



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

NOV 21 2002

Patrick McConnon, M.P.H.
Executive Director
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
2872 Woodcock Boulevard – Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Dear Mr. McConnon:

The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) supports the objectives stated in the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) position statement "Development of Nationwide State-based Chronic Disease Epidemiology Capacity" (#2000 CD-1), that each state health department should by 2004, identify a State Chronic Disease Epidemiologist (SCDE) to work collaboratively with program managers to assure that essential epidemiology functions are performed.

This position statement affirms the vision expressed in the Institute of Medicine's 1988 report, *The Future of Public Health*. This assessment is a core public health function and every public health agency should "regularly and systematically collect, assemble, analyze, and make available information on the health of the community, including statistics on health status, community health needs, epidemiological and other studies of health problems."

(1) *Healthy People 2010* reconfirm this vision in its Objective #23.14:

Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local public health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.

(2) Legislation anticipates development of a nationwide Health Tracking Network information system that will provide scientists with the health information needed to help prevent chronic disease.

(3) Chronic disease epidemiologists will play a key role in developing such a system using the information effectively contained in the system. Many states lack adequate chronic disease epidemiology capacity.

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Several states have combined funds to establish new chronic disease epidemiology positions from two or more of the following NCCDPHP sources: Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, Cardiovascular Health, Diabetes, Tobacco Prevention, Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention, Oral Health, Cancer Registries, and the chronic disease State-based Epidemiology for Public Health Program (STEPPS) activity.

NCCDPHP strongly encourages state departments to explore opportunities to combine funds from among these and other potentially appropriate sources for the purpose of establishing and maintaining SCDE positions. States are encouraged to maintain current information about their SCDE on the CSTE web site:

<http://www.cste.org/surveys/scdesurveyresultreviewList.asp>

The State Chronic Disease Epidemiologist will work collaboratively with other epidemiologists and with state chronic disease program managers to assure the following:

Conduct chronic disease surveillance according to nationally developed standards including:

- Chronic Disease Indicators (CDI)
- National Public Health Surveillance System (NPHSS)
- National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS).

Disseminate results of chronic disease surveillance regularly and widely in a variety of forms and formats.

Provide appropriate epidemiology technical support to state chronic disease programs including the following:

- Provide epidemiology input to documents produced by chronic disease such as reports, grants and cooperative agreement applications.

- Coordinate epidemiology capacity and activities across individual chronic disease programs.

- Coordinate at the state level epidemiology technical support for measuring community health status indicators that are related to chronic disease control

- Conduct appropriate evaluation of chronic disease programs

Maintain an epidemiology point of contact with NCCDPHP.

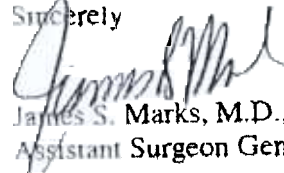
Monitor and update at least every two years the adequacy of the state's chronic disease epidemiology capacity (perhaps using the CSTE instrument).

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- Maintain a state strategic plan for filling gaps identified during the capacity assessment process.

If you have additional question, please contact Dr. Donna Stroup of my staff at (770) 488-5414.

Sincerely



James S. Marks, M.D., M.P.H.

Assistant Surgeon General

Director

National Center for Chronic Disease
Prevention and Health Promotions

Endnotes:

Institute of Medicine. The Future of Public Health. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1988.

2. <http://www.health.gov/healthypeople/Document/HTML/Volume2/23PHI.htm#To c491137863>
3. <http://healthymamericans.org/campaigns/tracking>