

Issue #59

PBRN Week in Review | December 10, 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

- ◆ **Public Health Activities and Services Tracking (PHAST) Study.** The PBRN PHAST study is moving ahead to address the goals and objectives established during the October kick-off meeting. Six of the 11 networks attending the meeting have committed to the study and three others are exploring participation. PI Betty Bekemeier and her team are cross-walking the retrospective data elements provided thus far by six networks. PH PBRNs that have not sent the data elements to Betty should do so quickly.

PHAST Webinar. To facilitate discussion and share more information with all interested network members, Bekemeier and the National Coordinating Center (NCC) will host a webinar on **Tuesday, December 14**, from 3 to 4:00 p.m. ET. [Follow this link to register](#) for the webinar.

- ◆ **We Interrupt this Column.** Several newly-released publications are so significant to PH PBRNs' work to warrant more prominent placement than the usual space for reports.

IOM Committee Report. To begin showing improvement in the health of communities, states, and the nation as a whole, "the health system" must be measurable. One of three major topics being examined by the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Public Health Strategies to Improve Health, measurement is the focus of a report released this week that "recommends changes in the processes, tools, and approaches used to gather information on health outcomes and to assess accountability." [For the Public's Health: The Role of Measurement in Action and Accountability](#) may be downloaded as a four-page Report Brief that highlights the committee's seven recommendations or the full report (uncorrected proofs of the forthcoming book) that provides the richly referenced supporting evidence for each recommendation.

The committee is tasked with examining and preparing "actionable reports" on two remaining topics relative to public health: the law and funding. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation asked the IOM to convene a committee; the Foundation's charge to the group for all three topics is described in the full report.

Public Health Quality. The Office of Assistant Secretary for Health, Howard Koh, has issued [Priority Areas for Improvement of Quality in Public Health](#), a report of the recent efforts of Koh and the Public Health Quality Forum (PHQF) to develop priority areas for improving quality in public health.

Koh convened the PHQF in 2008 to begin developing a macro-level framework for quality in public health, emphasizing the shared and coordinated roles of the practice, policy, and research communities. A consensus statement that included a definition and characteristics of quality in the public health system was part of their early work.

With passage of The Affordable Care Act (ACA) focusing more attention both on quality as a measurable construct and on population-based health improvement as means of cost-savings, the Forum moved to its next step of defining priority areas. The six priorities, or "primary drivers," listed in no particular order because the PHQF intentionally left them unranked, are:

- Population Health Metrics and Information Technology
- Evidence-Based Practices, Research, and Evaluation
- Systems Thinking
- Sustainability and Stewardship
- Policy
- Workforce and Education

Decennial Health Agenda. Perhaps one of the most recognizable signposts in the oft-unnoticed work of public health, the Healthy People initiative has announced the new 10-year health promotion and disease prevention goals and objectives and launched a [new website](#). Healthy People 2020 includes 39 topic areas (several more still are evolving) and 600 objectives with more than 1300 measures.

- ◆ **AcademyHealth PHSSR Translation Webinar.** According to AcademyHealth, “This webinar focuses on two examples of translation in PHSSR. Participants will learn about designing research questions in partnership with practitioners, conducting research with practice partners, and sharing findings with those who can use them to support the implementation of evidence-based and innovative public health practice.” Both of the webinar faculty have worked with their states' PH PBRNs on research projects: University of Minnesota's Bill Riley and University of Colorado's Danielle Varda.

[Research to Practice: Examples of Translation in Public Health Systems and Services Research.](#)
Thursday, December 16 | 1:00–2:30 p.m. (Eastern)

Note:
No Round II Call
so all can attend
the webinar!

Activities on the Horizon

- ◆ **Incentivizing Public Health Collaboration.** HHS recently released the [new federal regulations for minimum medical loss ratios](#)) that health insurers must meet starting in January 2011 under the Affordable Care Act. An MLR is the proportion of premium revenue that insurers are required to pay out each year in expenses for medical services – a level set at 80%-85% of premium revenue in 2011. Thanks to the ingenuity of the public health policy community in the health reform discussions, a tiny little provision in these new regulations creates some potentially powerful incentives for insurers to invest in public health activities through collaboration with public health agencies. Under these regs, health insurers can count any costs they incur in conducting public health education campaigns toward their MLR, as long as these campaigns are carried out in collaboration with state and/or local public health agencies. As the behavioral economists teach us, small and well-timed incentives can have large effects on behavior. The NCC is teeing up a study to assess the responses to this new regulation – [send an email to us](#) if you are interested in being involved.

