

Issue #17

PBRN Week in Review | May 16, 2009

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

Notable Activities This Week

- The **May 12th PBRN conference call** discussion of the possible program-wide research response to the H1N1 influenza was evidence of a promising future for public health PBRNs. Call participants were enthusiastic about a joint research project and had great ideas for content and methodological approaches. A summary is included in the newsletter email.
- In particular, the Kentucky PBRN is moving forward with research planning activities on H1N1 response involving possible collaborations with the state's primary care PBRN and emerging pharmacy PBRN. Our friends in Kentucky are eager to coordinate and collaborate with other public health PBRNs on this research.
- On a similar note, Glen Mays was in Chapel Hill on Friday May 15 and met with members of the **North Carolina PBRN** and their collaborators at the NC Institute for Public Health and their CDC-funded Public Health Preparedness Research Center for further discussions on practice-based research opportunities around preparedness and response activities for H1N1. The NC network is moving forward with planning research activities related to this opportunity and is eager to share and collaborate with other PBRNs. Several other CDC-funded preparedness research centers exist in close proximity to PBRN grantees (for a full list click [here](#)), perhaps creating opportunities for collaboration.
- **Thursday, May 21** at 1 pm, ASPH, APHA, ASTHO, NACCHO, and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) will host a briefing for Congressional members and staff on the public health workforce response to the H1N1 influenza. According to the ASPH Friday Letter (5/15), "the briefing will focus on how the public health workforce responded to (and plans to stay ahead of) the new and dangerous flu virus and other potential public health threats." **NACCHO Executive Director and NAC member Bobby Pestronk** is among the panelists. Thus far no access other than personal attendance has been found by NCC staff.
- **Newest Public Health Systems Researcher Enters the Field.** Many of you know or will soon know Kate Papa, who for years now has served as the champion of PHSSR at AcademyHealth. Ever doing her part to build the pipeline, Kate brought Samuel into the world last week. You may recall seeing Kate and signs of Samuel at the Keeneland conference last month. Congrats Kate!!



Key Upcoming Dates

- **Wednesday, May 20, the quarterly PBRN Webinar will feature Doug Wholey**, professor of health policy and management at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. Dr. Wholey's current research touches on social network analysis methods for public health systems, theory-based sampling, mixed-method approaches, and studies of collaboration and team-based approaches in public health practice. He also has a wealth of experience with researcher-practitioner collaboration, both in MN where he partners with state and local health officials, and in the UK where he works closely with the National Health Service. His recent work with social network analysis in public health systems will be helpful to us as we work together to develop cross-cutting research and evaluation plans. **PBRN Quarterly Webinar - 2:00-3:30 ET; 1:00 CT; 12:00 MT; 11:00 PT.**
- **June 9: PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30 ET; 10:30 CT; 9:30 MT; 8:30 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. For more information on the conference click [here](#).
- **June 28-30: AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting** in Chicago. See below
- **June 30-July 1: AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting**, in Chicago. See below.
- **July 14: PBRN Monthly Conference Call.** 11:30am ET; 10:30am CT; 9:30am MT; 8:30am PT
- **July 29-31: NACCHO Annual Meeting** in Orlando, Florida. See below.

Activities on the Horizon

- **PBRNs at NACCHO.** A PBRN learning session entitled *Measuring the Value of Public Health through Practice-Based Research Networks* will be presented at the NACCHO Annual Conference, July 29-31 in Orlando, Florida. Harold Cox (MA), Lee Thielen (CO), David Fleming (WA), and Glen Mays (NCC) invite others to join them as presenters. We will work together to flesh out the structure and content of this session during the coming months.
- **June 28-30: AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Chicago.** www.academyhealth.org. *Registration rate increases after May 27.*

AcademyHealth also offers five health services research [methods seminars](#) as pre-conference sessions, with offerings for both new and experienced researchers. Registration is now open for **Friday, June 26:**

- Issues in the Analysis of Complex Survey Data
- Methods of Comparative Effectiveness Research

Saturday, June 27:

- Enhancing your Methodological Toolbox: An Introduction to Qualitative Research
- Methods for Addressing Endogeneity and Selection Bias in Observational Studies

- **June 30-July 1: AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting, Chicago.** <http://www.academyhealth.org/interestgroups/phsr/2009.htm>

This Interest Group Meeting will feature cutting-edge research in PHSSR along with advanced methodological discussions and training. AcademyHealth is devoting the entire morning of July 1 to methodological issues in PHSSR. Panels of invited speakers at this meeting will cover the following topics:

- Data challenges in PHSSR, including the use of survey and administrative data sources as well as primary data collection
- Methodological challenges in PHSSR, including quasi-experimental designs, data aggregation, and working with system-level units of analysis.
- Challenges of comparative analyses in PHSSR, including strategies for supporting valid comparisons across agencies, communities, and systems.

