

Issue #24

## **PBRN Week in Review | Oct 9, 2009**

*PBRN Grantees: Please circulate relevant information to your network members.* For additional information and to make suggestions for future items, please contact Elaine Wootten, [woottenelaineb@uams.edu](mailto:woottenelaineb@uams.edu) or 501-526-6628. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

### **Notable Recent Activities**

- **From Grimaces to Grins!** Rain is falling in ark-boarding proportions; the roof is leaking and the dogs refuse to go outside. None of that matters, though, because the PBRNs have an extra week to respond to the RFP for Research Implementation Awards! The due date for the proposal package is now **October 22** rather than October 15!
- **Focus on Public Health Systems & Services Research.** The October issue of *Health Services Research* features nine journal articles and additional commentary that examine the most current public health systems issues. Click [here](#) to go to the RWJF website for a link to the journal issue, a podcast with Senior Program Officer Debra Pérez discussing the importance of the research, and a video interview with Glen Mays answering five questions about research on public health spending.
- **State Public Health Meetings.** Over the past month, the public health PBRNs have used state and regional public health professional meetings as venues to update practitioners about their research activities, share preliminary findings, and in some cases to collect information and feedback from practitioners to inform their studies. These state and regional meetings are proving to be very effective venues for engaging larger communities of practitioners in the work of PBRNs. Your network may want to begin some advance planning with its practice partners to identify how to engage most effectively in these meetings in the future. These venues may also be valuable settings in which to recruit new PBRN participants. As an example, Mays spent last weekend at the annual Arkansas County Health Officers' Meeting, where groundwork was laid to develop an affiliate public health PBRN within the state. (Editorial note: in Arkansas, county health officers are private-practice physicians who serve *without pay* as local public health authorities within their communities, so the road to practice-based research may be a bit slower).
- **PBRN End of Year Evaluative Work.** The first year of the PBRN developmental grant program will be wrapping up in December for the founding cohort. The Coordinating Center is planning a modest evaluative activity to help us collectively to take stock of where we've come and the current stage of development of Round I PBRNs. Social network analysis methods are commonly used for this type of activity involving multi-organizational networks and partnerships. We propose to field a brief social network survey sometime during November/December, and we welcome your thoughts and feedback about this activity. For ideas, you may want to review this [brief](#) on crosscutting research and evaluation themes developed earlier in the year.

## Activities on the Horizon

- **APHA Session on H1N1 Research Finalized.** The line-up and agenda for the APHA session on H1N1 research has been finalized, with presentations from several PBRN representatives. Click [here](#) for a full summary of the session scheduled for 8:30-10am on Monday, November 9.
- **Planning for the afternoon APHA Session on PBRNs:** The monthly PBRN conference call scheduled for *October 13* will devote time to planning for the APHA session on public health PBRNs, scheduled for Monday afternoon on November 9. The goal for this APHA session is to share experiences and lessons learned from the first year of the program.
- **APHA Reception for PBRNs and other PHSSR Champions!** Mark your calendar for a reception at APHA on Monday, November 9 from 5:30 – 8:30 pm, to celebrate the progress being made in the field of public health services and systems research, including the work of PBRNs. More information and your invitation are coming soon.
- **PBRN Siblings are on the Way.** A second cohort of public health PBRNs will come into the world of public health services and systems research in December 2009. We are planning a variety of activities to help orient this second cohort to the program and learn from the activities and accomplishments of the first cohort. Lee Thielen of the Colorado PBRN and her colleagues at the National Network of Public Health Institutes have given us some wonderful suggestions for accommodating this type of growth and for capitalizing on the opportunities for learning that result from multiple cohorts of program participants. If you have thoughts about how best to welcome these new networks into the program and orient them to your work, please let us know. We'll be sharing ideas and plans with you in the coming few weeks.

## Recent Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

- **Coming to the PBRN Website!** Concise reviews of PHSSR research exemplars will be posted on the PBRN website beginning next week. “What makes an exemplar?” one might ask. From a content perspective, the research must seek to answer questions or contain important findings relevant to PHSSR topics such as organization, financing, workforce, quality improvement, and comparative effectiveness. Studies with implications for public health practice and PBRNs also are candidates for review. On the research side, a particular survey instrument, novel set of measures, novel sampling approach or data source of interest to PBRN researchers merit consideration. Perhaps most importantly, the research design and methodology must be appropriate, sound, and rigorously applied. Three articles reviewed by PBRN Project Manager Sharla Smith will be posted next week.