Calls for Abstracts

- **Keeneland Conference.** The deadline has been extended to January 14 for the 2011 PHSSR Keeneland Conference Call for Abstracts. The conference is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12 to Thursday, April 14, 2011 in Lexington, Kentucky. Visit the [PHSSR website](#) to download submission forms and for more information. Note changes in venue and start times for the 2011 meeting.
- **AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting (ARM).** The [Call for Abstracts](#) is open for panels, posters, and presentations for the 2011 ARM, June 12-14 in Seattle. Details are available at the link above, including the 20 themes in health services research and policy for which abstracts are sought, **submission criteria**, and instructions. **Abstracts due: January 13, 2011.**
- **APHA 2011 Annual Meeting.** The APHA [Call for Abstracts](#) is scheduled to open December 17. Scheduled from October 29 through November 2 in Washington, DC, the 2011 Annual Meeting theme is "Healthy Communities Promote Healthy Minds and Bodies." Deadlines for abstracts range from February 7 to 11, depending upon the entity within APHA.

Resources in Research and Practice

CONFERENCES

- **The 2011 National Health Policy Conference (NHPC).** Leading health policy experts will discuss policy priorities for the new Congress and issues ranging from relevant training for the future health care workforce to encouraging innovation in health care delivery. February 7–8, 2011 in Washington, DC. [View the NHPC agenda](#). Register by December 21.

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Chronic Disease Epidemiology Capacity.** The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) has released a five-year update of "Chronic Disease Epidemiology Capacity: Findings and Recommendations," a state-based report of chronic disease epidemiology capacity in the U.S. as measured in 2009. The report is available in PDF at the [CSTE website](#).

NEW TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- **New Resources in PH Law.** The [Public Health Law Network](#) (PHLN) is a companion program to RWJF's *Public Health Law Research*. PHLN connects and serves individuals and organizations committed to applying the law to improve public health. Available resources include law technical assistance, training materials and programs on public health law.

New Literature and Exemplary Studies of Interest

PBRN
Authors

- In the [November/December 2010](#) issue of *Public Health Reports*, check the Local Acts section for a paper co-authored by Ohio PH PBRN's **Susan Kovach, Wesley Vins, and Matt Stefanak**. Kovach, Stefanak and their local health department colleagues at Mahoning County District Board of Health used a RAND protocol to test telephone response time to disease reports against the 30-minute standard recommended by CDC, and then used business process analysis and redesign methods to make improvements. In introducing the article, section editor Lorna Thorpe (CUNY-Hunter) writes, "The development of performance measures is a critical step toward improving preparedness, but these measures are only useful when routinely evaluated. Although this evaluation was small, Kovach et al. are to be commended for prioritizing the full quality improvement cycle." Among their conclusions, the authors give a nod to public health

pbrns as mechanisms for linking researchers with multiple practice settings to test variation across contexts.

- ✦ **Cost Savings from Disease Prevention.** In the [January issue](#) of *American Journal of Public Health*, Ormond and colleagues present findings from their model of a 5% reduced incidence of hypertension and diabetes, presumably achieved through prevention activities such as diet, exercise, and reduced smoking. Nationally, the near term savings were estimated at approximately \$9 billion annually and significantly more over a medium term. Read more about the model and the study's findings in the article entitled, "Potential National and State Medical Care Savings from Primary Disease Prevention."

Funding Opportunities and Announcements

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 Public Health Law Research Rapid Response Studies**
Proposals are accepted online on a rolling basis. Details about the solicitation and the application process are [linked here](#).
- ✦ **NIH**
Effects of the Social Environment on Health: Measurement, Methods and Mechanisms [Link](#).
Application Due Date: January 6, 2011

Career Opportunities

- ✦ **PHSSR Funding for Post-Docs and Junior Faculty.** Applications are being accepted for the [2011 Pfizer Fellowships in Public Health](#). According to the award details, "The Fellowship in Public Health is intended to support research that fosters academic science, knowledge of public health, and collaborative partnerships between accredited schools or programs of public health and federal, state, and local departments of public health."

Key Dates: The application deadline is February 11; awards will be announced April 15, and funding begins July 1, 2011.

- ✦ **NCHS/AcademyHealth Health Policy Fellowship.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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. **Application Deadline: January 5, 2011.**
- ✦ **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.

Key Dates

Dec 14	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Dec 14	PHAST study webinar 3:00 -4:00 ET
Dec 16	Cancelled: Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
Jan 11	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Jan 20	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
Feb 8	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Feb 17	Round II PBRN Monthly Conference Call 1:00-2:30 ET
Mar 8	Round I PBRN Monthly Conference Call 11:30-12:30 ET
Mar 17	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)