



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

- **Baseline Measure of Round I PBRN Activity.** A revised draft of the social network analysis instrument was circulated among network leaders for comment this week. The new draft incorporates network feedback and includes a case definition of “network participant” that will ensure consistency in who completes the survey across networks and over time. Both will be discussed in the January 12 phone conference.
- **Keeneland Conference Deadline *Extended*:** Abstracts are still being accepted for the 2010 PHSSR Keeneland Conference. The new deadline is January 7, and details are [linked here](#). The Coordinating Center is submitting two abstracts for PBRN panel presentations related to each cohort of networks, and we will work together to develop the details. Individual presenters are welcome to submit abstracts on other PHSSR topics of interest.
- **RWJF Year in Research.** Remember to [vote](#) for the five most influential research articles among the 21 deserving nominees from RWJF’s programs. Consider which pieces “had major policy impact, affected the field’s work and thinking, or stood out in some other way,” **Voting ends December 23.**

Deadline

The nominated articles with PHSSR and PBRN program ties are:

- ❖ 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 PROPOSALS

- **The NACCHO Annual Conference** Workgroup is accepting “sharing session proposals” for its annual meeting themed “20/20 Public Health Vision: Prevention, Equity, Leadership.” According to the NACCHO website, the sessions selected “will support this theme by enhancing the ability of participants to create and build upon a forward-looking vision of local public health through disease prevention interventions and wellness promotion, elimination of health inequities among individuals and communities, and expanded leadership capacity within local health departments.” Proposals should also show how the presenter will engage the audience members as learners. The conference will be July 14–16, in Memphis, Tennessee. [Read submission instructions and submit proposals here.](#) **Proposals are due January 29, 2010.**
- **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. Calls in each category are quite specific, so [note the details at this link](#). The meeting will be held in Boston from June 27-29, 2010.
- **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 Calls for Papers | Two submission/review processes | Two deadlines
- **APHA** is accepting abstract submissions for the 2010 Annual Meeting. The conference theme is Social Justice: Public Health Imperative. **Abstracts are due February 1-5, 2010.** [Link to details.](#)

Deadline!

- **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

- **Complete the Streets!** The National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) will host a webinar training entitled “Complete the Streets! Using Street Design to Create Healthier Communities” on January 12, 2010, at 1:00 pm ET. For more information, please visit [this RWJF link](#).

Update!

- **Social Science Research and Public Health:** The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at NIH is sponsoring a symposia series on understanding health through the tools of the social sciences. Each symposium addresses an important health issue from four scientific perspectives: economics, health services, sociology and anthropology. Presentations 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 are video cast and can be viewed [here](#). Video casts are archive only; no live recording is available. **The second symposium in this series is now available for viewing online.**

- ❖ Symposium #2: Education

There is ample evidence demonstrating an association between educational attainment and a wide variety of health problems, behaviors and outcomes. Less is known about the mechanisms through which education influences health. Economics, health policies, organizational systems, social and cultural factors all play a role in shaping educational gradients in health. Anthropology Perspective: Susan Shaw (U Arizona); Sociology: John Mirowsky (U Texas); Health Services: Kevin Fiscella (U Rochester); Economics: James Smith (RAND)

- **Foodborne Diseases: Better Prevention with Better Public Health Information.** The December session of CDC Public Health Grand Rounds focused on food safety and the policies and interventions that can reduce foodborne-related illness and death. An archived video of the presentation is available [at this link](#).

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.

PUBLICATIONS

- **Epidemiology Capacity.** Earlier this year, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists surveyed the state epidemiologist in each of the 50 states and DC in its periodic, standardized national assessment of state health departments' core capacity. The resulting report, "Assessment of Epidemiology Capacity in State Health Departments---United States, 2009," shows that significant gaps persist and that capacity has declined since the 2006 report. The findings are summarized in the [MMWR](#) December 18 edition and the [full report](#) is linked here.
- **Readiness to Respond.** On a related topic, the newly-released "Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism" report shows that the H1N1 outbreak has highlighted key areas in which the nation's public health systems are unprepared for emergencies. The economic downturn and resulting funding cuts to public health continue to exacerbate the risks and challenges. Sponsored by Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Foundation, the report is available on the [RWJF website](#). NACCHO Executive Director and PBRN NAC member Bobby Pestronk reacted to the report by praising the efforts and resourcefulness of the local health departments in the challenging circumstances and urging Congress and the Administration to provide adequate funding to protect the public's health. Pestronk's comments were published in the [ASPH Friday Letter](#).
- **Public Health Law News.** More than 26,500 school cafeterias did not have their two required inspections last year, and more than 8,500 of those were not inspected even once. Black lung disease in coal workers has doubled in the last decade. More than 20% of US water treatment systems have violated the Safe Drinking Water Act in the last five years, according to a New York Times investigation of data from the EPA. Discussions of these topics, announcements, journal articles, and court opinions are in this month's [CDC Public Health Law News](#). Past issues and an electronic subscription form are also available through this link.
- **Tobacco Funding Report.** A recent report 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 aimed at 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](#)."
- **Aging Workforce.** In another recently released [report](#), findings from the Healthy Aging for Workers Conference showed 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.

OPPORTUNITY FOR INVOLVEMENT

- **PHAB Beta Site Visitors.** The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is looking for persons with extensive experience and knowledge of public health services delivery in state, local or tribal

health departments to serve as site visitors to the 30 health departments participating as accreditation beta test sites. Site visitors will participate in a two-day training in Washington DC in March 2010; visits will be conducted April – June. [Site visitor selection criteria](#) and the [application form](#), due January 29, are linked here. Email questions to rwilcox@phaboard.org.

Funding Opportunities

- **Finding Answers: Disparities Research for Change.** RWJF has announced a national initiative to move disparities research beyond documentation and into the implementation of efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic differences in health care. The types of organizations and partnerships that are eligible to apply are more specific than usual. Web conference calls for interested applicants are scheduled for January 6 at 3:00 pm CT and January 8 at 10:00 am CT. Brief proposals due by February 4 at 2:00 pm CT. [Link to CFP](#).
- **School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, Obesogenic Behaviors and Weight Outcomes:** 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 policies 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 by January 8; Application due 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.

Deadline!

Deadline!

- **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 5:** RIA Revisions Due for February 15 Start Date
- January 7:** Keeneland Conference Call for Abstracts Due
- 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: January 8, 2010
The newsletter is taking a holiday break!

