

Issue #38

## **PBRN Week in Review | Feb 19, 2010**

*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](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uams.edu) or 501-551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

### **Notable Recent Activities**

- **Quality Improvement Authority Shares Expertise with PBRNs.** Bill Riley, whose leadership in public health and health care quality improvement and related research spans the corporate, academic, government and non-profit sectors, was the featured presenter at a PBRN webinar this week. Using Glen Mays' familiar "black box" as a reference point, Riley illustrated the use of several QI tools to understand process performance as "an important first step to penetrating the black box to ensure public health services are delivered efficiently and effectively." He also discussed the challenges of studying public health interventions, contrasting the classic research designs of the "science of discovery" with models in the "science of improvement" that must consider the social and structural complexity of the setting. To continue elucidating the black box, the role of PBRNs is to identify and rigorously apply appropriate research designs to public health QI projects to test their effectiveness and then disseminate the results.

Currently, Riley is Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. He also is Project Manager for RWJF's *Public Health Practice: Evaluating the Impact of Quality Improvement*. One of Riley's co-authors on "[Introducing Quality Improvement Methods into Local Public Health Departments: Structured Evaluation of a Statewide Pilot Project](#)" in the October 2009 *Health Services Research* was **Debra Burns** of the **Minnesota PBRN**.

- **Round I Evaluation Activity.** After weeks of collaborating on the concepts, processes, and instrumentation for a social network analysis of the public health pbrns, the survey of Round I network participants launches on Monday, February 22. Each PBRN research coordinator will receive from the National Coordinating Center (NCC) an email with an introductory letter and embedded link to the instrument to send to their participants for completion by March 8. The NCC will generate descriptive reports of network interaction from the completed surveys and will provide each PBRN with a copy of its raw data to share with partners for more in-depth analysis. Overall results will be discussed at the grantee meeting in April. The next key dates include:

Feb 22	Survey administration via web begins
Feb 26	Reminder emails for participants sent to research coordinators
Feb 26-Mar 5	Research coordinators or NCC staff send reminder emails to non-respondents
Mar 8-10	Research coordinators or NCC staff contact non-respondents
Mar 8-10	Non-respondents contacted by phone

Data collected in this phase of the social network analysis process will serve as baseline measures as we track changes in the structure and function over time of the program's PBRNs.

- **Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF).** Through the generosity of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the program's 12 PBRNs are eligible for QSRF awards to take advantage of time sensitive research opportunities that can be completed within 90 days of funding. In fact, a research project idea may be submitted by anyone, and the study will be conducted by one or more networks. To lend flexibility to the unpredictable nature of project content, application deadlines are not specified. Practically, however, ideas should be submitted before mid-August to allow time for processing within the grant year. Submit a one-page summary of proposed QSRF research to the Coordinating Center at [publichealthpbrn@uams.edu](mailto:publichealthpbrn@uams.edu). If a summary shows potential to cultivate important knowledge quickly in a distinctive public health systems or services context, the submitting party will be asked to develop the proposal more fully.

## Activities on the Horizon

- **Methods Courses.** The *RWJF Public Health PBRN Program* is working with AcademyHealth to pilot test a new group registration process for their HSR Methods webinars. The next courses will focus on two important methods in public health and HSR as identified in a research training needs assessment: (1) best practices for conducting [case studies](#) on March 11, and (2) advanced uses of [multilevel modeling](#) on March 25. Both courses are from 1:00 to 2:30 pm ET. PBRN participants may read more about the HSR methods training [here](#). To enroll, send an email to [Elaine Wooten](#) in the PBRN Coordinating Center by March 3 for the case studies course and by March 17 for the multilevel modeling course. *PBRN participants should not register online at AcademyHealth!*
- **PBRN Annual NAC and Grantee Meetings.** PBRN grantees and NAC members planning to attend the program's annual meetings in conjunction with the 2010 Keeneland Conference should have received Travel Guidelines from the National Coordinating Center. Make hotel reservations soon! The schedule, with tentative times, is shown here.

Monday, April 19	8:15 am- 5:00 pm 6:00 pm	Grantee Meeting Dinner
Tuesday, April 20	8:30 am-12:00 pm 12:00 pm- 4:00 pm 7:00 pm	NAC/Grantee Meetings (independently) NAC/Grantee Lunch & Meeting (together) Keeneland Conference Opening Dinner
Wednesday, April 21	10:15am-11:45 am 1:45am- 2:45 pm	PBRN Round I Session (panel format) PBRN Round II (roundtable format)

The NCC will assist with planning and coordinating Wednesday's presentations. If attending the Keeneland Conference, remember to register at the [conference home page](#).

