

Subject Area: Chronic Disease

Assignment Description

The CSTE Fellow will be working at the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) located in Frankfort, Kentucky. Frankfort is the capital of Kentucky and is approximately 30 minutes from Lexington and 60 minutes from Louisville. The Commonwealth of Kentucky offers four distinct geographic regions, each offering their own culture, characteristics and traditions. From caves to mountain and bourbon to horses, there is ample cultural and geographic diversity to be explored in the Bluegrass State.

The CSTE Fellow will work primarily in the chronic disease area but can expect to have a multifaceted experience in the state health department. The fellow will be working in the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch which is strategically housed within Division of Prevention and Quality Improvement. The Division works in close collaboration with the Division of Maternal & Child Health (MCH), Division of Women's Health and the Division of Epidemiology & Health Planning. They have a common mission, resources, and leadership. This collaboration enhances opportunities to achieving outcomes.

Due to some recent developments in Kentucky, KDPH is interested in recruiting a CSTE fellow who is interested in various aspects of chronic disease epidemiology. The developments in Kentucky that will impact the use of health care data and strategic planning going forward related to chronic diseases include the creation of the Kentucky Health Benefit Exchange (KHBE) and expansion of Medicaid eligibility in Kentucky under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). A third important factor is the development of the "Unbridled Health" state chronic disease improvement plan which is a unified call to action to create a healthier Kentucky through a collaborative and coordinated approach to health promotion and chronic disease prevention and management.

The fellow's activities will focus on measuring the impact of the KHBE on health insurance coverage opportunities and enrollment, access to health care services, and use of preventive health services using new data available on the KyBRFS. It is expected that the fellow will also participate in the implementation of strategic area four of the state plan which is to translate surveillance, research and evaluation findings into information that is easily accessible and useful to the community partners, health advocates and decision makers. The CSTE fellow is also encouraged to develop additional projects in their own particular areas of interest during their assignment in Kentucky. A list of key initiatives from which the fellow can select projects have been identified in order to provide the fellow with a varied exposure to applied public health and epidemiology (see "Potential Fellow Projects" description box below).

The CSTE fellow will have access to all areas of epidemiology and disease surveillance in KDPH which has more than 15 epidemiologists specializing in a variety of areas of chronic disease, infectious diseases and

maternal & child health. These individuals along with MPH students & faculty from the four accredited Schools of Public Health at Universities in Kentucky and a number of residents, fellows and interns, constitute a learning community that actively contribute to the public health workforce development. KDPH supports and facilitates opportunities to connect with peers and experienced public health professionals.

Day-to-Day Activities

The CSTE fellow's day-to-day activities will vary with each project but will generally be related to KDPH ongoing work and the fellow's projects related to chronic disease surveillance, and evaluation. Activities will typically focus on desk work at the office, with field work, meetings and consultations. On a daily basis, the fellow will learn to use data sets of varying size and complexity, link data files, edit data and maintain quality control, and manage projects. He/she will participate in the design of studies, in data collection, in the analysis and interpretation of results, and in their dissemination. A typical day could involve meeting with mentors, meeting with KDPH or other state and local staff individually or in groups, or interacting with staff at local health departments, or external partners. Interactions outside of KDPH could be via telephone, email, videoconference, webinars, or in-person meetings. Daily activities will also include analyzing data, participating in coalition meetings, preparing surveys or reports, and preparing findings for conference presentations or manuscript publication.

Potential Projects

- Potential projects include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Monitor the impact of Kentucky Health Benefit Exchange (KHBE) on health insurance coverage opportunities and enrollment, access to health care services, and use of preventive health services in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
 - Assist the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch staff in developing the Diabetes Report to the Legislative Research Commission. This is a bi-annual report that uses data on diabetes and pre-diabetes to establish a plan for addressing diabetes in Kentucky. The plan is developed by a partnership of staff from Public Health, the state Personnel cabinet and Medicaid services.
 - Analyze clinical data on colonoscopy outcomes including matching to the Kentucky Cancer Registry. The Colon Cancer Screening program is a state funded program and is gaining attention as a model for how public-private partnerships can come together to increase access to colon cancer screening services.
 - Estimate the prevalence of receiving various components of ASBI (Alcohol Screening & Brief Intervention)-related services, and how this varies by the demographic characteristics of respondents; drinking status; and drinking pattern.
 - Investigate the spatial distribution of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in Kentucky and identify pockets of need for directing appropriate resources.
 - Determine the spatial epidemiology of asthma in Kentucky.
 - Assist the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch in setting up a database for coordinated chronic disease services available to Kentuckians.

- Study of the relationship between chronic disease and various risk/protective factors including low birthweight/prematurity, breastfeeding, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, and nutrition/physical activity.
- Assist in the development of data collection system and creation of a database for monitoring & evaluation of public health projects/programs.
- Evaluate differences in health care utilization and mortality from chronic diseases.
- Examine relationship between oral health and chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease
- Assist the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch staff in the evaluation of the “Enhanced” 1305 grant – this grant is designed to promote collaborative work between chronic disease programs with a focus on 4 domains: 1) Surveillance and Evaluation, 2) Environmental Approaches that Promote Health – focus on obesity prevention and school health, 3) Health System Interventions -focus on impacting the use of Health Information Technology to improve care for diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, 4) Community-Clinical Linkages – the focus here is on connecting providers and individuals to community based services and health improvement interventions. The grant requires reporting of an extensive list of performance measures related, most of which require new data collection or accessing of data sources new to public health. Work on this grant represents an opportunity to be involved in new opportunities to evaluate how health information technology is impacting the quality of care for chronic disease prevention and management in the age of healthcare reform.

Incoming fellows will engage in preparedness projects and activities throughout the tenure of their fellowship and are encouraged to participate in emergency public health response activities. In recent history, Kentucky has experienced several large-scale natural disasters and outbreak investigations requiring public health response. They fellow will receive training in conducting CASPER (Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response) during a disaster. All epidemiologists working in different areas at KDPH have assisted the Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning in responding to such emergencies. Previous fellows have been integrated into all aspects of emergency public health response ranging from pre-event planning to training to fulfilling Emergency Operations Center roles to field data collection during actual responses (e.g. 2012 KY Tornado Response and meningitis outbreak), planned mass gatherings (e.g. 2010 World Equestrian Games and annual NASCAR Sprint Cup events), and training exercises (e.g., USPHS Training Missions in 2010). The CSTE fellow may also participate with local health department preparedness operations for annually-scheduled large scale events (e.g., the Kentucky Derby in Louisville). The Fellow's role in emergency preparedness will depend on their level of interest and can include the challenges of addressing management of chronic disease among those impacted by a disaster.

Frankfort, KY

Primary Mentor:

Sarojini Kanotra, MS, PhD, MPH
BRFSS Project Director/Epidemiologist III

Secondary Mentor:

Teri Wood, MS, PhD
Chronic Disease Epidemiologist