

Issue #31

PBRN Week in Review | Dec 11, 2009

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 Recent Activities

- **PBRN study selected for Public Health Law funding.** The **Colorado Public Health PBRN** was part of another inaugural cohort this week when the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [Public Health Law Research Program](#) announced its first wave of 15 grants. Investigators Lee Thielen and Julie Marshall will examine regional approaches to local public health service delivery through the lens of law. Study components include a national look at state laws impacting regional approaches to service delivery and a legal analysis of the Colorado Public Health Act of 2008 as it impacts regionalization and regional approaches.

Ed Baker, co-PI with Rosemary Summers of the North Carolina PBRN, and a colleague from the NC Institute for Public Health also were funded by the Public Health Law Research Program to examine the legal structures that may support national accreditation of public health agencies. At the conclusion of their work, the North Carolina project will produce a "legal supplement" to The Accreditation Road Map, a tool to assist states in developing a successful accreditation program.

- **Round I PBRNs met** for their monthly phone conference on Tuesday, December 8, concluding their first grant year of activity. In a continuing discussion of the network analysis process and draft instrument, call participants emphasized the need to focus on those high-priority items necessary to characterize baseline network structures and interactions for tracking and comparison over time. The group concurred with fielding the survey in January, noting that the startup of the Research Implementation Award (RIA) studies in February could change the nature of network members' interaction and distort the baseline measure.

Call participants noted their anticipation of working with the second cohort of PBRNs and discussed ways of acclimating the newest program members. Round I grantees would like to pair with newer networks based on commonalities in network structure, research interests, or some other dimension(s). NCC staff sent project summaries and contact information to Round I members to assist in developing the idea.

The call also included conversations related to a proposed new format for the Annual Grantee Meeting that occurs in conjunction in the Keeneland Conference, as well as a fall conference proposal being submitted by the NCC to AHRQ. Both are highlighted elsewhere in the newsletter.

- ★ **Round I Networks:** Review the Action Items, Next Steps, and the accompanying due dates in the Call Summary sent last week!

- **Round II PBRNs met** for their orientation phone conference on Thursday, December 10. The enthusiasm was palpable among the 22 call participants as they introduced themselves and representatives of each of the seven networks described their memberships and convening efforts. Glen Mays explained the development of the RWJF-funded program and its uncommon emphasis on practice agency leadership and guidance for overall direction, research agenda setting, and translation of findings into practice. Mays also discussed the inaugural cohort's rapid development, their commonalities in member roles, and the variation in composition, structure, and approach that can be expected among the dissimilar public health contexts across the states. Following the conference, the Coordinating Center began polling for the most convenient regular monthly conference time. Watch for an email with the schedule and other follow-up items.
- **RWJF Year in Research.** Each January, the research and evaluation group of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation publishes a list of the prior year's 10 most influential research articles. The Foundation has selected 21 nominees and now [the poll is open](#) for your vote! Select the five articles you believe "had major policy impact, affected the field's work and thinking, or stood out in some other way." Voting ends December 23.

Three of the nominated articles have PHSSR and PBRN ties:

- ❖ Public Health Delivery Systems: Evidence, Uncertainty and Emerging Research Needs, published in the March 2009 [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#). Authors are Glen Mays and Sharla Smith of the PBRN Coordinating Center and Richard Ingram, Laura Racster, Cynthia Lamberth and Emma Lovely of CPHSSR.
- ❖ Geographic Variation in Public Health Spending: Correlates and Consequences, published in the October 2009 [Health Services Research](#) supplement. Authors are Glen Mays and Sharla Smith
- ❖ Applying Health Services Research to Public Health Practice: An Emerging Priority, also published in the October supplement to [Health Services Research](#). Authors are Douglas Scutchfield, Glen Mays, and Nicole Lurie.