- **Wisconsin PBRN Kick-Off Meeting** – Friday, February 26. Presenting by teleconference, Glen Mays will open the meeting with an overview of the national program and the importance of practice-based research in public health.
- **National Emergency Management Summit** - March 3. Research findings shared at APHA generated such interest that **Mays** and **Angela Dearing (KY PBRN)** will present again at this conference in DC, also accessible online ([conference information](#)). Kentucky's study of lessons

learned from communication among public health and other health professionals during the H1N1 outbreak of spring 2009 was supported by the RWJF Quick Strike Research Fund (QSRF).

- **Texas Public Health Association** – April 21, 2010. Mays will give a teleconference presentation on practice-based research.
- **Ohio Combined Public Health Conference** – May 12, 2010. Glen Mays will lead a session on the development and future of public health PBRNs at this annual meeting of the state’s public health professionals’ organizations. The **Ohio PBRN** will take advantage of this opportunity to showcase practice-based research and continue developing statewide participation in the network.

## Related Research and Practice Activities

### CALLS FOR CONFERENCE PROPOSALS

- **NACCHO** is including its *first* public health research track at the 2010 Annual Conference in Memphis from July 14-16. Here is an exceptional opportunity to share practice-based research experiences with one of our most important audiences: local health department professionals! NACCHO seeks proposals for presentations in three sessions:
  - ❖ Research at Local health Departments
  - ❖ Practice-Based Research Using NACCHO’s Profile Data; and
  - ❖ Applying Research Evidence in Local Health Departments.

Details and instructions are [linked here](#). **Proposals are due Sunday, February 28, 2010.**

### NEW LITERATURE

- **Leadership and Management.** The March/April 2010 issue of [Journal of Public Health Management and Practice](#) is a special content edition related to management and leadership. Included in the issue are articles by **Angela Dearing** and colleagues of the **KY PBRN** discussing their use of a PBRN group vetting session to improve knowledge of PHAB accreditation standards; **PHSSR colleague Peggy Honoré** and coauthors presenting a case study of a software model for determining funding priorities in a public health service area; **Mays, Scutchfield**, et al re-examining the relationship between local public health system characteristics and performance; **Betty Bekemeier** of the **WA PBRN** studying the impact of staffing shortages in local health agencies; and a commentary by Scutch.

## Funding Opportunities

- **Prevention Research Center (PRC) Funding.** PBRNs with PRC network partners or with research partners at PRC academic health centers will be especially interested in CDC’s [PRC funding opportunity](#) “to support comparative effectiveness research on innovative public health strategies or interventions that assess the impact of policy and environmental interventions.” While applicant eligibility is limited to existing CDC PRCs; *unlike their usual offerings, this FOA allows for a principal investigator from the academic health center who has not been part of the PRC.*

**Key Dates:** Letters of Intent are required and due February 22, 2010.  
Applications due March 22, 2010.

**New!**

- **AHRQ Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER).** AHRQ recently announced the availability of ARRA funds supporting CER. R01 applications are invited “from investigators seeking to conduct rigorous comparative evaluations of alternative system designs, change strategies, and interventions that have already been implemented in healthcare and are likely to improve quality and other outcomes.” PBRNs interested in looking at the delivery of prevention-oriented services may also want to consider ways to integrate health IT, use of EMR data or other novel clinical data sources, use of quality improvement techniques, team-based care models, or other AHRQ interest area. The [funding announcement](#) includes important definitions and other details. Deadline: Applications due March 18, 2010.

**Note Change**

- **RWJF and the Pew Charitable Trusts** have been overwhelmed by the response to the call for proposals on their collaborative [Health Impact Project](#). *This is no longer an open-ended CFP. Letter of interest is required and must be submitted by **February 26, 2010** to be considered for funding.*

**Update**

- **RWJF Public Health Law Research (PHLR).** PHLR has issued its second [call for proposals](#) “for studies that will examine the public health impacts of a broad range of laws and legal practices, including innovative legal approaches and laws and regulations developed at the city or county level.” While the primary focus should be on the influence of law or policy on public health, a multidisciplinary approach is welcome. Several resources for strengthening proposals are available at the [program website](#). Brief proposals are due April 14, 2010.
- **Obesity Prevention Research.** RWJF’s *Active Living Research* (ALR) program has released calls for proposals aimed at preventing obesity in children and youth through policy and environmental strategies that increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviors. This round emphasizes strategies to reach children at greatest risk for obesity and those living in lower-income and under-resourced communities. *New Connections* grants, administered by the ALR program, are a part of the CFP. Details linked [here](#).

## Upcoming Key Dates

<b>March 9:</b>	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call   11:30-12:30 ET
<b>March 18:</b>	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 ET
<b>April 13:</b>	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call   11:30-12:30 ET
<b>April 15:</b>	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call   1:00-2:30 ET

**Next Issue:** Week of February 26, 2010