Coordinating Center](#) with any questions.
- **Another PBRN Dissemination Opportunity: the Public Health REACT Podcast:** As more PBRN research projects are bearing fruit, the Public Health PBRN Program is developing a new vehicle for rapidly disseminating key findings and practice implications from this research to key audiences, tentatively called the *Public Health Research-to-Action (REACT) Podcast*. Through this vehicle, the program will produce a series of fast and timely podcast interviews with PBRN networks as they are completing research projects, focusing squarely on the implications of the research for public health practice and policy decisions. NAC member

and Arkansas secretary of health Dr. Paul Halverson has agreed to host this series of approximately 3-minute conversations with PBRN leaders about their research projects. Dr. Halverson will serve as an interviewer and provocateur for these sessions, driven by a few targeted questions asked by a sitting state health official. With Dr. Halverson leading the conversation, we can be sure that these sessions will emphasize brevity, clarity, and relevance to real-world public health practice and policy, particularly at state and local levels. We will disseminate the podcasts through a variety of channels, including the PBRN website, the PHSSR Youtube channel, and partnerships with key public health professional organizations. We will be contacting PBRN leaders about this opportunity in the coming weeks, but don't hesitate to contact the [Coordinating Center](#) with your ideas about this opportunity.

- **A Reminder: Please Route All Questions on Grant Budgeting, Reporting, and Administration to the PBRN Coordinating Center:** The PBRN National Coordinating Center is your one-stop source for information and assistance on the administrative aspects of your PBRN projects, including budgeting, expenditures, subcontracts, and reporting. Please make sure that you send your network's questions to the Coordinating Center (email publichealthPBRN@uky.edu or telephone **(859) 218-2094**) to ensure the fastest response. This routing also helps us to reduce unnecessary burdens on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants administration personnel.

Related Developments in Research and Practice

- **2012 Keeneland Conference Planning:** The National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services & Systems Research (PHSSR) at the University of Kentucky is hosting the **2012 PHSSR Keeneland Conference** from April 17-19, 2012, in beautiful Lexington, Kentucky. The Call for Abstracts will close at 3 p.m. EST on Monday, January 9, 2012. Researchers, practitioners and policymakers who are interested in sharing their work during the scientific sessions should visit the conference website at www.keenelandconference.org or follow on Twitter, www.twitter.com/keenelandconf, for updates. Questions regarding submission guidelines should be sent to the national program office via email, abstracts@publichealthsystems.org or phone 859-218-2289. Confirmed speakers for the 2012 conference include: Dr. Harvey Fineberg, President, Institute of Medicine (IOM); and Dr. Thomas Frieden, Director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Join close to 400 PHSSR colleagues to discuss the future of the nation's public health system. Previous programs, agendas and presentations are also available for download from the conference website. The Public Health PBRN Program will have its Annual Grantee Meeting on April 16-17, 2012 in conjunction with Keeneland, and its PBRN National Advisory Committee meeting on April 17.
- **AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting Accepting Abstracts:** AcademyHealth is now accepting abstracts for its 2012 Annual Research Meeting to be held in Orlando FL on June 24-26. Among the 12 research theme areas for this year's conference is "Public Health, Prevention, and Population Health Improvement." As in years past, there will also be a meeting of the Public Health Systems Research Interest Group. Abstracts are due by January 12 at 5pm EST. [More](#) information.

Activities on the Horizon

- **PH PBRN Monthly Virtual Meeting for January.** The Public Health PBRN Monthly Virtual Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. EST. As part of the PBRN Research-in-Progress section, representatives from the Washington Public Health PBRN will present emerging findings from their research (to be determined). Please [email](#) us any items you would like to be placed on the meeting agenda.

Research Dissemination Opportunities

- **Keeneland and AcademyHealth.** See the above posts for abstracts being accepted for the Keeneland Conference and the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. These two meetings are the go-to places to discuss the production, translation, and consumption of PHSSR.

