

Issue #43

PBRN Week in Review | May 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 PBRN Activities

- **Public Health PBRN Quarterly Webinar.** On Wednesday, May 19, about thirty participants joined Maggie English and Gina Todorovich of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to discuss the organization's [Toolbox](#) and [Model Practice Database](#) initiatives.

NACCHO's Toolbox is a collection of local public health materials and resources submitted by and for members of the public health community to inform and improve their work. This free, online inventory includes reports, training materials, templates, protocols, fact sheets, drills, presentations, case studies, and more.

The more formalized Model Practice Program accepts submissions from local public health, and judges evaluate these against the criteria of LHD role and collaboration; innovation; responsiveness; and evaluation. A practice that meets all the criteria is awarded the Model Practice designation. A practice that meets all the criteria, except the evaluation lacks sufficient strength, is designated a Promising Practice and has the potential to become a Model Practice. Model Practices and Promising Practices are shared in an online, searchable database. This program of national recognition is intended to honor outstanding practices and promote their sharing and replication among LHDs.

Because many PBRNs are studying issues related to the adoption, implementation, and impact of evidence-based practices in public health, the discussion focused on the intersections between these efforts and the work behind the Toolbox and Model Practice programs. Several opportunities were identified for working together toward mutually beneficial outcomes.

- ◆ PH PBRNs may be able to test the effectiveness of Promising Practices, those lacking a sufficiently strong evaluation component to earn the Model Practice designation when submitted.
- ◆ PH PBRNs may be well-suited to examine such questions as:
 - how a model practice works in different settings and what causes variation;
 - how much variation is possible/desirable within a model practice; and
 - key factors or what Brownson calls "active ingredients" in the effectiveness of a model practice and why these matter.

- ◆ To assist NACCHO with attracting more geographic diversity in submissions, particularly from the rural southwest and midwest, the webinar presenters may schedule further conversations with representatives of the Nebraska and Colorado PBRNs to generate ideas.
- ◆ PH PBRNs suggested submitting their own tools to the Toolbox that may be helpful to developing PBRNs, such as the North Carolina PBRN focus group process used to develop a practice-focused research agenda built around the Ten Essential Services. As PH PBRNs develop, implement, and complete research projects, each should be examined for materials and resources developed by the network that are appropriate for the Toolbox and/or resulting practices that may be submitted for Model Practice review.
- ◆ PH PBRNs can assist NACCHO with determining whether the inventories are being accessed, used and the degree of helpfulness to practice agencies by fielding a brief survey provided by NAACHO to their networks. (Network members also suggested that NACCHO conference attendees could be surveyed this summer for their input.)

English and Todorovich will follow up with the Coordinating Center to prioritize next steps as time allows with conference planning. PBRNs also may discuss these ideas further on upcoming conference calls and on the PBRNING site.

Special Webinar on Public Health Workforce Issues. On Tuesday, June 8 from 11:30-1:00 Eastern, the Public Health PBRN Coordinating Center will host a webinar on public health workforce research, giving special attention to the interface with the practice-based research agenda. Entitled *The Public Health Workforce Research Agenda: Opportunities for PH PBRNs*, this is a continuation of the collaborative conversations initiated in Lexington. Glen Mays will facilitate the discussion along with our PHSSR colleagues at Kentucky’s Center of Excellence in Public Health Workforce and Policy.

Webinar panelists include three of the leading thinkers in public health systems research, particularly in issues related to the public health workforce, who will share their knowledge and perspectives and then discuss participants’ questions.

Workforce Webinar Panelists:

- ◆ Carol Gotway Crawford, PhD, is CDC’s Acting Director of the Division of Measurement & Analytic Methods in the Epidemiology and Analysis Program Office (proposed). Dr. Crawford will give an overview of the “new” agenda in public health workforce research.
- ◆ Kristine Gebbie, DrPH, RN, is Dean of the School of Nursing at Hunter College, CUNY. Dr. Gebbie will focus on the kinds of information practitioners can glean from this type of research.
- ◆ Hugh Tilson, MD, DrPH, has been named Senior Advisor for Public Health Workforce to HRSA’s Bureau of Health Professions and is an adjunct professor at UNC and Duke. He will share “breaking news” on the state of public health workforce research.

PBRNs are welcome to invite network partners to join the webinar. Please contact the Coordinating Center at publichealthpbrn@uams.edu if you have not received email information on how to register. For related background reading, the [November 2009 Supplement](#) to the *Journal of Public*

Health Management and Practice focused on public health workforce research opportunities and included work by all three panelists and researchers from both the Kentucky and Michigan workforce centers of excellence. The [December 2009 issue](#) of *Health Services Research* included a special section on the health services research workforce, and scanning those articles may stimulate good questions to ask the panel about the public health workforce, even good *researchable* questions ...think QSRF! (One of the four articles in the *HSR* special section was co-authored by **Sandra McGinnis, New York PH PBRN.**) Finally, NAACHO released new workforce survey information this week as noted elsewhere in the newsletter.

UK's Center of Excellence Project Manager Susan Webb has done a masterful job of organizing the panel and working with the Coordinating Center on webinar details. Our thanks to Scutch, Cynthia Lamberth, and especially to Susan for working closely with us on this important event!