- In a forthcoming article in *Health Services Research*, Rexford Santerre examines the relationship between population size served by a local health department and local public health spending per capita. What are the implications for small LHDs? Is a regionalized approach recommended? Check the website next week for the review! ([Link here](#) to full article.)



- In another study related to public health funding, Kyle Kinner and Cindy Pellegrini look at the historical and prospective trends in federal, state, and local public health funding compared to levels recommended in an IOM 2002 report. Where do we stand and what does it mean? (Full article: [American Journal of Public Health](#))  
Food for Thought: What role might a strong network of public health PBRNs play?
- In the *Health Services Research* October 2009 supplement devoted to PHSSR, Savoia and colleagues studied possible relationships between elements of public health infrastructure and local public health emergency preparedness. True or false: No association was found between community population size served by LHDs and the LHDs' public health emergency preparedness activities. Read the review to find out. ([Link to full article](#))
- **Evaluation of CDC's Prevention Research Centers.** This week the CDC released [results](#) from a national evaluation of its Prevention Research Centers program. PRCs are critical nodes in the nation's prevention research infrastructure, playing leading roles in developing and testing health promotion and disease prevention interventions. Research results produced through PRCs provide the basis for evidence-based practices in public health. As such, several public health PBRNs maintain active collaborations with PRCs.
- **Effective and Adoptable Prevention Interventions.** Incidentally, the CDC maintains a continuously updated list of [evidence-based interventions](#) that have been tested through the work of the PRCs. These interventions are classified into three categories based on the nature of evidence supporting them (adoptable, effective, and promising) may serve as valuable targets for studying the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices within public health PBRN.
- **More Evidence-Based Practices.** The Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions project (DEBI) is a national-level strategy to provide high quality training and on-going technical assistance on selected evidence-based HIV/STD/ Viral Hepatitis prevention interventions to state and community HIV/STD program staff. Click [here](#).

## Funding Opportunities


- **Research Implementation Awards (RIA):** Current grantees of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Public Health PBRN program are eligible to apply for RIA award funds to support implementation of larger-scale research projects through their networks. The complete RFA and more information are available on the PBRN [website](#). *Proposal deadline extended to October 22, 2009.*
- **Pfizer Fellowships in Public Health Research:** Pfizer offers career development awards for junior faculty pursuing careers in public health systems and services research. Research collaboration with state and/or local public health agencies is required. The [2010 announcement](#) was released today, and the application deadline is January 31, 2010. Glen Mays is on the academic advisory board for this fellowship and can answer questions.

- **Dissemination and Implementation of Evidence-based HIV Prevention:** NIH invites research to enhance the science of technology transfer, dissemination, implementation, and operational research for evidence-based HIV-prevention interventions in the United States. More information is [here](#).
- **Implementation of Quality Improvement Processes:** AHRQ announces the Agency’s interest in supporting grants to rigorously study the implementation of quality improvement strategies and provide generalizable scientific findings about the implementation of the quality improvement strategy, related organizational changes, and their impact. There is increasing evidence that success in achieving quality improvement goals is at least partially attributable to implementation processes and contexts and not just to the nature of the quality improvement strategy. The research funded through this announcement may be conducted by the team designing/implementing the quality improvement strategy or it may be conducted by a separate team. The quality improvement strategy must be one that is expected to result in major improvements in health care delivery that will enhance patient outcomes. Research design and execution will yield results providing AHRQ, providers, patients, payers, policymakers, and the public with contextual details and high level of confidence about what works and what doesn’t in improving health care in the United States. More information is [here](#).
- **Community Infrastructure for Health Research:** NIH has released a new funding opportunity under ARRA for research infrastructure that is highly relevant for Public Health PBRNs, entitled *Building Sustainable Community-Linked Infrastructure to Enable Health Science Research*. These grants are designed to “support the development, expansion, or reconfiguration of infrastructures needed to facilitate collaboration between academic health centers and community-based organizations...in order to accelerate the pace, productivity, **dissemination, and implementation** of health research.” Communities are defined to include “neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, **public health departments**, health care providers, community coalitions, local governments, campus-community partnerships...” Public Health PBRNs may be well positioned to compete for this funding in collaboration with their academic health center partners. Deadlines: 12-Nov-2009 (letter of intent) and 11-Dec-2009 (full application). More information is [here](#).
- **Communities Putting Prevention to Work:** HHS recently announced its comprehensive \$650 million initiative under the Prevention and Wellness Trust component of the ARRA allotted for chronic disease prevention. *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* has four components, two announced thus far, that make grants available to support the implementation of evidence-based public health programs and policies to reduce risk factors, prevent/delay chronic disease, promote wellness, and provide positive, sustainable health changes in communities. We expect this opportunity to create compelling situations for PBRNs to study the adoption, implementation, and impact of the prevention strategies supported under this initiative.
  - **Community Initiative:** The initial \$373 million cornerstone component will fund urban and rural communities “to achieve the following prevention outcomes: increased levels of physical activity; improved nutrition; decreased overweight/obesity prevalence; decreased tobacco use; and decreased exposure to secondhand smoke.” A revised [Full Announcement](#) further specifies the number of communities per state that may apply, etc.

