

Issue #48

PBRN Week in Review | July 9, 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

- **Special Topic Network Calls (STiNCs).** The first Public Health PBRN topical conference call is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13, 2010 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. ET. Betty Bekemeier (WA PBRN) will lead the initial discussion. Despite the forbidding acronym, STiNCs are designed to facilitate cross talk and collaboration among networks that share a common interest or are pursuing common strategy. In the early portion of Tuesday's conference, participants will discuss format and expectations for these topical calls before moving into content.

The first STiNC will focus on commonalities in data collection among the PBRNs, one component of the shared interest in multi-network measurement of variation in practice, relationship to outcomes and impact on public health. As discussed at the Annual Grantee Meeting, the development of common measures of service delivery and types of practices is the first step toward examining practice differences and changes over time. Sharing data collection instruments, procedures and practices used in PBRN states is a good place to begin this process.

Please send an email to publichealthpbrn@uams.edu if you plan to participate in the July 13 call or would like more information.

- **PBRN Monthly Conference Calls.** The Round I Call is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13, one hour prior to the STiNC. The Round II call is cancelled because of the overlap with the NACCHO annual meeting.
- **The NACCHO Annual Meeting** is in Memphis, Tennessee next Wednesday through Friday, July 14-16. At least two sessions in the new research track feature PBRN colleagues. **Lee Thielen (Colorado)** and Glen Mays (Coordinating Center) will present "Practice-Based Research 101" on Thursday at 1:15 p.m. On Friday at 8:00 a.m., **Matt Stefanak (Ohio)**, **Julie Myhre (Minnesota)**, and **Nancy Winterbauer (Florida)** will present "From Theory to Practice: Addressing Challenges and Emphasizing Opportunities for Practice-Based Public Health Research Coast to Coast." **Jennifer Kertanis (Connecticut)** will facilitate this session. In addition, RWJF's senior program officer for the *Public Health PBRN Program*, **Debra Pérez**, will co-facilitate a networking session discussion of The County Health Rankings on Thursday at 10:15 a.m. [Updated link to meeting information.](#) [Annual Meeting Blog.](#)
- **AcademyHealth Highlights** will appear in a forthcoming edition of the *PBRN Week in Review*.

Activities on the Horizon

- **New PBRN Research Opportunity.** Glen Mays (NCC) is working with the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) on an opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis of environmental health service delivery issues in collaboration with interested PBRNs. A "small amount" of end-of-year CDC funding is available to support this activity via the CDC's [ORISE Faculty Fellowship program](#), which typically funds a portion of salary for faculty at accredited academic institutions. An initial allotment of funding is available to support a small-scale, pilot-type study between August and December 2010. This may enable the PBRN program to demonstrate "proof of concept" to NCEH – the types of practice-based studies that are possible through PBRNs. CDC is interested in a small-scale study that would examine variation and change in environmental health service delivery across communities and/or states, ultimately leading to larger projects that could examine impact, quality, and cost-effectiveness of services and service mix. Services pertaining to food, water, air, and land use quality are of particular interest. Please contact the NCC if interested. The core research team for this initial effort likely will need to be a small group of investigators (3-4?) from multiple networks who have an interest in working together with CDC and NCC through the ORISE program for about 10% effort during August-December 2010.

New Resources for Research and Practice

OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT

- **Using the *County Health Rankings*.** In preparing for the release of the 2011 County Health Rankings, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is seeking ideas on how communities can use the information to improve health. Click on this [link](#) to suggest the "types of tools, training and assistance that can help communities address the many factors that affect health."

WEBINARS

- **Informatics Needs Assessment.** "The Status of Local Health Department Information Systems – Results from the 2010 NACCHO Informatics Needs Assessment" archived webinar and related publications are available on the [Public Health Informatics Resources page](#) of NACCHO's website.

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Methods Guide.** AHRQ's Effective Health Care (EHC) Program has published a new chapter of the *Methods Guide for Effectiveness and Comparative Effectiveness Reviews*. Entitled "Selecting Observational Studies for Comparing Medical Interventions," the chapter is available on the [EHC Program website](#).

WEBSITES

- **The Health Reform Gateway** contains a wide variety of resources related to the new health reform laws, including issue briefs and in-depth analysis at <http://healthreform.kff.org>.

Recent Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

- **Comparative Effectiveness Research Methodology.** A June 2010 supplement to *Medical Care* is devoted to comparative effectiveness research. Among the articles is a summary of proceedings of

a 2009 AHRQ-sponsored symposium on comparative effectiveness research methods. While the topical content of the research in the supplement is mostly clinical, PH PBRNs may find helpful the discussions of the applications and implications of the methodology. All the articles in the supplement are available free online.