Activities on the Horizon

- **PBRN Annual Grantee and NAC Meetings.** Responding to grantees' consistent and vigorous requests for more time to work together, an extended Annual Meeting format is being proposed. In conjunction with the April 20-22, 2010 Keeneland Conference, the PBRN Grantee Meeting would begin on Monday morning, April 19, and conclude on Tuesday afternoon, April 20, just prior to the Keeneland Conference opening session. The NAC also would meet on Tuesday afternoon. This schedule allows the NCC and networks to work together longer but requires most grantees to travel to Lexington on Sunday evening. This is a proposed format, and we invite your input and feedback.
- **PBRN Fall 2010 Conference Opportunity.** The NCC is developing a proposal to the AHRQ grant program (R13) designated for conferences and scientific meetings. This funding would provide another opportunity for an in-person PBRN meeting in the fall 2010, possibly to include networking with related research networks that have strong scientific and geographic affinity with the public health PBRNs, such as PRCs, primary care PBRNs, and/or CTSAAs. Ideas and feedback on this concept are welcome!

Related Research and Practice Activities

Calls for Papers

- **AcademyHealth** is accepting abstracts for papers, posters, and panels through **January 14, 2010** for the Annual Research Meeting (ARM). New this year in the panel presentation category, proposals for round-table discussions in health services research or health policy will be considered. The ARM is organized around *twenty themes* in health services research and policy; the description of the Public Health theme is pasted below just to innervate your creative synapses. Calls in each category are quite specific, so [note the details at this link](#). Our **Massachusetts PBRN** friends will make us feel at home in Boston, where the meeting will be held from June 27-29, 2010.

Public Health Theme of ARM

- Using evidence-based practices to deliver public health services
 - Cost, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ROI of public health services and systems, especially prevention strategies focusing on obesity, smoking cessation, and other major public health concerns
 - Resource allocation decisions for public health practitioners, including input from the community and elected officials
 - Understanding the effects of organizational change and innovation on population health
 - Measuring and improving quality in public health practice (including accreditation/performance standards)
- **AcademyHealth Interest Groups (IG)** issue [separate calls for papers](#) for their meetings held in conjunction with the ARM. **All IG abstracts are due February 15, 2010**, including the Public Health Systems Research (PHSR) IG [detailed here](#). The PHSR meeting is June 29-30 immediately following the ARM. **Glen Mays, PBRN Coordinating Center**, is active in AcademyHealth and the PHSR IG and can provide additional information.
 - Two distinct Calls for Papers | Two submission/review processes | Two deadlines
 - **APHA** begins accepting abstract submissions for the 2010 Annual Meeting on December 18, 2009. The 2010 conference theme is Social Justice: Public Health Imperative, and our **Colorado PBRN** colleagues will help APHA welcome us to Denver. **Abstracts are due February 1-5, 2010**. [Link to details](#).
 - **BRFSS**. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Conference Committee is accepting abstracts for posters and presentations related to BRFSS topics in survey research, epidemiology, evaluation, policy and public health. The committee is especially interested in research pertaining to the conference theme of “Leading the Way in Public Health Surveillance.” [Abstracts are due Thursday, December 31, 2009](#), and the conference will be held in San Diego from March 20-24, 2010.

Webinars

- **Foodborne Diseases: Better Prevention with Better Public Health Information**. On Thursday, December 17, 2009, from 9:00 a.m.–10:15 a.m. (ET), the monthly CDC Public Health Grand Rounds session will focus on food safety and the policies and interventions that can reduce food-

borne-related illness and death. The session is available through a [live broadband link](#) and an archived video of the presentation will also be made available.

