

Issue #6

PBRN Week in Review | February 27, 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

- We are nearing completion of the first *PBRN Technical Assistance Survey*—designed to identify information needs and areas of expertise that PBRNs would like to access during their initial phases of network development. Our target date for completion is **today, February 27**. We ask that a representative from each PBRN complete the brief survey on behalf of their network, or alternatively PBRNs may choose to distribute the survey more broadly to network members for completion.

The information collected through this survey will be summarized and discussed at the March PBRN conference call. We will use the results to design future webinars and other training sessions, as well as to start the process of helping PBRNs identify consultants to work with on a more targeted basis in developing their networks and designing initial research projects.

If you haven't yet completed a survey, you may do so online at <http://www.questionpro.com/akira/gateway/1153199-0-0>. We want to hear from you about any questions, problems, or suggestions regarding the survey. Please direct these to Sharla Smith, smithsharla@uams.edu or 501-526-6629.

- ***PBRN Grantee Meeting @Keeneland.*** We are actively developing the agenda for our PBRN grantee meeting to be held on Tuesday April 7 (Lexington, KY). We invite your ideas regarding specific agenda items or more general topical areas to be covered during the meeting. Please send your ideas and interests to Sharla Smith, smithsharla@uams.edu or 501-526-6629. This meeting will be an opportunity for in-depth discussions of the strategies that grantees are using to develop their network, prioritize research interests, and plan initial research activities. Members of the PBRN National Advisory Committee will also be on hand for these discussions.
- ***Travel Expenses for the PBRN Grantee Meeting.*** PLEASE NOTE: the PBRN Coordinating Center will support travel expenses for up to two participants from each network to attend the grantee meeting on April 7. We will be able to pay for roundtrip coach airfare, one night of lodging, ground transportation, and meals not provided at the meeting (up to a per diem limit) for each person. PBRN grantees are



welcome to use their own funds to support travel for other participants, and to support additional nights of lodging so that participants can stay on for the Keeneland Conference. Please Contact Sharla Smith with information on the two members of your network that should receive travel support—smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629. Once we have this information, we can send you the details on how to book your travel with the designated RWJF travel coordinator. If you have already booked travel for one or more of these individuals, let Sharla know that as well.

- ***Speakers at the Keeneland Conference:*** As noted previously, we need to confirm speakers for the panel on public health PBRNs to be held at the Keeneland Conference on Wednesday April 8. We would like to include a speaker from each of the 5 networks – someone who can speak (for about 10 min plus Q&A) about the organization of your network, the array of organizations involved, roles/responsibilities of key network members, initial research interests, and processes being used to facilitate exchange between practitioners and researchers. This speaker may be the network director/PI or another key person involved in the network – but certainly it needs to be someone who is able to stay over in Lexington through Wednesday. **Please let us know as soon as possible who will serve as the speaker for your network, so this information can be included in the detailed conference agenda.** We will be able to cover expenses for an additional night of lodging for each of the five speakers.

The preliminary conference agenda has been released:

<http://www.publichealthsystems.org/phssr/EventsConferences/KeenelandConference/2009KeenelandConference/2009Agenda>

Ongoing PBRN Activities

- A draft document outlining ***Initial Research and Evaluation Concepts*** for the Public Health PBRN Initiative was developed and shared at the PBRN February conference call. In this document, we suggest that some of the constructs and methods of network analysis may be useful for tracking the development and evolution of public health PBRNs. We anticipate that this type of analysis—a self-study of sorts—will be useful and revealing exercise in collaborative research involving all 5 PBRN networks (and ultimately the full set of 15 networks). But we need to hear from you about this concept.



We ask that PBRN grantees review this draft concept document and submit your initial questions, ideas, and comments to the Coordinating Center by March 6 so that a broad discussion of these concepts can be conducted during the March conference call. Importantly, we anticipate that any baseline data on PBRN structure and function will need to be collected in the relatively near term, so that changes in structure and function can be detected over time. Let us hear from you about these research and evaluation ideas.

Activities on the Horizon

- AcademyHealth released its preliminary conference agenda this week, and many sessions each day will appeal to PBRN practitioners and researchers. Log on to <http://www.academyhealth.org/arm/agenda/index.htm> to see what is offered in the overarching themes of public health, organizational performance and management, health care workforce, and several quality topics. Methods workshops for health services research are available at all skill levels. A pre-conference meeting of the State Health Research and Policy Interest Group is scheduled for Saturday, June 27, and the Public Health Systems Research Interest Group will meet Tuesday and Wednesday, June 30 – July 1. The conference is June 28-30 in Chicago.
- America’s Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA), generically known as “the stimulus package,” passed recently and retained funding for evidence-based prevention and wellness programs. PBRNs may be well-positioned to help their affiliated public health agencies take advantage of this opportunity to enhance adoption and implementation of evidence-based public health practices. PBRNs may be equally well-positioned to study the impact of stimulus funding on public health service delivery and outcomes.
- In the past week, a variety of health-related analyses and views of the ARRA have been published. The NIH Director gives an overview of the institutes’ funding at http://nih.gov/about/director/02252009statement_arra.htm. George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, with support from RWJF, published an Issue Brief highlighting the legislation’s major health provisions at http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/departments/healthpolicy/CHSRP/downloads/Legal_Barriers_Stimulus_Cover_Memo_021809.pdf
- The newly launched Health Workforce Information Center is a virtual clearinghouse for data and research, funding, policy, events, state resources, publications, and other information related to health workforce issues. Information is available on some public health professions and workforce matters, and an opportunity also exists to add information we have available. For PBRNs examining workforce issues, this may be a good place to post your results after publication. Supported by HRSA’s Bureau of Health Professions, the URL is <http://www.healthworkforceinfo.org/>.

Key Upcoming Dates

March 10 – Monthly PBRN conference call, 11:30 EST, 10:30 CST, 9:30 MST, 8:30 PST.

March 13 - Deadline for registration for the *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems and Services*

Research. www.publichealthsystems.org/media/file/2009KCRegistrationFormPDF.pdf

April 7 - PBRN Grantee Meeting held in conjunction with the Keeneland Conference, Lexington KY.

April 7-9: Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems and Services Research. Lexington, KY. www.publichealthsystems.org/media/file/2009KCRegistrationFormPDF.pdf

Funding Opportunities for Public Health Systems Research

- A new National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) was announced this week. The partnership between CDC, NIH and RWJF is intended to synergize the efforts of the three organizations and have an impact on obesity more quickly by addressing the efficiency and effectiveness of obesity research. A free monthly webinar series beginning February 27 is designed to further enhance the skills of researchers in evaluating state and local policies aimed at reducing the prevalence of obesity. The website is www.nccor.org.
- 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 are anticipated. Interdisciplinary projects are welcome. Visit www.wtgrantfoundation.org/ for complete program guidelines.
- RWJF is developing a new program focus area on public health law that is likely to open new opportunities for research on the design, implementation, and impact of public health law and policy. We will keep you apprised of funding opportunities.
- RWJF has a newly active program to support research that evaluates the use and impact of quality improvement techniques in public health practice. The deadline for the first round of funding closed in December 2008 but we will keep you apprised of subsequent funding opportunities.
<http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20581>
- A new program announcement from the National Institutes of Health looks particularly well suited for practice-based research in public health. *Using Systems Science Methodologies to Protect and Improve Population Health (R21)*. This 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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