- **LHD Resources and Health Outcomes.** In the June 2010 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, co-authors Paul Erwin (**Tennessee PBRN affiliate**), Glen Mays and Mary Davis (collaborator in the **North Carolina PBRN**) report on a retrospective cohort study that explored the association between local health department (LHD) resources and state-level health outcomes. Researchers measured changes in expenditures and staffing reported by LHDs on the 1997 and 2005 National Association of County and City Health Officials surveys and assessed changes in state level health outcomes with *America's Health Rankings* reports for those years. The study concluded increases in LHD expenditures were significantly associated with decreases in infectious disease morbidity at the state level, and increases in staffing were significantly associated with decreases in cardiovascular disease mortality, controlling for other factors. [Link to abstract.](#)
- **LHD Characteristics and Program Offerings.** A paper in the August 2010 *American Journal of Public Health* presents a study by Zhang and colleagues in which data from the 2005 National Profile of Local Health Departments were used to conduct a cross-sectional analysis of 2300 LHDs nationwide. Researchers assessed whether LHDs were conducting obesity prevention programs and diabetes screening programs, and examined associations between LHD characteristics and whether they conducted these programs. The study concluded the presence of obesity prevention and diabetes screening programs was significantly associated with LHD structural capacity and general performance. However, the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of both types of programs remain unknown. [Link to abstract.](#)
- **LHD Strategies to Address Disparities and Diversity.** A recent [HCFO Brief](#) by Jennifer Lucado and Claudia Schur reports on approaches LHDs have used to meet the needs of their changing populations. As part of a larger study, investigators conducted in-depth telephone interviews with 13 representatives of LHDs that had developed innovative programs to reach members of a socioculturally or demographically diverse population in their communities. The study found that LHDs in both urban and rural areas across the United States are taking steps to better serve their increasingly diverse populations. Some of the common approaches identified were partnering with community organizations, performing outreach and understanding the cultural norms of clients. (One of the highlighted approaches is from the Orange County Health Department where **North Carolina PBRN leader Rosemary Summers** is Health Director.)



Funding Opportunities and Announcements

The Coordinating Center is developing a [list of funding opportunities](#) for and grant awards to Public Health PBRNs. Grant opportunities with recurring deadlines will be tracked and updated. PH PBRNs are asked to help keep the awards list up to date by notifying the Coordinating Center of funding received.

New

- **Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure.** CDC is accepting applications to its “Strengthening Public Health Infrastructure for Improved Health Outcomes” five-year cooperative agreement program. The program includes a non-competitive base funding component and a

competitive “enhanced” funding component. Applicants must be state health departments and others designated as eligible in the [Funding Announcement](#). Public Health PBRNs may want to discuss opportunities for partnership with appropriate applicant organizations. **Application Deadline: August 9, 2010.**

- **Occupational Safety and Health Education (T42).** CDC’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) invites grant applications for Education and Research Centers (ERC) focused on occupational safety and health training and research training. NIOSH is mandated to provide an adequate supply of qualified personnel to carry out the purposes of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the ERCs are one of the principal means for meeting this mandate. ERCs are academic institutions that provide interdisciplinary graduate training and continuing education in the core occupational safety and health areas of industrial hygiene, occupational health nursing, occupational medicine residency, occupational safety, and other closely related occupational safety and health fields. Research and research training are integral components of ERCs, thus ERC scientists conduct peer reviewed, investigator initiated research on issues related to the National Occupational Research Agenda. [Funding Announcement](#). **Application deadline:** September 10, 2010.
- **RWJF Rapid-Response Call for Proposals.** [Active Living Research](#) is an RWJF national program supporting research to inform policy and environmental strategies for increasing physical activity and preventing obesity in children and adolescents, particularly among those at highest risk. With characteristics similar to the Public Health PBRN Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF), this CFP seeks proposals for "opportunistic, time-sensitive studies on emerging or anticipated changes in physical activity-related policies or environments. Rapid-response grants are expected to accelerate progress toward policy and environmental strategies to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. For maximum impact, studies should be completed in as short a time frame as realistically possible, and results disseminated using methods designed to reach local, state or national decision-makers in time to help inform key policy decisions." **Deadline:** Awards made on a rolling basis. A Letter of Intent is required and will be accepted until July 1, 2011.

Upcoming Key Dates

July 13:	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
July 13:	PH PBRN STiNC Conference Call 12:30-1:30 ET
July 14-16:	NACCHO Annual Meeting in Memphis
July 15:	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call CANCELLED
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 July 16, 2010