Resources in Research and Practice

WEBINARS

- **Skill-Building Opportunities for PBRNs:** A new set of on-demand methods webinars are making available free of charge to PBRNs for a limited time only – through January 2012. The following webinars are now available from AcademyHealth – contact the [Coordinating Center](#) for information on how to access these sessions free of charge as a PBRN participant:
 1. **Analysis of Social Networks (parts 2 and 3).** These sessions, from a three-part webinar series taught by Dr. Robert A Hanneman from the University of California, Riverside, will address ways in which the network perspective can inform common types of health services research. Practical guidance on the common statistical software for analyzing networks will be covered, in addition to advanced concepts that are useful for developing strategies to implement change in networks.
 2. **Give Your Research a Voice: Social Media Dissemination and Knowledge.** Participants will learn how researchers can use social media to communicate their research to stakeholders—primarily policymakers and media. Austin Frakt, researcher and founder of The Incidental Economist blog, discusses the potential of blogging for dissemination and knowledge transfer. Participants will gain insight into the influence of health policy blogging, along with the pros and cons of using it as a dissemination strategy. Lou Rossiter, professor at The College of William & Mary, provides the policymaker perspective on the challenges of finding the information in a timely manner. He will share his insight on the role of social media and offer advice on how researchers can stand out in the crowd.
 3. **Innovations in Health Surveys.** Panelists from the Innovations in Health Services section at the 2011 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM) highlight their innovative methods in regard to survey research. As modern technology provides new challenges and opportunities to research subjects and access data, the panelists speak on issues such as probability sampling, mixed methods, and research to impact practice in a health care setting. Panelists include Jordon Peugh, Knowledge Networks; Trent Buskirk, St. Louis University School of Public Health; Charles DiSogra, Knowledge Networks; and Sara Singer of the Harvard School of Public Health.

➤ **NIH Resources on Systems Science.** NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research continues to amass a treasure trove of resources for researchers seeking to understand and use systems science approaches in their work. Among these resources are:

1. Annual Institute on Systems Science and Health (ISSH). There is a call for applications each fall (mid-December) and a weeklong spring/summer course each year. To view ISSH materials from prior years, please click [here](#). The 2012 application site is not accepting applications just yet.
2. The archives for the wildly popular 2007 Symposia Series on System Science and Health sponsored by the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other components of NIH is available. Resources include: Systems Methodologies for Solving Real-World Problems: Applications in Public Health <http://videocast.nih.gov/launch.asp?13712>; Network Analysis: Using Connections and Structures to Understand and Change Health Behaviors, <http://videocast.nih.gov/launch.asp?13878> ; Agent Based Modeling: Population Health from the Bottom Up, <http://videocast.nih.gov/launch.asp?13931> ; System Dynamics Modeling: Population Flows, Feedback Loops and Health, <http://videocast.nih.gov/launch.asp?14005>
3. The BSSR Lecture Series, including “Harnessing Systems Science Methodologies To Inform Public Policy: System Dynamics Modeling For Obesity Policy In The Envision Network” <http://videocast.nih.gov/launch.asp?16756>

And don't forget the wonderful NIH funding opportunities available to support health research that uses system science methodologies. See the PBRN funding opportunities list archive below.

REPORTS, BRIEFS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Integrating Public Health into Medical Education.** A new supplemental issue of [AJPM](#) is devoted to principles and strategies for integrating public health into the medical school curricula. Included is an insightful article on “Principles for Authentic Population Health” authored by Ohio PBRN leader Dr. Scott Frank of Case Western Reserve University and the Shaker Heights Health Department.
- **Public Health Nurses Improve Prevention Adoption:** A new study in this month's [AJPH](#) shows that a public health nurse-delivered intervention improved the adoption of prevention practices to reduce household environmental health risks among rural low-income parents.
- **Recruitment and Retention in State Public Health Workforce:** A new study in this month's [AJPM](#) reports on the results of a 50-state Epidemiologic Capacity Assessment survey fielded in 2009, which reveals high levels of expected turnover in state epidemiologist positions and numerous challenges to recruitment and retention.

