

Issue #3

PBRN Week in Review | February 6, 2009

PBRN Grantees: Please circulate relevant information to your network members. For additional information and suggestions for future items, please contact Sharla Smith, smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629.

Notable Accomplishments this Week

- ***Database of Expert Consultants:*** The PBRN Coordinating Center is preparing a database of expert consultants that PBRNs may wish to tap via their allotment of consultation time (recall that 20 days are pre-loaded into each PBRN's "technical assistance account"). The consultants have diverse expertise in areas such as organizing multi-institutional networks and collaboratives, performance measurement in public health, research designs and frameworks for public health systems research, participatory research strategies in public health, health disparities research, quality improvement research, public health law, public health financing, qualitative research methods, statistical analysis and survey design. We invite PBRN grantees to suggest other potential consultants via the brief technical assistance survey to be posted next week (see below). The list of consultants will be updated continuously and can be accessed on the PBRN website soon. www.publichealthsystems.org/pbrn
- ***Technical Assistance Survey:*** Next week the PBRN Coordinating Center will post a short electronic survey designed to elicit the information needs and technical assistance needs currently faced by PBRN directors/managers during this early phase of network start-up. This information will help to anticipate and direct resources to PBRNs for network development activities. In addition to identifying these initial information and TA needs, we hope to obtain a better fix on the existing assets and areas of expertise that each network already possesses that could be shared with other PBRNs via meetings, conference calls, and other exchanges. The web-based survey link will be emailed to the primary contacts at each of the five PBRN grantees. If desired, network directors/managers can forward this survey link to other active participants in their network.
- ***Overarching Research and Evaluation Activities:*** The Coordinating Center has been working on an overarching research and evaluation framework that can be used to study the development, implementation, and evolution of public health PBRNs through this initiative. An initial draft of this framework will be shared at the February conference call so that grantees can begin to shape and refine this framework. Some of the questions we hope to answer in the near term are: [1] What types of organizations participate in public health PBRNs? How does this vary across networks and change over time? [2] What motivates organizations to participate in

PBRNs? What are the expected benefits and expected costs? How does this vary across networks, within networks, and over time? [3] What are the types and intensities of interaction that occur among PBRN participants, and the roles played by different organizations? How does this vary across networks, within networks, and over time? Capturing this kind of descriptive information early in the PBRN initiative will provide a baseline for measuring change over the course of the initiative, and for examining the types of network arrangements appear to work well in different settings.

PBRN Meeting at the Keeneland Conference

- The first in-person meeting of the five public health PBRN grantees will take place on Tuesday, April 7, in conjunction with the *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems and Services Research* at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. The agenda is not yet final, but we anticipate that the meeting will commence at 8:30 am and conclude by 5:00 pm. The primary audience for the meeting will be PBRN project directors/managers, but grantees are welcome to invite other key participants in their networks to attend. 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 the discussions. Following the PBRN meeting, grantees are encouraged to stay on and attend the Keeneland Conference, which will begin with a plenary speaker and dinner at 6pm, and run through April 9.
- On the morning of Wednesday April 8, we will host a panel session at the Keeneland Conference on the *Role of Public Health PBRNs in Advancing Public Health Systems Research*. We would like to include a speaker from each of the five PBRN grantees on this panel if at all possible. We will be discussing the format and content of this session during the February conference call and via email—your ideas are needed and most appreciated. Please submit any ideas and interests regarding this session to Sharla Smith at smithsharlaa@uams.edu.

Other Activities on the Horizon

- The first *Public Health PBRN Webinar* will be held February 19 from 9:30-11:00am EST. This webinar—the first in a quarterly series—is designed for all PBRN participants and interested collaborators. This session will provide an overview of “*Public Health Systems and Services Research: Models, Methods, and Emerging Priorities*.” Glen Mays will be joined by Doug Scutchfield at the University of Kentucky and Tim Van Wave at CDC in giving a brief overview of PHSSR, what we’ve learned to date, common methods and approaches, and new directions. Connection information will be sent via separate email.

- The process for selecting an additional 10 grantees to join the Public Health PBRN Initiative will commence this spring. More information will be forthcoming on this process and timeline.
- The vetting process has begun for the national accreditation standards developed by the Public Health Accreditation Board (see January 30 newsletter). To contribute your expertise and insight, visit at www.phaboard.org.

Opportunities for Presenting/Publishing Your Work

- The PBRN Coordinating Center will be organizing a panel session on public health PBRNs at the 2nd Annual *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems Research*, to be held on April 8 in Lexington, KY. Please call or email Sharla Smith with your interest at smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629
- Abstracts for the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting are due February 9-13. We will be soliciting interest in a panel presentation at this meeting as well. Please call or email Sharla Smith with your interest at smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629
- The PBRN Coordinating Center will be soliciting interest in a panel session on public health PBRNs for the AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting to be held in June in Chicago. Please call or email Sharla Smith with your thoughts at smithsharlaa@uams.edu or 501-526-6629. Information about the meeting can be found at: <http://www.academyhealth.org/interestgroups/phsr/callforpapers.htm>

Key Upcoming Dates

February 9 – *AcademyHealth Webcast on Public Health Emergency Preparedness* (1-2:30 pm ET). AHRQ has developed a range of emergency preparedness planning tools, including free, interactive computer models. To showcase a few of the newer tools and their uses, AHRQ will host a wecast, *Public Health Emergency Preparedness: Planning and Practicing for a Disaster*. This event will feature tool demonstrations by developers and insights from users. Presenters will offer diverse perspectives on emergency planning and preparedness.

February 9-13 – Deadline for abstract submissions for APHA Annual Meeting

February 10, 9:30-10:30am EST – monthly conference call with PBRN project directors and project managers.

February 13, 10am PST – Panel session on public health systems research at *Preventive Medicine 2009 Meeting*, Los Angeles CA. Speakers include PBRN Advisory Group member Dr. Michael Caldwell along with Dr. Hugh Tilson and Glen Mays.

February 16 – Deadline for abstract submissions for presentation at the *AcademyHealth Public Health Systems Research Interest Group Meeting*.

<http://www.academyhealth.org/interestgroups/phsr/callforpapers.htm>

February 19, 9:30-11:00am EST – *PBRN Webinar on Public Health Systems Research*. Glen Mays, Doug Scutchfield, and Tim Van Wave will give a brief overview of PHSR, what we've learned to date, common methods and approaches, and new directions. This webinar is designed for all PBRN investigators, staff, and interested network partners. Connection information will be sent via separate email.

March 13 - Deadline for registration for the *Keeneland Conference on Public Health Systems Research*. www.publichealthsystems.org/media/file/2009KCRegistrationFormPDF.pdf

Funding Opportunities for Public Health Systems Research

- 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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