New Literature

- **Obesity and Child Care.** With a majority of US preschoolers in some type of child care, these settings play an important role in the food and physical activity choices of young children. One RWJF-funded study recently published in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* found that Head Start programs generally report going beyond current regulations in providing healthy eating and physical activity. In another report, though, findings showed that other child care settings in many states could be doing more. [Link here](#) to more information about the studies.
- **QI in Public Health Practice.** The January/February 2010 issue of [Journal of Public Health Management and Practice](#) focuses on the topic of quality improvement in public health from a broad array of perspectives. Authors include too many network participants, NAC members, and PHSSR colleagues to name for fear of omitting someone. Through the generosity of RWJF, this special issue is available online free of charge.
- **More Evidence on Physical Activity.** The [December 2009 issue](#) of *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* focuses on physical activity and is now available online.
- **Physical Activity among Older Adults.** The December 2009 issue of the *Journal of Urban Health* reports evaluation findings of a Southeast Seattle program using “a community-organizing approach to disseminating evidence-based interventions in a sustainable way” to promote physical activity among older adults. Among the authors is **PBRN NAC Chair Jeff Harris**. Read the promising results in this link to the [full article](#).

Publications

- **Tobacco Funding Report.** A report released this week by a coalition of public health organizations shows that the record revenues states have collected in tobacco settlement and tobacco tax dollars have not saved programs for reducing tobacco use from the funding chopping block. Read the findings of “[A Broken Promise to Our Children: The 1998 State Tobacco Settlement 11 Years Later](#),” for example, over half the states fund their tobacco prevention programs at below 25% of the CDC recommended funding level.
- **Aging Workforce.** Also released this week was a [report](#) based on the Healthy Aging for Workers Conference showing that most employers are not doing enough to address the health needs of older workers. Because economic conditions may force older people to continue working longer and workloads increase as employers reduce staffing levels, the risk for illness and injury mounts. Though this report is aimed at clinical health care workers, the ramifications for a public health workforce characterized as aging and in short supply even before the downturn are worth consideration.
- **Impact of Health Department Funding Cuts.** When local, state, and federal governments reduce funding to local health departments’ budgets, leading to personnel and service cutbacks, will the public ultimately pay the price in the form of poorer health? The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) recently released a report on the consequences of LHD budget cuts. [Linked here](#) are various formats of the report and brief interviews with the author and with **NACCHO Executive Director Bobby Pestronk, a PBRN NAC member**.

- **Living in a Healthy Place.** A RWJF Investigator awardee, Jason Corburn, has written a book entitled, *Toward the Healthy City: People, Places and the Politics of Urban Planning*. Corburn looks at urban planning and public health from a historical context and then proposes a collaborative approach to urban health issues, using contemporary success stories as examples. His recommendations parallel a number of those of the Foundation's Commission to Build a Healthier America and the RWJF/Pew Charitable Trust collaborative [Health Impact Project](#). More about the book and related topics [here](#).

Opportunities for Involvement

- **Comment on Competencies.** The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice has opened the public comment site for the Tier 1 and Tier 3 draft Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals. At [this link](#) you will find a brief introduction to the project and the need for updating the competencies, the comment form and related instructions, and ideas for using the competencies for workforce development.
- **Voices from the Past.** The year 2010 will be the 100th year of publication for the [American Journal of Public Health](#). To mark this significant milestone, the *Journal* will feature Voices from the Past in each issue, brief extracts of works of public health pioneers originally published before 1985. Contributions are invited, and to make it easier, *Journal* articles from 1911 to the current issue are available and searchable online at the link above! For more details about how to be a part of Voices from the Past, [click here](#).