- **A Framework for Reducing Disparities through Public Health:** A recent article in [Health Affairs](#) critiques theoretical frameworks for reducing disparities in health care access, and articulates new roles for public health agencies to play in this arena. In this same [issue](#), HHS leaders Drs. Howard Koh, Garth Graham, and Sherry Glied outline the federal government's new action plan to combat disparities.

CONFERENCES

- **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](#).
- **2012 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting.** Orlando FL on June 24-26. Abstracts are due by January 12 at 5pm EST. [More](#) 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.

PUBLIC HEALTH PBRN NEW LISTINGS

- **Quick Strike Research Projects:** The Public Health PBRN Coordinating Center will solicit, select, and coordinate the implementation of up to four Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF) research projects to be carried out by primary and affiliate members of the Public Health PBRN Program during the 2011-2012 program year. Projects must address time-sensitive research questions based on emerging information needs in public health practice and policy; must have a high probability of leading to subsequent, larger-scale studies; and must be feasible for completion with a limited budget of up to \$25,000 in total costs and within 3-6 months. These projects will be funded through a subcontract to each awardee to expedite initiation of the research. Grantees will be expected to disseminate practice-relevant findings rapidly through the new rapid-release publication *Frontiers in Public Health Services and Systems Research* and other vehicles, and will be expected translate findings into practice improvements through the development of webinars, training sessions, and decision tools for use by practitioners and policy analysts.

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis until all awards have been given or until a final deadline of August 31 2012 has been reached. PBRN networks should submit a brief proposal of no more than four single-paged pages (one-inch margins, 11 point Arial font) by emailing their proposal as an attachment in PDF format to publichealthPBRN@uky.edu with "QSRF Proposal" indicated in the subject line. The proposal must include: (A) a description of the rationale and specific aims for the proposed project; (B) a summary of the research design, data and analytic methods to be used; (C) a description of the practice settings involved in the research and how they will be engaged in the design, implementation, and translation of the research; and (D) a brief summary of the roles and qualifications of key personnel. Proposals

will be reviewed by Coordinating Center staff and members of the Public Health PBRN National Advisory Committee (NAC) using the following selection criteria: (1) the importance of the topic in terms of its ability to inform public health practice and/or policy; (2) time-sensitivity of the research opportunity; (3) feasibility of the project given budget and time constraints and expertise of network; (4) strength of mechanisms for engaging practice settings in the study and its translation; and (5) potential for the study to lead to subsequent, larger-scale funded research. Additionally, for PBRN networks that have received prior QSRF awards, reviewers will consider the past performance of the network in publishing and disseminating results from prior QSRF projects and in pursuing subsequent larger-scale studies. Based on the proposal reviews, successful applicants will be asked to submit a project budget and additional materials required for award processing.

- **Junior Investigator Awards to Expand Diversity through Mentored Public Health PBRN Research:** The National Coordinating Center for PHSSR announces the availability of funds to support predoctoral and postdoctoral researchers from under-represented backgrounds to engage in a mentored research experience within a Public Health PBRN. Four awards are available for junior investigators from backgrounds that historically have been under-represented in scientific and research disciplines. The awards will allow the funded investigator to contribute to the research of the sponsoring Public Health PBRN while receiving mentorship and support from senior PBRN leaders and investigators. The awards also include travel support to attend the Keeneland Conference on PHSSR. **Applications must be received via email by Tuesday January 17, 2012 at 3pm EST.** More information on how to apply has been sent to the key contact person(s) in each Public Health PBRN. Contact the PBRN Coordinating Center for more information.