- **State and Territory Initiative:** HHS has also announced the second component of the initiative, \$120 million for which states may apply. The three major elements include: (1) statewide policy and environmental change; (2) tobacco cessation through quitlines and media campaigns; and (3) a competitive category of high impact health-promoting policy and environmental change with awards based on potential for health impact. According to the announcement, “Funded projects will emphasize state-level policy and environmental changes that will help communities and schools support healthy choices.” Further information, key dates and related events such as conference calls are listed [here](#).

## Related Research and Practice Activities

- **Research Methods Resources:** AcademyHealth has launched a dedicated [website](#) containing resources on methods for health services research. Of course, these methods are highly relevant to the study of public health services and systems through PBRNs. Among the many resources are on-demand [webinars](#) accessible through the website for a modest fee. As an organizational affiliate of AcademyHealth, the PBRN National Coordinating Center may be able to secure preferred pricing or even coordinated viewing of these webinars. Check out the website and let us know if you see resources that are of interest.
- **Implementation Research:** The call for abstracts for NIH’s 3rd Annual *Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation*, has a deadline of 5 pm pacific time on Nov 6, 2009. The conference will be held March 15-16, 2010 in Bethesda, MD. NIH says, “There is a recognized need to close the gap between research evidence and clinical and **public health practice**, but how is this best accomplished? Although emerging as a field of research in health and medicine, dissemination and implementation science is yet underdeveloped. A forum is needed to facilitate growth in the science of dissemination and implementation.” For details, click [here](#).
- **Social Science Research and Public Health:** Throughout the fall and winter the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at NIH is sponsoring symposia on understanding health through the tools of the social sciences. Each symposium will address an important health issue from four scientific perspectives: economics, health services, sociology and anthropology. Presentations will provide background on the concepts, definitions, methods, and theories through which social scientists study the causes of health problems and the application of this science for improving health. Lectures in this series are video cast and can be viewed [here](#). Video casts are archive only and posted approximately one week after the lecture; no live recording is available.
- **Behavioral Economics and Health:** Describes a behavioral economics approach to human behavior with a focus on health. According to the website description, “our strategy combines research (infusion of new ideas, testing, and evaluation) with action (program implementation, service delivery, attention to process and on-the ground details) to design effective solutions to our most pressing health and social problems.” (87 minutes)



New  
posting

## **Upcoming Key Dates**

**October 13: PBRN Monthly Conference Call** 11:30-12:30 ET; 10:30 CT; 9:30 MT; 8:30 PT.

**October 22: PBRN Research Implementation Award Proposal Deadline** 5:00 pm ET

**November 9: PBRN-related sessions at the APHA Annual Meeting**

9:30-11am (H1N1 research)

2:30-4 pm (PBRN research)

5:30-8 pm (PHSSR reception)

**November 10: PBRN Monthly Conference Call:** cancelled due to APHA

**November–December 2009: Year One PBRN Data/Reporting.** These are our target dates for collecting data from the PBRNs about their development over the first year. Details to come.

**November 18: PBRN Quarterly Webinar,** 2-3:30pm EST

**December 1: Start date for second cohort of Public Health PBRNs.** The next group of networks begins their activities.

**January 15, 2010: Annual Progress Reports** due to RWJF.

**Next Issue:** October 16, 2009