

Issue #56

PBRN Week in Review | October 29, 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 or 501-551-0106. Newsletter archives are available [here](#).

Notable PBRN Activities

- **PBRN Public Health Activities and Services Tracking (PHAST) Study.** PH PBRN participants formally launched the PHAST study on October 22 in Little Rock. Twenty-two participants from 11 PBRN states, including the University of Washington study leaders and PBRN National Coordinating Center (NCC) staff, laid groundwork for the goals, processes and next steps of the study.

Study Purpose: The initial aim of the study is to establish a system for monitoring variation and change in public health services and the impact of these services on the health of vulnerable populations. The work is intended to serve as the basis for a larger, more sustainable system for monitoring and comparing outcomes of changes to local health department (LHD) practice over time, providing ongoing evidence for decision-making by LHD leaders. The study also provides a large, well-populated data set for other PH PBRN research.

Retrospective Examination of LHD Services: A short-term goal of the PHAST study is to identify, gather, and compile existing and comparable LHD service data from participating PBRN states that reflect services delivered by LHDs from 2007-2009. These data will provide a level of detail related to service volume, type, scope, and reach unavailable through other sources. Data analysis will provide a preliminary exploration of changes occurring in LHDs in association with the nation's financial crisis and how these changes might be impacting the public's health. A notable number of comparable variables, across several domains of LHD practice, were identified during the Little Rock meeting.

Prospective Examination of LHD Services: In addition to retrospective variables already collected, items for new collection of LHD service data were discussed and will be further refined. Principles discussed in relation to data collection included minimizing burden to state and local health departments, identifying meaningful service items, focusing on current LHD services, and reporting findings in a timely manner to enhance the support and interest among practitioners and public health leaders.

Highlights of Immediate Next Steps:

- ◆ Participating states will confirm their PBRN's interest in the PHAST Study, if still needed.
- ◆ PI Betty Bekemeier and Study Coordinator Carly Kaufman (UW) will compare existing LHD service variable items indicated by participants and follow up with PBRN leads for more information, as needed.

- ◆ Glen Mays and the NCC staff will provide technical assistance and support to the project and to participating PBRNs upon request.
- ◆ Glen Mays and Betty Bekemeier will host a webinar within one-to-two months to provide an overview of the study and additional information to participating PBRN partners.
- ◆ Participating states will provide available existing data to study leads (Bekemeier, Mays) over the next few months (details to follow).

Newsletter readers interested in greater detail may inquire to publichealthpbrn@uams.edu.

- **Outcomes-Driven Public Health. Ohio PBRN participants** convened a conference on Thursday, October 28, focused on measuring the outcomes of public health practice. Hosted by Wright State University and Public Health-Dayton & Montgomery County, featured speakers included Health Commissioner Jim Gross of the host health department, Assistant Professor Bill Mase of the University of Cincinnati (OH PH PBRN member), and Glen Mays of the Public Health PBRN National Coordinating Center. Speakers addressed the challenges of outcomes measurement, the economic and policy imperatives of outcomes measurement, and the roles of practice-based research and practice variation studies in building evidence regarding outcomes. When conference slides are available online, a link will be included in the PBRN newsletter.
- **2010 Research Implementation Award** proposals were submitted *early* by all seven Round II Public Health PBRNs and are in the review process. Proposed research includes developing and testing measures of quality across public health contexts related to:
 - Extent of implementation of quality improvement in local health departments;
 - Community health improvement plans and processes;
 - Structure, process, and outcome of local health department role in foodborne illness prevention, investigation, and intervention;
 - Family planning services provided by local health departments to teens compared to outcomes and determinants of outcomes;
 - Defining and examining variation in quality in a state where public health infrastructure has been reorganized to include regional public health departments serving underserved populations in rural communities;
 - A new integrated approach to HIV and AIDS field services and program delivery where a non-integrated approach has existed; and
 - LHD emergency preparedness and response.
- **Colorado Advances Intergalactic Research and Preparedness.** Friday's *Wall Street Journal* noted a ballot initiative in Denver's election that seeks to establish a commission for studying UFOs and addressing the health and safety risks posed to Colorado's population. A new frontier for PBRNs? [Link to article](#)
- **2010 NACCHO Profile of Local Health Departments Survey Has Launched!** Encourage your LHD partners to complete this very important census survey of the nation's local public health agencies. This year's survey has been carefully harmonized with the ASTHO census survey (currently in the field) and the NALBOH census survey (planned for fielding in January-March 2011). This is an extremely important data source for the research and practice communities concerning the organization and operation of public health at the local governmental level. Several PBRN collaborators serve on the scientific advisory committee for this year's survey, including Lisa VanRaemdonck of the Colorado PBRN, Jeff Jones of the Kentucky PBRN, and Glen Mays of the NCC. More information is [here](#).