Related Research and Practice Activities

- **Policy Approaches for Preventing Childhood Obesity.** *Leadership for Healthy Communities*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, recently released a [toolkit](#) of policy approaches and resources that can help state and local policy-makers prevent childhood obesity and improve children's health. It covers a wide range of issues, including increasing access to parks and recreation centers, improving safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, offering healthier foods in schools, and attracting grocery stores that provide healthy, affordable foods to lower-income communities. Each section recommends targeted strategies based on the setting, identifies key stakeholders, outlines policy and program options, provides direction on how to start programs, describes resources that can help inform the process, and includes examples of how other states and localities have achieved progress.
- **H1N1 research.** Independent, international medical journal *The Lancet* has partnered with over 40 journals to launch a new [H1N1 Flu Resource Centre](#) for health professionals. This new online information clearinghouse aggregates infectious disease and public health information, and individuals may register for email updates.
- **Colleagues in High Places.** One of the leaders in our field of PHSSR is among the newest members of the Obama administration. *Dr. Nicole Lurie* was named as nominee for Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response this past week. She has been very influential in the development of our field and the larger field of health services research, working as a senior scientist at RAND in recent years. The nominee for CDC Director was also named last week, in the person of NYC Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Frieden.



Recent Literature of Interest



- **Public Health Workforce Enumeration** is the title of an all-too-timely essay by Kristine Gebbie and colleagues in the May issue of [American Journal of Public Health](#). She discusses the need for and challenges to development of comprehensive data on the public health workforce at local, state and federal levels.
- **Recruiting through PBRNs.** In the April issue of the [Wisconsin Medical Journal](#), results were reported from a study that examined differences in the effort and resources needed to recruit clinicians for a short-term infectious disease sentinel surveillance project. Differences were measured among three physician groups: a primary care practice-based research network (PBRN), an influenza sentinel clinician program, and a state academy of family physicians. The conclusions reported observing “large and significant differences among 3 primary care groups in the efficiency of recruiting for participation in public health sentinel surveillance.” “Members of established networks were more approachable and rapidly recruited.” Link to [article](#). (Ed note: NCC staff happened across the article after the May 12th conference call, and it reflected the demeanor of the call that PBRNs stand ready to help!)
- **Another primary care PBRN study** published in the May/June 2009 Annals of Family Medicine examined the response rates of physicians in three PBRNs to web-based surveys and mail surveys. After three non-responses to electronic version, physicians were mailed paper copies at the same time they were emailed a fourth electronic copy. A second paper copy was also mailed to non-responders. In the end, 24% of the responses were in paper form. The [study](#) has numerous limitations but is worth reading and discussing.
- **Scope and content of local public health ordinances.** Local ordinances represent one of the great unknowns in the field of public health law – wide variation in structure and content but little systematic information about the nature and consequences of this variation. A new paper by Kathy McCarty and colleagues in this month’s [Public Health Reports](#) provides a detailed examination of local public health ordinances in a selection of communities around the U.S. and lays the groundwork for future studies on the design, implementation, and impact of these laws.
- **Data infrastructure for public health systems research.** Another paper in the current issue of [Public Health Reports](#), by Doug Scutchfield and colleagues, summarizes the range of existing data sources that can be used to support studies on the organization, financing, and delivery of public health services.
- **Improving public health through the healthy environments.** A recently released special supplement to the [Journal of Public Health Policy](#) examines how better environments can encourage people, especially children, to be more active on a daily basis. The supplement collects papers that were presented at a 2008 conference hosted by Active Living Research (ALR). ALR is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that builds an evidence base on the environmental and policy factors related to physical activity to inform policy. The 13 research papers in the supplement cover three broad categories: transportation, schools and youth, and built and social environments. Researchers evaluated policy interventions related to federal transportation funding and

employer transit incentives, as well as the types of roads cyclists used and building designs to stimulate the use of stairs.

