

Living environment and geographical assets: Anchorage is the world's best place to live. The city is semi-arid, coastal, and surrounded by mountains. Within 1 hour of Anchorage one can find fishing (salmon, halibut, trout), hunting, hiking, skiing (back-country, cross-country, resort, heli), climbing (ice, rock, mountaineering), sea and whitewater kayaking, mountain and road biking, hanggliding, snowmachining, and ice skating. The city and nearby hills have moose, lynx, bear, sheep, wolves, and mountain goats. Yet, it is also cosmopolitan with the state's largest university (the University of Alaska, Anchorage, which recently boasted a professor with a nobel laureate in Economics) and a smaller private university. There is a dynamic music and restaurant scene (particularly Asian cuisine), several theatres, and a large and well-supported performing arts center.

Day to day activities: The assignee will design evaluations, conduct analyses, and write and publish reports including in peer-reviewed journals. He or she will set-up workgroups, attend meetings, and write position papers. If the assignee develops areas of particular expertise, they will be expected to interact with the media and public on that topic. Similar to the EIS experience, much of the day-to-day work will consist of data analysis and writing. Travel opportunities will exist

Examples of projects:

- 1) Setting up an ongoing surveillance system for asthma. The state has an active asthma coalition, and the data are available (Medicaid, BRFSS, YRBS, school-based), but no coherent surveillance system has yet been established.
- 2) Conducting an evaluation of the Alaska Healthy Families Program, a home visiting program for families at high risk of abusing their children.
- 3) Small studies have suggested diabetes may be associated with low birth weight birth. We have already linked Medicaid and Vital Statistics records and await someone with an interest in analysis.
- 4) Working with the Alaska Native Hospital to evaluate health program changes that have recently led to dramatic improvements in health outcomes, changes that may be appropriate for other areas of the state. The Alaska Native hospital is the leader within the HIS system and one of the world experts on health system management.
- 5) Evaluation of fetal deaths.
- 6) Evaluation of the recent increase in infant mortality among Alaska Natives.
- 7) Evaluation of the association between sexually transmitted diseases and birth defects.
- 8) If interested, the assignee could work with the Section of Epidemiology on outbreak investigations.

Program or surveillance system evaluation component.

See project 1 immediately above.

Role of the fellow in State Emergency Preparedness plan

No definitive role. If the fellow has an interest in this topic, involvement can be arranged.

Assignment Location: Anchorage, AK

Primary Supervisor: Brad Gessner, MD, MPH

Alaska_ Gessner

Medical Officer, Alaska Section of Maternal, Child, and Family Health
(1999-present)

Advanced Degrees: MPH, University of Washington (1997)
MD, University of Florida (1988)

Secondary Supervisor: K. Janine Schoellhorn
MCH Epidemiologist (10/04-present)

Advanced Degrees: MS, University of Hawaii School of Public Health (1987)
MPH, University of Hawaii School of Public Health (1986)