Activities on the Horizon

- **Are you going to AcademyHealth?** The Coordinating Center is organizing a PBRN gathering for our AcademyHealth participants, so please let us know of your plans to attend. Are you attending the ARM? the PHSR interest group meeting? Send an email to publichealthpbrn.@uams.edu and be sure to tell us when you will be there and how we can contact you in Boston.
- **Why go to AcademyHealth?** The AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM) in Boston, June 27-29, is a terrific opportunity to become immersed in high quality research. Public Health PBRN members, particularly research partners, should consider attending the meeting and seeking out the presentations of PHSSR colleagues and other researchers whose study designs and methodologies are applicable to our work. Plus, the best destinations are those with familiar hosts, and our Massachusetts PH PBRN colleagues are eager to welcome us! Registration is open until June 22. [Link to AcademyHealth website.](#)
- **AcademyHealth Preconference Methods Seminars:** [Link to more information](#)
 - ◆ Friday June 25, 1:00-7:30 p.m.
 - Qualitative Analysis
 - ◆ Saturday, June 26, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
 - Measurement Techniques and Perspectives on Quality Improvement
 - Pragmatic Trials in Comparative Effectiveness Research:
 - Propensity Score Analysis
- **Public Health Systems Research Interest Group** (PHSR IG) meets June 29-30 following the ARM. The PHSR IG was formed in 2002 with 40 researchers and today boasts over 1,500 members, a marker of the overall growth and significance of the field. [Register and/or read more](#) about this RWJF-sponsored interest group meeting.
- **NACCHO Annual Meeting** in Memphis, Tennessee, July 14-16, 2010. **Lee Thielen (CO PBRN)** and Glen Mays (Coordinating Center) are part of an invited presentation on practice-based research. **Matt Stefanak (Ohio), Julie Myhre (Minnesota), and Jennifer Kertanis (Connecticut)** will present their competitively selected session on the opportunities and challenges associated with conducting research at a local health department. [Link to conference information.](#)

Related Research and Practice Activities

NEW REPORTS

- **Continued Job Losses Threaten Local Health Department Services.** Results from NACCHO's Job Loss and Program Cuts Survey, released Monday, May 24th, show that local health departments (LHDs) lost 23,000 jobs from 2008–2009. More than half had to cut services in 2009, such as programs that reduce the use of tobacco, provide immunizations, or inspect restaurants. Two out of three Americans live in the jurisdiction of a LHD that had to cut services. More information is available at this link on [NACCHO's website](#).
- **New BRFSS Data.** CDC has released its 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) [data, documentation](#) and [Prevalence and Trends](#) tables. With over 400,000 interviews conducted in 2009 in the largest telephone-based surveillance system in the world, the BRFSS collects information on health risk behaviors, clinical preventive health practices, and health care access in all 50 states. Now in its 25th year of producing data, the BRFSS was proposed by and developed through the leadership of Dr. Jim Marks during his tenure at CDC. Dr. Marks is RWJF senior vice president and director of the health group of which the *Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks Program* is a part.

Recent Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

- **Enhancing Public Health Budgeting.** In a recent issue of the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, Peggy Honoré and colleagues presented a case study of applying a decision analysis software model to the process of identifying funding priorities for public health services. Borrowing from business and private industry, the results shed light on how decision science models can be applied successfully to public health budgeting and agency financial management processes. [Link to abstract](#).
- **Statistical Network Analysis Modeling.** In the June *American Journal of Public Health* watch for a study by Luke and colleagues with a next-step in social network analysis (SNA). The authors examined patterns of collaboration among five member networks of the National Network Consortium on Tobacco Control in Priority Populations (a network analysis of a network of networks!). In seeking to describe how common the collaborative activities are among national networks that address tobacco-related disparities and to identify organizational and structural predictors of the relationships, the researchers went beyond SNA descriptive techniques and developed statistical modeling to examine collaboration and network structure. To read more about their study design and results, [link to the abstract here](#).
- **WIC Participation and the Health of Newborns.** In a paper published early online in [Health Services Research](#), Foster, Jiang, and Gibson-Davis examined the effect of Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) on birth outcomes. Using data from the Child Development Supplement of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the authors used propensity score matching to examine whether WIC participation influenced birth outcomes as measured by birth weight, prematurity, maternal report of infant health, small for gestational age and NICU placement. A fixed-effects model also was used to examine these outcomes, controlling for “mother-specific unobservables.” The study concluded that the WIC program has moderate effects on the six measured birth outcomes, but “the findings were sensitive to the estimation

method used.” The authors provide an excellent example of the use of propensity score matching and fixed effect methods.

- **Public Health Labs.** A supplement to the May/June 2010 *Public Health Reports* entitled *Public Health Laboratories* features a broad range of topics related to our laboratory system. A critical, too-often-overlooked component of the public health system, the labs at various levels may make great network partners to PBRNs. [Link to supplement.](#)

Upcoming Key Dates

- June 8:** Special Public Health PBRN Webinar | 11:30-1:00pm ET
The Public Health Workforce Research Agenda: Opportunities for PH PBRNs
(This is the Round I monthly conference call time slot.)
- June 17:** Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 ET
- July 13:** Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 11:30-12:30 ET
- July 15:** Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 ET

Note: The July conference calls overlap with the NACCHO meeting schedule.

- Aug 10:** Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 11:30-12:30 ET
- Aug 18:** Public Health PBRN Quarterly Webinar | 2:00-3:30 ET
(Regularly scheduled date and time remain flexible to accommodate speaker(s).)
- Aug 19:** Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 1:00-2:30 ET

Next Issue: Week of June 4, 2010

Enjoy a safe Memorial Day!

