

Chronic Diseases/Substance Abuse

Assignment Description

Under the guidance of the TEC Director and the Epidemiologist II, the fellow will have the opportunity to investigate chronic diseases and risk factors among American Indians in the Phoenix and Tucson Service Area which includes Tribes in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. Based on ITCA TECs most recent needs assessment, Tribal health departments in the region indicated that diabetes, cancer, obesity, and substance abuse are high priority areas. Therefore, the chronic disease fellow will provide important epidemiologic services, which are high priority for Tribal health departments.

Surveillance. The fellow will have the opportunity to work on at least two surveillance reports with a mix of data sources (federal, tribal, state, local). The first report for the fellowship will include a mix of data sources to construct a picture of cancer survival among the American Indian population in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. The second report for the fellowship will include a mix of data sources to examine diabetes, related risk factors, and complications among the American Indian population. The fellow will also assist with preparation of Tribal Community Health Profiles (reports of health indicators for tribal communities) which will include preparation of reports, presentations, and fact sheets for tribal leadership. The fellow will be encouraged and assisted in developing the next steps for epidemiologic information after these reports are constructed.

Tribal Health Department exposure. Along with surveillance analytics, the fellow will receive exposure to working directly with Tribal community health departments. The fellow will represent ITCA TEC at the Wellness Workgroup meetings for one tribal community and provide epidemiologic assistance as needed.

Community-level workshop instruction and facilitation. The fellow will provide capacity-building hands-on epidemiology workshops based on the ITCA TEC's current curriculum both on-site with tribal communities and over WebEx. The workshop curriculum is pre-designed, and can be tailored to meet a number of training needs.

Social Network Analysis exposure. Social network analysis (SNA) is a technique often used to investigate relationships in disease patterns and communication. The fellow will be a part of partnership meetings with SNA Mayo Clinic researchers in Arizona. The fellow will be exposed to SNA literature, techniques, and there may be opportunity to conduct analysis in this emerging area as well.

Respond to requests for assistance. The fellow will also work directly with Tribal communities and Indian Health Service for special assistance requests. Technical assistance in the past has been provided to the Indian Health Service Special Diabetes program, survey construction for tribal communities, construction and coordination of specialized workshops, and assistance with data quality improvement projects.

Grant Writing. The fellow will be exposed to grant writing in the ITCA TEC. This may include providing analysis, tables, charts, and/or literature reviews for grant announcements.

Day-to-Day Activities

Most days at the Tribal Epidemiology Center are not the same and flexibility is required to work in this unique setting. An overall day will include working directly with tribal communities and TEC staff to accomplish surveillance report construction, community health profile construction, ad hoc technical assistance requests, and leading a structured chronic disease project from start to finish.

Potential Projects

Direct community services

- Community Workshops: Basic Public Health and Epidemiology, Program evaluation planning, Community Survey Development, Data management and analysis, and Public health accreditation 101: community health assessments
- Cancer survival analysis workshop
- Ad hoc technical assistance in chronic disease areas
- Special Diabetes Program Wellness Group technical assistance

Data Analysis

- Cancer Survival Among American Indians in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah Surveillance report
- Diabetes morbidity and mortality among American Indians in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah Surveillance report
- Assist with analysis of the Phoenix Area Diabetes Care and Outcome Data (request dependent)
- Tribal Community Health Profiles for Tribal leadership (mix of federal, tribal, state, local and Indian Health Services data)
- Social network analysis cancer researchers on assigned topics (ITCA SNA and Tribal SNA for cancer resources) with Mayo Clinic partners
- Cancer mapping for quality improvement of cancer care among Tribal members with Tribal Partners and Mayo clinic

Surveillance system evaluation

- Evaluate a state and/or tribal system
- Provide a report and presentation

Preparedness Role

Role of the Fellow in Emergency Preparedness

- Complete an on-line infectious disease outbreak training, Incident command on-line trainings, and NIMS on-line trainings
- Participate in Arizona Department of Health table top exercises, meetings and events
- Be familiar with ITCA TEC procedures regarding emergency events

Assignment Location: Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ

Primary Mentor: Jamie Ritchey, PhD, MPH
Tribal Epidemiology Director

Secondary Mentor: Erica Weis, MPH
Epidemiologist II