

Issue #13

PBRN Week in Review | April 17, 2009

PBRN Grantees: Please circulate relevant information to your network members. For additional information and suggestions for future items, please contact Elaine Wootten, woottenelaine@uams.edu or 501-526-6628.

Notable Activities This Week

- The **Public Health PBRN Round II Call for Proposals** was issued Wednesday, April 15. In this round up to 10 grantees will be selected to join the initial cohort of 5 grantees in developing public health PBRNs. For details and important dates, see the PBRN website or the complete [Call for Proposals](#).
- **Cross-cutting PBRN Research and Evaluation Activities.** Based on feedback received from the PBRN National Advisory Committee and PBRN grantees at the Keeneland meeting last week, coordinating center staff are continuing to work on possible research activities that will yield comparative information on how public health research networks develop and evolve over time, along with information about important, cross-cutting issues in public health practice. One activity highly recommended by several NAC advisors (and mentioned in our 3-page concept paper on PBRN research and evaluation activities) is a descriptive network analysis conducted with PBRNs. Such an activity, if conducted relatively early in the developmental history of networks, can provide a baseline for tracking changes in network structure and function over time, thereby allowing others to learn from the pioneering experiences of our first cohort of public health PBRNs. Descriptive, interorganizational network analyses can be conducted relatively quickly and easily with minimal data collection burden, but nevertheless they can yield powerful insights about patterns of interaction and membership within and across networks. For an example of such an analysis, see this month's issue of the journal *Health Services Research* and the paper by Peter Mendel and colleagues on "[The Growth of Partnerships to Support Patient Safety Practice Adoption](#)" in health care practice settings (note: a copy was also included in the binder for the Keeneland grantee meeting). For a more extensive review of the use of network analysis in public health research, see the paper by Doug Luke and Jenine Harris in the 2007 [Annual Review of Public Health](#).
- **PBRN Technical Assistance.** Coordinating center staff have developed an initial searchable database of public health research and practice consultants who are available to consult with PBRN grantees on a variety of topics relevant to developing and conducting research with PBRNs. This database along with a web-based form to request more information and indicate other TA needs will be launched on the PBRN

website very shortly. In the meantime, feel free to contact coordinating center staff directly with TA needs or requests for specific consultants.

Key Upcoming Dates

May 12: PBRN Monthly Conference Call -11:30-1:00 ET; 10:30 CT; 9:30 MT; 8:30 PT.

May 20: PBRN Quarterly Webinar - 2:00-3:30 ET; 1:00 CT; 12:00 MT; 11:00 PT.

June 24-26: AHRQ Primary Care PBRN Research Conference. This conference is heavily focused on primary care PBRNs and their research priorities, but the implications for public health PBRNs are numerous. Sharla Smith attended this conference last year and is glad to share her experiences with you. For more information on the conference: <http://pbrn.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=854&PageID=14485&mode=2>

June 28-30: AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Chicago.
www.academyhealth.org

June 30-July 1: AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting, Chicago. There is currently a call for student scholarships to attend this meeting, and a call for nominations for the Article of the Year in public health systems research. <http://www.academyhealth.org/interestgroups/phsr/2009.htm>

Activities on the Horizon

- ***What Would You Like to See at the Next PBRN Webinar?*** The second installment of our quarterly PBRN Webinar is scheduled for May 20. We invite your ideas about topics to cover at this next session. We will also use the recent TA survey and the advice of our National Advisory Committee to hone in on topics for this and future webinars.
- ***PBRNs at NACCHO.*** Congratulations! The PBRN learning session proposal entitled *Measuring the Value of Public Health through Practice-Based Research Networks* was selected for presentation at the NACCHO Annual Conference, July 29-31 in Orlando, Florida. The session thus far includes Harold Cox (MA), Lee Thielen (CO), David Fleming (WA), and Glen Mays (NCC). We invite other PBRN presenters to be a part of this learning session – let us know if you are interested and able to join. We will work together to flesh out the structure and content of this session during the coming months.

Related Research Activities

- **The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars** program is an innovative approach to training leaders. Postdoctoral scholars in a variety of fields at



any stage of their careers can apply for two years of support to attend one of six universities beginning in the fall of 2010: Columbia; Harvard; U of California, San Francisco and Berkeley; U of Michigan; U of Pennsylvania; and U of Wisconsin. The principle is to take a multidisciplinary approach to address the multiple determinants of population health and to contribute to policy change. Applicants should be creative and open to new approaches with a significant record of research that can be related to population health. The deadline to apply is October 2009 and program details are available at http://www.rwjf.org/files/applications/cfp/cfp_HSS2009.pdf.