Funding Opportunities for Public Health Systems Research

- **Impact of Policy and Environment on Active Living.** Active Living Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that supports research to identify promising policy and environmental strategies for increasing physical activity, decreasing sedentary behaviors and preventing obesity among children and adolescents. This funding opportunity from RWJF for New Connections research or publication grants through the Active Living Research program is for new investigators from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities. For more information click [here](#).
- **Public Health Decision-making in the Economic Downturn.** At our grantee meeting in Keeneland, participants noted the cross-cutting research question of how public health agencies make decisions about downsizing and service cuts in the midst of the economic downturn. We discovered a funding opportunity at the National Science Foundation that appears appropriate for studying this and related questions about public health policy decision-making. The *Decision, Risk and Management Sciences program* supports scientific research directed at increasing the understanding and effectiveness of decision making by individuals, groups, organizations, and society. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, doctoral dissertation research, and workshops are funded in the areas of judgment and decision making; decision analysis and decision aids; risk analysis, perception, and communication; societal and public policy decision making; management science and organizational design. The program also supports small grants that are time-critical and small grants that are high-risk and of a potentially transformative nature – such as studies of decision-making in the current economic downturn. Standard submission due dates are **August 18** each year but time-critical grants can be submitted on an ongoing basis. More info on the funding opportunity is [here](#). *Perhaps a proposal involving multiple PBRNs could be on target for this opportunity?*
- **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>
 - **The next deadline for new applicants appears to be June 16.** Deadlines are a moving target in the world of ARRA funding, however, so the wise potential applicant would check closely!
- **Health Disparities Research:** National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities announces three funding opportunities that provide up to 2 years of funding



as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Please visit the NCMHD website at www.ncmhd.nih.gov for more information on these NCMHD funding opportunities:

- ***NCMHD Community Participation in Health Disparities Intervention Research Planning Phase*** (R24) supports community-based participatory research (CBPR) in planning, implementing, evaluating and disseminating effective interventions for a disease or condition to reduce and eventually eliminate health disparities through partnerships between racial/ethnic minority populations, subpopulations, and other health disparity populations and research investigators. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-09-006.html#PartI>
Letters of Intent: May 29, 2009
Application Receipt Date: June 30, 2009
- ***NCMHD Exploratory Centers of Excellence*** (P20) supports institutions of higher education to establish an Exploratory NCMHD Center of Excellence to support accelerated research infrastructure and capacity building efforts that will make a measurable and significant contribution to NCMHD's short and long term efforts to reduce and eliminate health disparities and stimulate the local economy by 1) establishing, building and sustaining novel partnerships; 2) hiring faculty from health disparity populations, 3) designing and launching new or expanding existing training programs within academe and the community for engaging academic health disparity researchers and community members in health disparity reduction or elimination research efforts or activities; 3) accelerating the recruitment of minorities into interventions and trials, and 4) rapidly initiating or expanding focused research training programs, research activities or intervention and prevention studies likely to enable improvements in minority health, reductions in existing health disparities and growth of the local economy. For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-09-007.html>
Letters of Intent: June 1, 2009
Application Receipt Date: July 1, 2009
- ***NCMHD Dissertation Award to Increase Diversity*** (R36) aims to increase the health disparities research workforce by stimulating and supporting dissertation research. The NCMHD Dissertation Research grant will provide full-time salary support and modest research funds for up to two years for eligible students to facilitate completion of their doctoral research project and dissertation in a research area relevant to the NCMHD mission and research priorities. These awards are available to all qualified pre-doctoral students in accredited research doctoral programs in the United States (including Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories or possessions). For more information, visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-09-008.html>
Letters of Intent: May 29, 2009
Application Receipt Date: June 30, 2009
- **NIH GO Grants. *GO Grant Submission Date changed to May 29, 2009.*** “Grand Opportunities” or “GO” grants are a component of the NIH Recovery funds. 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/>. Subscribe to email updates if you so desire. 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.
 - According to the most recent reports, funds in the Prevention and Wellness, Health Information Technology, and Comparative Effectiveness Research areas for which PBRNs seem especially well-suited have not been obligated.



- **Funding for Health IT:** In compliance with ARRA's 90-day deadline, the Office of the National Coordinator on May 18 issued a timetable for ONC and other federal agencies responsible for federal health IT programs. The document lays out milestones, required reports, rules and guidelines. For a copy go [here](#).

And in the Financial Markets:



Pssst: While sampling the salads on the Keeneland buffet I overheard the daughter of **NAC member Michael Caldwell** saying what she'd enjoyed doing in Lexington while dad attended the conference. "Shopping mostly," she said, "I'd never been to a Dillard's, so I wanted to go there." Even I, a *fly*, thought it was funny that she lives in New York and wanted to shop at Little Rock, AR-based Dillard's department store. Then this weekend, I buzz by the newspaper's business section and what do I read? "*Dillard's surprises with profit!*" Ahem...Dr. Caldwell, has the bill arrived? -F©TW-

Next Issue: Happy Memorial Day!

The next newsletter will cover two weeks and be issued on May 29, 2009.