Activities on the Horizon

- **APHA Workshop on Communicating Public Health Data.** On **Saturday, Nov. 6**, from 1:30 to 5 p.m., this APHA Learning Institute Workshop provides practical suggestions and examples on how scientists, health promoters, health educators, clinicians, statisticians, and others can better communicate data to the public, policy makers, and the news media. Workshop agenda [linked here](#).
- **APHA Workshop on Practice-Based Research.** Public health practice-based research is the focus of a workshop slated for **Sunday, November 7**, from 8:00 until 11:30 am during the APHA 2010 Annual Meeting in Denver. The workshop is an opportunity for academic and practice representatives to work together in exploring “selected priority research areas” of public health systems and services research. Hosted by the Yale School of Public Health (a partner in the **Connecticut PH PBRN**), the workshop has a few seats available. If you responded to the survey of agenda topics and indicated *tentative* attendance, a definite response is needed! Practice participants are especially encouraged to attend. [Kathi Traugh](#) is accepting RSVPs and can provide additional details.
- **RWJF Reception at APHA.** Monday, November 8, is a busy night for receptions at APHA. Be sure to drop by the RWJF Public Health Team Reception at the Colorado Convention Center in Korbel Ballroom 4 between 6 and 8 pm for refreshments and networking.
- **APHA Presentations by PBRN Participants.**
 - ◆ "Communication Capacity during the Outbreak of Novel Influenza H1N1: An Evaluation of Health Departments in a Public Health Practice-Based Research Network" **Robin Pendley (KY PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ “Resource Allocation and Funding Challenges for Regional Local Health Departments in Nebraska” **Li-Wu Chen and Dave Palm (NE PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ “Effectiveness and Challenges of Regional Community Health Planning Partnerships in Nebraska” **Li-Wu Chen and Dave Palm (NE PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ "Local Public Health Leadership and Community Efforts to Obtain ARRA Stimulus Funding" **Bill Livingood (FL PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ "Formative Evaluation Results for a Local Public Health QI initiative to Improve Immunization Rates" **Bill Livingood (FL PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ "A Participatory Approach to Planning for Regional Public Health Services in Massachusetts" **Justeen Hyde (MA PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ "Changes in Public Health Programs over Time...and How They Relate to Disparities in Mortality" **Betty Bekemeier (WA PH PBRN)** and colleagues
 - ◆ "An Innovative Service Learning Program for MPH Students: Applying Problem-Based Learning in Community Settings" **Karen Hartfield (WA PH PBRN)**
 - ◆ "Closing the Quality Chasm in Public Health: Lessons from Practice-Based Research Networks" (**National Coordinating Center**)

- ◆ "Accelerating Evidence-based Management in Public Health: Results from the First Two Years of PBRN Research"(National Coordinating Center
- **PBRN Publication.** A reminder to Round I Public Health PBRNs that the National Coordinating Center requests a draft of each network's ten-page, double-spaced manuscript for the *Leadership in Public Health* journal by **Friday, November 12**. The Coordinating Center will review and may suggest editorial changes to help the articles flow together as a special issue. Please email your network's article to publichealthPBRN@uams.edu.

Resources in Research and Practice

WEBINARS

- **HSR and Open Data Initiatives and Innovations.** "This [webinar](#), as part II of the free series, will take place on **Thursday, November 4, 2010** at 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. (EDT) with Dr. Aman Bhandari, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; Dr. Hal Luft, Palo Alto Medical Foundation; Dr. Murray Ross, Kaiser Permanente Foundation; Dr. Paul Wallace, Kaiser Permanente. The webinar will include updates on the latest Open Government and Open Data activities initiated by the Obama administration. Participants will learn about emerging data, applications, and opportunities for the research community. [Registration](#) is required."
- The **National Academy for State Health Policy** and **Women in Government** are co-sponsoring a webinar on **Thursday November 4**, at 2:00 p.m. (ET). The topic will be Health Insurance Exchanges and the Affordable Care Act of 2010. For more information visit this [site](#).
- **PHSR Translation Webinar.** "This free webinar will take place on Thursday, **December 16**, 1:00–2:30 p.m. (EDT) and will discuss Research to Practice: Examples of Translation in Public Health Systems and Services Research. Faculty will feature Dr. William Riley of the University of Minnesota and Dr. Danielle Varda, of the University of Colorado. Registration will open soon, please e-mail phsr@academyhealth.org for more information."