OTHER NEW LISTINGS

- **NSF/AHRQ Funding for Systems Modeling in Health:** NSF, in collaboration with the Health Information Technology (IT) Portfolio at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), invites investigator-initiated proposals that address systems modeling issues in health services research. This initiative seeks innovative, interdisciplinary research projects to transform the U.S. health care system toward more effective and efficient service delivery, including strategies to enhance delivery of preventive strategies. The full announcement is [here](#). Submission date: February 15, 2012
- **AHRQ Funding for Primary Care PBRN Centers of Excellence:** AHRQ solicits applications for Center Core grants (P30) to “support Centers of Excellence in Primary Care Practice-Based Research and Learning. Applications must consist of a primary organization with 3 or more affiliated regional PBRNs (including a PBRN affiliated with the primary organization) or a national PBRN organized around shared resources and research infrastructure. It is expected that each Center will foster a highly collaborative, interdisciplinary research environment. AHRQ is particularly interested in supporting an infrastructure that would accelerate both the generation of new knowledge and a community of learning for primary care practices to improve quality, patient safety and effectiveness of care.” The full announcement is [here](#). Submission date: January 26, 2012

- **CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation:** The CMS Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation has released a “Health Care Innovation Challenge” which dedicates up to \$1B for innovative projects that test creative ways to deliver high quality health care services, with a driving emphasis on lowering costs. The full announcement is [here](#). Letters of intent are due December 19 and full proposals due January 27, 2012.
- **RWJF Funding for public health QI implementation:** As part of the new initiative, Strengthening the Community of Practice for Public Health Improvement (COPPHI), the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) will provide health departments with \$5,000 awards coupled with 15 hours of individualized quality improvement (QI) assistance from an experienced QI Coach to conduct a QI project that results in measureable changes in practice. A letter of intent to apply is due on January 6 and the proposal is due January 26, 2012. Please visit the [COPPHI](#) page of the NNPHI website for additional details and information on how to apply.
- **National Demonstration Initiative on QI Practices in State Public Health Programs:** The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has announced the launch of a National Demonstration Initiative on Quality Improvement Practices in State Public Health Programs. The purpose of the National Demonstration is “to increase state readiness for accreditation, demonstrate the value of accreditation/QI, improve integration of services among state public health programs, and use standard methodology to manage budgets in difficult times.” The deadline for applications is 11:59 PM EDT, January 9 2012. The full announcement is [here](#).
- **New NSF Program on Smart Health and Wellbeing:** This new funding opportunity “seeks to address fundamental technical and scientific issues that would support much needed transformation of healthcare from reactive and hospital-centered to preventive, proactive, evidence-based, person-centered and focused on wellbeing rather than disease. The issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to, sensor technology, networking, information and machine learning technology, modeling cognitive processes, system and process modeling, and social and economic issues.” Full Proposal Deadline(s): February 06, 2012 Type I: Exploratory Projects (EXP) February 21, 2012 Type II: Integrative Projects (INT Full announcement [here](#).
- **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 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

- **Predocctoral support.** 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.** PHLR will be accepting Rapid Response Letters of Intent through December 29, 2011 at 3:00 Eastern Time. After this date this Call for Proposals (CFP) will be closed. A new CFP may be issued next year. Details available in the [CFP](#).

Key Dates

Jan 19, 2012	Monthly Public Health PBRN Virtual Meeting 1:00-2:30PM EST
Feb 2, 1012	Quarterly Public Health PBRN Webinar 12noon – 1:30PM EST
Feb 16, 2012	Monthly Public Health PBRN Virtual Meeting 1:00-2:30PM EST
Mar 15, 2012	Monthly Public Health PBRN Virtual Meeting 1:00-2:30PM EST
Apr 16-17, 2012	Public Health PBRN Grantee Meeting and National Advisory Committee Meeting at the Keeneland Conference. Lexington, KY
Apr 17-19, 2012	Keeneland Conference on PHSSR Lexington, KY



Parting Shots

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has released its nominations for the “most influential research articles” of 2011 that comprise this year’s RWJF *Year in Research* poll. According to the Foundation, the 20 research article nominees for 2011 were selected based on the strength of the research approach used and “popularity as revealed by the number of visits each article collected since their debut on RWJF’s website. The Foundation does not determine the top research, we ask the public—our subscribers, visitors, followers on Twitter and other social networks—to do the honor. Now, it’s time for the public to help us select the ‘Final 5.’ ” Until December 23 you can [visit the list of nominees and VOTE for the “Final 5”](#) articles of the year.

Best wishes for an enjoyable holiday season and a fast and clean start to 2012.

