

Maternal and Child Health/Oral Health

Assignment Description

The Division of Community Health Promotion consists of several units and programs including Community Health Practice and Analysis, School Health, Adolescent Health, Family Planning, Dental Health, WIC Food Supplemental Program, Child Care Food Program, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Domestic Violence Prevention. Our Community Health Practice and Analysis Unit (CHPA) reports to the Division in order to serve the data needs of the Division and Department.

Formerly known as MCH Practice and Analysis Unit (MCHPA), CHPA was created to strengthen the Department's ability to effectively use scientific evidence in its planning and decision-making processes related to MCH policies and programs. Created in 2006 with the hiring of the first State MCH Epidemiologist, the CHPA focuses on surveillance, evaluation, epidemiology and evidence-based planning including training the public health workforce. Surveillance activities include monitoring maternal and infant mortality/morbidity, prematurity and cesarean delivery, unintended and teen pregnancies, maternal and child obesity, and racial disparities. Policy and program evaluation activities include evaluating Florida Healthy Start pregnancy and infant health services, family planning and preconception health activities.

Day-to-Day Activities

On a daily basis, the CSTE fellow will be actively engaged in planned projects and activities with the CHPA Team and other FDOH and university partners. With timely input, CHPA continuously develops a list of potential MCH epidemiology and surveillance projects of policy/program relevance for staff, fellows and students to work on. The fellow can consider these proposals and new ones. The fellow will develop a work plan designed to meet the fellowship requirements, the fellow's interests and program needs in consultation with the CSTE mentors and the Division Director. Our intent is to provide a well-rounded and solid MCH epidemiology experience and a successful track record of producing future MCH epidemiologist leaders.

As a team member of the Community Health Practice & Analysis Unit (CHPA), the Fellow will contribute to regular activities that include but are not limited to:

- Actively interacting and engaging in planned projects and activities with other FDOH staff, national agencies, and university partners.
- Becoming familiar with surveillance systems in Florida to understand the value and usefulness of data sources such as vital records, youth and adult risk factor surveys, and health services claims data to populations in Florida.
- Using statistical software packages (e.g. STATA) to enter and clean data, and conduct descriptive and epidemiological analyses.
- Using Microsoft Office products to develop reports and presentations.
- Continuously developing a list of potential MCH epidemiology and surveillance projects of policy/program relevance for Division staff to conduct.

- Giving presentations to programmatic staff at the Department of Health, the public, and at professional meetings.
- Attending monthly conference call meetings with the CDC MCH Epidemiology Program (MCHEP) with participation from MCHEP staff in Atlanta and MCH Epidemiology Assignees at state health departments throughout the nation.
- Completing data use agreements and participating in various public health trainings including scientific ethics and an annual course sponsored/facilitated by CDC and the University of Illinois at Chicago that varies according to the current needs of states.
- Collaborating with various stakeholders to assess the maternal and child health needs within the Florida population and sub-populations and to identify and propose strategies for meeting those needs.
- Writing original scientific manuscripts for peer-reviewed publication and data reports for online publication.

Potential Projects

Primary Analytic Projects:

Florida Life Course Indicator Report - As MCH programs develop initiatives guided by a life course framework, measures are needed to determine the success of their approaches. Recently a standardized set of indicators was developed by the Association of MCH Programs (AMCHP) in partnership with selected states to assist programs in measuring the progress of efforts to improve MCH using the life course approach. The fellow will develop a comprehensive and descriptive statewide Life Course Indicator Report using various MCH-related datasets in Florida. The report will be used to inform programs and set benchmarks for life course indicators in Florida.

Life Course Indicator Analysis Using Florida's Maternally-linked File - The fellow will examine multiple life course indicators (e.g., body mass index, maternal education, marital status, type of insurance coverage, employment status) from the Florida maternally-linked file to determine how stasis or change in these life course indicators between the initial and subsequent pregnancies are associated with adverse birth outcomes – preterm delivery, low birthweight or small-for-gestational age. The maternally-linked file is a longitudinal compilation of data from various sources including birth certificates, infant death certificates, hospital discharges, etc. The fellow will either learn or apply their knowledge of hierarchical modes (e.g. General Estimating Equations (GEE)) to appropriately analyze the correlated data.

Primary Evaluation Project:

Evaluate the usefulness and impact of Florida CHARTS - Florida Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set (CHARTS) is a website that allows the public to track the health status of their own Florida communities using current public health statistics and community health data. The fellow will develop and conduct a survey of Florida county health departments and other stakeholders. The overall goal of the evaluation is to assess whether FL CHARTS is meeting their current and foreseeable MCH

data needs (e.g. availability of data to support funding requirements as well as preconception health and life course efforts).

Primary Surveillance Project:

Develop a surveillance report of oral health measures for children in Florida - The fellow will have the opportunity to develop a surveillance report of oral health measures for Florida's child population less than 21 years of age. Findings from this report will be incorporated into a comprehensive state oral disease burden document that will detail the status of oral diseases and identify disparities within and between subgroups in Florida. Data sources will come from several agencies including the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Florida Department of Health. The fellow will analyze Medicaid and healthcare service data to derive indicators that are consistent with national measures such as those in the National Oral Health Surveillance System, Healthy People 2020, and Florida's State Health Improvement Plan and State Oral Health Improvement Plan. Data will be obtained for measures assessed within the past 5 years where available.

If time and resources permit, the fellow will have an opportunity to work on the following project:

Childhood Obesity Qualitative Study - Through the Healthiest Weight Florida Campaign, the Department of Health is building collaborations and providing assistance to counties, community groups and other partners to implement programs that focus on a variety of issues including (1) promoting improved nutrition and physical activity in early care and education and (2) increasing the physical activity for students during the school day and after school programs. Although a number of factors contribute to childhood overweight and obesity, much is still unknown in the Florida population. Under our supervision, the fellow will have an opportunity to collaborate with epidemiology and program Division staff to design, organize, and implement local focus groups to enhance understanding of reasons for childhood obesity in Florida. Qualitative software will be used to compile and synthesize the data.

Preparedness Role

The FDOH continuously focuses on preparedness because of the multiple hurricanes and other potential hazards that can affect Florida. The fellow will be able to receive training, volunteer with hurricane preparation and response, participate in preparedness planning, and more. Florida experiences several outbreaks each month, providing the fellow with a variety of opportunities for participating in outbreaks, according to their interest over the two year fellowship.

Assignment Location: Florida Department of Health
Tallahassee, Florida

Primary Mentor: Ghasi Phillips, ScD, MS
Senior MCH Epidemiologist/CDC MCH Epi Assignee

Secondary Mentor: Cheryl Clark, DrPH, RHIA
Senior MCH Epidemiologist