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **PHSSR and Health Reform.** [HCFO's October e-newsletter](#) features Public Health Services and Systems Research (PHSSR) as its "hot topic." The discussion highlights how several features of the new law will channel funding toward prevention and public health research. Several exemplary studies funded by HCFO are highlighted.
- **Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER).** The October 2010 issue of [Health Affairs](#) is a theme issue on **comparative effectiveness research**. A [policy brief](#) co-produced by *Health Affairs* and RWJF highlights important issues and concerns raised by the CER effort included in the Affordable Care Act (ACA).
- **NASHP launches State Refor(u)m.** "The NASHP State Refor(u)m [website](#) is a hub for state-developed resources related to national health reform implementation. It is designed to support state officials working to implement health reform."

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

- **Comparative Effectiveness Research Methods Conference.** The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) are co-sponsoring "Methodological Challenges in Comparative Effectiveness Research," a conference in which

participants will use case studies to examine and address the limitations of existing intervention research. According to the announcement, the meeting is designed to "explore current methodologic, data analytic, infrastructure and database research challenges in order to help develop a vision for shaping the methodological tools of tomorrow." Conference dates are December 2 and 3rd on the NIH main campus in Bethesda, Maryland; registration deadline is November 17. [Link](#) to more information, including registration.

- **Modeling for Public Health Action.** CDC's Preparedness Modeling Unit is hosting the 2010 Conference on Modeling for Public Health Action on December 9 and 10 in Atlanta. According to the announcement, the conference is designed to "promote the exchange of information and ideas about modeling uses to shape public health action. Intended audiences include "public health practitioners and policy makers in state and local health departments, state and local health policy makers; scientists and modelers working at CDC and its federal partners in public health; academic researchers, non-government organizations, and international practitioners, modelers and policy makers." Conference details are [linked here](#), and conference organizers [Michael Washington](#) and [Shelby Alexander](#) at CDC are the contact persons for questions.

New Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

- **Public Health Systems and Partnerships.** In an article by Glen P. Mays and Doug Scutchfield in the November 2010 issue of *Preventing Chronic Disease*, evidence and uncertainties concerning the use of partnerships to improve the performance of the public health system are examined, with a special focus on partnerships between public health agencies and health care organizations.

Funding Opportunities and Announcements

Funding
List
Link

The Coordinating Center maintains a [list of funding opportunities](#) of interest to Public Health PBRNs. Grant opportunities with recurring deadlines are tracked and updated.

- RWJF PHSSR Call for Proposals. The RWJF CFP for investigator-initiated research in PHSSR is expected to be released in early 2011.
- NIH Systems-Oriented Pediatric Obesity Research and Training (SPORT) Center of Excellence Grant [Link](#)
Letter of Intent Due: November 30, 2010
Application Deadline: December 31, 2010
- RWJF Public Health Law Research Rapid Response Studies
Proposals will be accepted online on a rolling basis during the next 12 months. Details about the solicitation and the application process are [linked here](#).
- NIH
Effects of the Social Environment on Health: Measurement, Methods and Mechanisms
[Link](#).
Letters of Intent Due: December 6, 2010
Application Due Date: January 6, 2011

Career Opportunity

- **PHSSR Faculty Search.** The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is seeking candidates for a tenure-track, open-rank faculty position in the Health Policy and Management Department to advance its research program in public health systems and services research. Candidates should have a successful record of research relevant to the organization, financing, and delivery of public health services or the ability to develop such a record. For more information contact gpmays@uams.edu.
- **NCHS/AcademyHealth Health Policy Fellowship.** Application Deadline: January 5, 2011
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and AcademyHealth are seeking applicants for the 2011 Health Policy Fellowship. This program brings visiting scholars in health services research-related disciplines to NCHS to collaborate on studies of interest to policymakers and the health services research community using NCHS data systems. Applications are welcome from doctoral students through senior researchers and/or faculty. For more information about the fellowship and application requirements, visit the AcademyHealth [website](#) or e-mail [AcademyHealth](#).

Key Dates

Nov 6-10:	2011 APHA Annual Meeting in Denver
Nov 9	CANCELLED for APHA: Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call
Nov 12	Round I manuscript drafts due
Nov 17	UPDATE: Quarterly webinar will be in early December
Nov 18	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
Dec 14	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Dec 16	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
April 10-12	2011 Annual Grantee and NAC Meetings in Lexington
April 12-14	2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference in Lexington (conference changes to a Noon kick-off in 2011)

Next Issue November 5, 2010