

Issue #39

PBRN Week in Review | Feb 26, 2010

PBRN Grantees: Please circulate relevant information to your network members. To request additional information or make suggestions for future items, please contact the National Coordinating Center at publichealthpbrn@uams.edu or 501-551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

Notable Recent Activities

➤ **Round I Evaluation Activity**

The social network analysis survey is in the field. Non-respondents will receive reminders on March 1st, 4th, and the due date of the 8th. Approaching key dates include:

Feb 26-Mar 5	Research coordinators or NCC staff send reminder emails to non-respondents
Mar 8-10	Research coordinators or NCC staff contact non-respondents
Mar 8-10	Non-respondents contacted by phone
Mar 9-15	Data cleaning by NCC staff
Mar 15-30	Preliminary data analysis by NCC staff

Data collected in this phase of the social network analysis process will serve as baseline measures as we track changes in the structure and function over time of the program's PBRNs.

- **NACCHO's 2010 Annual Conference** will include a first-ever public health research track among its offerings. Public Health PBRN representatives from **Ohio, Florida, Connecticut and Minnesota** collaborated to submit an abstract for a session describing early lessons learned from organizing and implementing research conducted by and with local health departments. The panel proposes to discuss their work in educating fellow practitioners about PHSSR, developing researcher relationships, managing differences in practice-academic organizational cultures, and prioritizing a practical research agenda. Network research topics and projects will be shared; and in keeping with NACCHO's emphasis on interactivity, participants will work in small groups to explore how PHSSR might be conducted in their own settings utilizing local assets. The NACCHO conference will be in Memphis from July 14-16.
- **Keeneland Scientific Sessions on PH PBRNs** have been finalized. The Round I panel is scheduled for Wednesday morning, April 21, 10:15-11:45. The Round II roundtable discussion is slated from 1:45-2:45. Coordinating Center Staff will contact presenters to coordinate session planning. Session descriptions are reprinted here to assist presenters with planning.

Translational Research through Public Health PBRNs: Methods, Findings and Lessons Learned

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recognized the promise of practice-based research networks (PBRNs), long successful in clinical settings, for narrowing the evidence chasm in the effective organization, financing and delivery of public health services. The inaugural cohort of RWJF's *Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks Program* will report on the methodologies and results of their initial research projects, including newly emerging research

opportunities, and current large-scale projects examining the adoption of evidence-based practices. Representatives of the Colorado, Kentucky, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington PBRNs will share results of work ranging from comparative analyses of public health practices across settings, both in routine and crisis contexts; natural experiments examining changes in state public health legislation, including organizational structure and distribution of authority; and how quality improvement strategies, community partnerships, and financing and budgetary changes influence the adoption of evidence-based practices.

Keys to Success in Building Practitioner-Researcher Networks: Experiences of the Public Health PBRNs

Public health practice-based research networks (PBRNs) provide a model for public health agencies and researchers to collaborate in designing and implementing studies that produce evidence for management and policy decision-making in real-world practice settings. Recognizing the success of PBRNs in medical care research, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched the *Public Health PBRN Program* to support development of the nation's first formal research networks dedicated to expanding the volume and quality of practice-based research in public health. Program director Glen Mays and members of the second cohort of public health PBRNs will lead an audience-participation roundtable discussion of lessons learned in recruiting network members and leaders; developing infrastructure; prioritizing research interests; crafting rigorous yet feasible research designs; and planning for network sustainability while designing and implementing research. Panelists will examine how PBRNs can advance the goal of expanding the volume and quality of research on public health systems and services that state and local public health officials can apply to practice.

Activities on the Horizon

- **Methods Courses.** The *RWJF Public Health PBRN Program* is working with AcademyHealth to pilot test a new group registration process for their HSR Methods webinars. The next courses will focus on two important methods in public health and HSR as identified in a research training needs assessment: (1) best practices for conducting [case studies](#) on March 11, and (2) advanced uses of [multilevel modeling](#) on March 25. Both courses are from 1:00 to 2:30 pm ET. PBRN participants may read more about the HSR methods training [here](#). To enroll, send an email to [Elaine Wooten](#) in the PBRN Coordinating Center **by March 3 for the case studies course** and by March 17 for the multilevel modeling course. *PBRN participants should not register online at AcademyHealth!*
- **PBRN Grantee and NAC Annual Meetings. Meeting schedule will be at the end of the newsletter each week.** Coordinating Center staff are developing the agenda based on leading edge research in PHSSR, networking, and other influences and PBRN input. A draft will be available soon.
- **National Emergency Management Summit - March 3. Glen Mays and Angela Dearing (KY PBRN)** will present the PBRN H1N1 studies at this conference in DC, also accessible online ([conference information](#)). The Kentucky study of lessons learned from communication among public health and other health professionals during the H1N1 outbreak of spring 2009 was supported by the RWJF Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF) for Public Health PBRNs.
- **Texas Public Health Association** – April 21, 2010. Mays will give a teleconference presentation on practice-based research.

**Note
Date**

- **Ohio Public Health Combined Conference** in Columbus – May 12, 2010. Glen Mays will lead a session on the development and future of public health PBRNs at this annual meeting of the state’s public health professionals’ organizations. The **Ohio PBRN** will take advantage of this opportunity to showcase practice-based research and continue developing statewide participation in the network.