Funding Opportunities

- **Obesity Policy and Obesogenic Behaviors:** This week NIH announced additional obesity policy research funding, this time with schools as a context. The agencies again offer three application mechanisms, depending upon the project size, time to completion, and stage of development, all with the same scientific scope. Applications are sought “to: (1) foster multidisciplinary research that will evaluate how policies (federal, state and school district levels) can influence school physical activity and nutrition environments, youths obesogenic behaviors (e.g., nutrition and physical activity behaviors), and weight outcomes; (2) understand how schools are implementing these policies and examine multi-level influences on adoption and implementation at various levels (e.g. federal, state, school district, and school); and (3) understand the synergistic or counteractive effect of school nutrition and physical activity polices on the home and community environment and body weight.”
 - ❖ R01 [Announcement](#)
 - ❖ R03 [Announcement](#)
 - ❖ R21 [Announcement](#)
- **Obesity Policy Research: Evaluation and Measures.** Three NIH mechanisms are available to fund obesity policy research at the community level. The initiatives are related, and each announcement states, “The overarching goal of this FOA is to inform public policy and research relevant to (1) diet and physical activity behavior, and (2) weight and health outcomes of Americans.” All three announcements seek applications to: “(1) conduct evaluation research on obesity-related natural experiments (defined as community and other population-level public policy interventions that may affect diet and physical activity behavior), and/or (2) develop and/or

validate relevant community-level measures (instruments and methodologies to assess the food and physical activity environments at the community level).”

- ❖ R01 [Announcement](#): Research grants ([About R01](#))
- ❖ R03 [Announcement](#): Small research grants ([About R03](#))
- ❖ R21 [Announcement](#): Exploratory/developmental grants ([About R21](#))

- **Health IT Funding.** HHS Secretary Sebelius and Health IT Coordinator David Blumenthal have announced \$235 million in ARRA funding available for 15 communities that are already leading in the adoption of electronic health records (EHR). Known as the Beacon Hill Community Program, funded communities will establish cooperative agreements “to build and strengthen their health IT infrastructure and health information exchange capabilities to achieve measurable improvements in health care quality, safety, efficiency, and population health.” Funding is also available to the communities for technical assistance and program evaluation. Qualified applicants are expected to: (1) build upon existing health IT infrastructure; (2) have adopted EHR at a significantly higher rate than national estimates; and (3) coordinate with new national programs for developing and disseminating best practices. [Click here](#) for Beacon Hill Program information and the application link. **Deadlines: Letter of Intent required - January 8; Application - February 11, 2010.**

- ❖ To learn more about how the US fares in the use of health information technology in primary care, check out this recent *Health Affairs* web exclusive: [A Survey of Primary Care Physicians in 11 Countries, 2009: Perspectives on Care, Costs, and Experiences](#) by Schoen and colleagues.

- **Tobacco Control RFA.** The National Cancer Institute recently released its State and Community Tobacco Control Policy and Media Research RFA soliciting cooperative agreement applications for research projects examining the effectiveness of state and community tobacco control policy and media interventions. According to the announcement, “focal areas include secondhand smoke policies, tax and pricing policies, tobacco industry marketing and promotion, mass media countermeasures, and community and social norms.” Additional information about the RFA [linked here](#). **Deadlines: Letter of intent due December 22; Application due January 22, 2009**

- **RWJF and the Pew Charitable Trusts** have issued a Call for Proposals on their collaborative [Health Impact Project](#). Funding is available to support up to 15 health impact assessment (HIA) demonstrations with awards expected to range between \$25,000 and \$150,000, plus training, mentoring and technical assistance. Grantees will promote the use of HIAs, decision-making tools that assist policy-makers with recognizing health consequences of new policy and ways to incorporate health into the policy of other sectors. Letter of interest required; full proposal invited based upon letter of interest. No deadline; rolling submissions until all funding is obligated. The applicant web conference is archived at the project link above.

- **Implementation of Quality Improvement Processes.** AHRQ has announced 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. More information is [here](#). The next application deadline is **January 25, 2010.**

- **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](#) is available online, 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](#). The next application due date is **February 5, 2010**.

Upcoming Key Dates

- January 12:** Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call | 11:30 -12:30 ET
- January 14:** AcademyHealth Abstracts Deadline
- January 30:** Round I PBRNs' Annual Progress Reports to RWJF
- February 1-5:** APHA Abstracts Deadline
- February 9:** Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call
- February 15:** AcademyHealth Interest Groups' Abstracts Deadline

Next Issue: December 18, 2009
(Final issue of 2009)