- **Input for Comparative Effectiveness Research Priorities.** The Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research on Tuesday held the first of three listening sessions in which interest groups and the public can express how they believe the \$1.1 billion from the stimulus package for comparative effectiveness research should be spent. The next hearings are tentatively scheduled for May 6 and May 13. At least one meeting is expected to be held outside of Washington, D.C. <http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/programs/os/cebios.html>
- **New Report Calls for Enhanced State and Local Food Safety Roles.** Recent food-borne disease outbreaks involving peanut butter and fresh produce underscore the need to enhance state and local food safety programs and integrate them better with federal efforts, according to a new report from the Department of Health Policy at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services. The report calls on Congress and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to construct a robust and coordinated national food safety system that makes effective use of the best science and state and local public health capacities to prevent food-borne illness. The new report, *Stronger Partnerships for Safer Food: An Agenda for Strengthening State and Local Roles in the Nation's Food Safety System*, was produced in partnership with the organizations that represent food safety officials and practitioners at the state and local levels: the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The report was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is available at: <http://www.rwjf.org/publichealth/product.jsp?id=41629>
- **Opportunity for Input from the Public Health Community until April 30!** The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is holding a public review and comment period for the draft standards, measures and documentation guidance related to the voluntary national accreditation standards for state, local, and territorial public health departments. Revisions of the standards depend upon feedback from the public health community, and PHAB makes a variety of input mechanisms available on its website: <http://phaboard.org>.
- **The 2009 National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) Annual Conference** will focus on the themes of “advancing health system reform and opportunities for building strong components of health promotion, improvement and disease prevention in national, state, and local efforts.” The conference is in New

Orleans from May 6-8. To learn more, see the preliminary agenda at the NNPHI website at <http://www.nnphi.org/home/section/4/conferences>.

Recent PHSSR Literature

- The brand new 2009 volume of the [Annual Review of Public Health](#) contains an extremely useful review on the application of diffusion theory and implementation research methods to gain insight about evidence-based practice in public health—by none other than our long-time friend in practice-based public health research Lawrence Greene and his colleagues. This is a must-read for all of us engaged in public health PBRNs, which we believe are poised to become important vehicles for stimulating and supporting diffusion research, implementation research, and dissemination research in public health practice.
- The March issue of [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) contained a mini-symposium on PHSSR featuring articles by the familiar names of **Alice Ammerman**, NAC member; **Douglas “Scutch” Scutchfield**, Keeneland host, PBRN webinar presenter, and handicapper extraordinaire; and **Glen Mays and Sharla Smith** of the Coordinating Center. Thanks to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for funding the work that generated the symposium papers, and to AcademyHealth for organizing and commissioning several of the papers.

Funding Opportunities for Public Health Systems Research

- **Call for Proposals for Research on Public Health Law!** In the first round of funding, short-term, less-complex studies such as policy analysis or public health implications of specific laws or regulations will be funded up to \$150,000 each for up to 18 months. Complex and comprehensive legal and public health studies including long-term analyses and in-depth evaluations will be funded up to \$400,000 each for up to 30 months. The CFP and more detail about the program are available at http://www.rwjf.org/files/applications/cfp/cfp_PHLR2009.pdf.

Deadlines: Apply online by May 19.



- If members of your PBRN are interested in public health law, they may want to subscribe to the monthly electronic newsletter, *CDC Public Health Law News*. Here is a link to this month’s newsletter, and the subscription box is right on the front: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/phlp/cphln.asp>.
- **NIH GO Grants.** A recently-announced component of the NIH Recovery funds is the Research and Research Infrastructure “Grand Opportunities” or “GO” grants program. This funding is designated for biomedical and biobehavioral research projects that can benefit from significant 2-year funding with no expectation for renewal. According to the NIH announcement, research supported by this program “should have high short-term impact, and a high likelihood of enabling growth and

investment in biomedical research and development, public health, and health care delivery.” GO grant key dates differ from other ARRA application dates, so be sure to check specific opportunities of interest. GO grant opportunities of participating NIH Institutes and Centers are posted at http://grants.nih.gov/recovery/ic_go.html

- All the **NIH Challenge Grants** announced so far under the federal stimulus package can be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/recovery/>. Click on the link and subscribe to email updates if you so desire. We are finding that the individual NIH research institute web pages have more and clearer descriptions about their research priorities than does this web page. You may also want to keep an eye on the CDC, HRSA, and AHRQ web pages – and of course www.grants.gov
- The **William T. Grant Foundation** has issued a RFP for research “on the factors that affect policy makers’ and practitioners’ acquisition, interpretation, and use of research evidence. Grant awards ranging from \$100,000 to \$600,000 for direct and indirect costs for two to three years of work anticipated. Visit www.wtgrantfoundation.org/ for complete program guidelines. Letters of inquiry are due by May 12, 2009.
- **Systems Research for Population Health:** This NIH program announcement looks particularly well suited for practice-based research in public health. *Using Systems Science Methodologies to Protect and Improve Population Health (R21)*. The FOA solicits Exploratory/Developmental (R21) applications from institutions/organizations that propose to apply one or more specific system science methodologies to “policy resistant” public health problems and contribute knowledge that will enhance effective decision making around the development of and prioritization of policies, interventions, and programs to improve population health in the U.S. and abroad, especially where resources are limited and only a limited number of programs/policies/interventions can be implemented. Standard NIH submission deadlines apply. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-224.html>

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