Related Research and Practice Activities

WEBINARS/WEB CASTS

- **How Healthy Could a State Be?** In its continuing series of “Meet the Author!” web casts, *Public Health Reports* will host David Kindig presenting “How Healthy Could a State Be?” and Daniel Fox with follow-up discussion on Monday, March 22 at 1 p.m. (ET). Kindig’s same-titled article and Fox’s commentary appear in the March/April 2010 journal issue. Read their work and get more information about the web casts at this [link](#).

NEW REPORTS

- **How Healthy is Your County?** Perhaps boosted by national discussions of health and health care, the recent release of the [County Health Rankings](#) reports have received much attention. Though state rankings of health are nothing new, RWJF and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute have provided the first ranking of indicators of overall health of every county in the fifty states. The data are intended “to provide public health and community leaders, policy-makers, consumers and others to see how healthy their county is, compare it with others within their state and find ways to improve the health of their community.” PBRNs are well-situated to study whether and how the information is utilized and any impact that may be realized. View Project Director Patrick Remington and RWJF President Risa Lavisso-Mourey discussing the County Health Rankings at this [link](#). The Population Health Institute is a partner in the **Wisconsin PBRN**.
- **Population-Based Policy and Systems-Level Approach to Hypertension.** PBRNs will notice at least one common component between Research Implementation Award (RIA) projects and a CDC-IOM hypertension effort: the question of why existing evidence-based practices are not widely adopted. At the request of CDC’s Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, an Institute of Medicine committee has made prioritized recommendations for the Division’s work to speed progress in reducing and controlling hypertension. The report’s title, **A Population-Based Policy and Systems Change Approach to Prevent and Control Hypertension**, reiterates its overall theme – a call to focus on those interventions aimed at population-based policy and system improvements. Read the brief and full report versions and more about the study [here](#). (The IOM Committee was chaired by David Fleming, director and health officer of Public Health-Seattle King County and co-PI of the **Washington PBRN**.)

NEW LITERATURE

- **Public Health Administration.** The March/April 2010 issue of [Journal of Public Health Management and Practice](#) is a special content edition related to administration. Included in the issue are articles by **Angela Dearinger** and colleagues of the **KY PBRN** discussing their use of a PBRN group vetting session to improve knowledge of PHAB accreditation standards; **PHSSR colleague Peggy Honoré** and coauthors presenting a case study of a software model for determining funding priorities in a public health service area; **Mays, Scutchfield**, et al re-examining the relationship between local public health system characteristics and performance;

Betty Bekemeier of the WA PBRN studying the impact of staffing shortages in local health agencies; and a commentary by Scutch.

Funding Opportunities

- **Best Policy and Practice Funding.** CDC has announced the availability of funding “to test the effectiveness of major population-wide, targeted health policies that strengthen health promotion and preventive care, thereby reducing the risk of diabetes, diabetes complications, and health inequalities across broad segments of the population.” [Natural Experiments and Effectiveness Studies to Identify the Best Policy and System Level Practices to Prevent Diabetes and Its Complications](#) (U58) will fund up to seven centers. In addition to their own studies, the sites will collaborate as a multi-center network. PBRNs with research interests in this topic area may want to investigate opportunities to participate if a state application is being submitted. Application closing date: April 15, 2010.
- **AHRQ Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER).** AHRQ recently announced the availability of ARRA funds supporting CER. R01 applications are invited “from investigators seeking to conduct rigorous comparative evaluations of alternative system designs, change strategies, and interventions that have already been implemented in healthcare and are likely to improve quality and other outcomes.” PBRNs interested in looking at the delivery of prevention-oriented services may also want to consider ways to integrate health IT, use of EMR data or other novel clinical data sources, use of quality improvement techniques, team-based care models, or other AHRQ interest area. The [funding announcement](#) includes important definitions and other details. Deadline: Applications due March 18, 2010.
- **RWJF Public Health Law Research (PHLR).** PHLR has issued its second [call for proposals](#) “for studies that will examine the public health impacts of a broad range of laws and legal practices, including innovative legal approaches and laws and regulations developed at the city or county level.” While the primary focus should be on the influence of law or policy on public health, a multidisciplinary approach is welcome. Several resources for strengthening proposals are available at the [program website](#). Brief proposals are due April 14, 2010.
- **Obesity Prevention Research.** RWJF’s *Active Living Research* (ALR) program has released calls for proposals aimed at preventing obesity in children and youth through policy and environmental strategies that increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviors. This round emphasizes strategies to reach children at greatest risk for obesity and those living in lower-income and under-resourced communities. *New Connections* grants, administered by the ALR program, are a part of the CFP. Details linked [here](#).

Upcoming Key Dates

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| March 9: | Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET |
| March 18: | Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET |

April 13: Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 11:30-12:30 ET

April 15: Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 ET

2010 Grantee and NAC Annual Meeting Schedules

Sunday, April 18		Grantees travel to Lexington
Monday, April 19	8:15-9:00	Breakfast
	9:00-5:00	Grantee Meeting
	6:00	Dinner
Tuesday, April 20	8:30-12:00	NAC/Grantee Meetings (independently)
	12:00-4:00	NAC/Grantee Lunch & Meeting (combined)
	7:00	Keeneland Conference Opening Dinner
Wednesday, April 21	10:15-11:45	PBRN Round I Session (panel format)
	1:45-2:45	PBRN Round II (roundtable format)

Next Issue: Week of March 5, 2010