

Chronic Disease

Assignment Description

The CDC/CSTE Fellow will serve as an integral team member of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (CDB) located in Albuquerque, NM. S/he will primarily be involved in applied epidemiology activities related to CDB program areas, including arthritis, cancer, worksite health, tobacco control, and diabetes.

Additional CDB priority areas which the Fellow's work may support include cardiovascular disease, program integration, social determinants of health, and health inequities. The Fellow will analyze and apply CDB-relevant surveillance data from sources such as the NM Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the NM Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (an equivalent to the CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey). S/he will disseminate this data in a number of formats, and will be charged with keeping chronic disease indicators up-to-date on the NMDOH Indicator Based Information System for Public Health (NM-IBIS).

The Fellow will participate in advisory committees related to NMDOH surveillance system questionnaires and methodologies to ensure that CDB's data priorities are represented. Evaluation of current surveillance sources will be an important function, and the potential enhancement of surveillance activities to fill identified data gaps (e.g., sexual orientation of high school youth) will be explored.

The Fellow will have ample opportunities to develop fact sheets and reports for print and website dissemination, to write articles for the NMDOH Epidemiology Report, to present at the NMDOH Quarterly Epidemiology meetings and annual NM Public Health Association meetings, and to provide training or technical assistance to contractors and community members. S/he may develop relevant portions (e.g., surveillance and evaluation) of CDC funding applications and program update reports.

S/he will also be encouraged to participate in CDB-relevant legislative bill analyses during the annual 1-2 month state legislative session, which represents a unique opportunity to inform decision makers. The CDB has recently been transitioning to an exciting new phase with a stronger emphasis on integrated policy and environmental approaches to chronic disease prevention and control. In support of this focus, the Fellow may be assigned to audit relevant national and state legislative actions, as well as administrative policies of state and local governments, businesses, educational institutions, and the healthcare system. Tying CDB program activities to environmental and policy strategies and determining evaluation needs for these efforts will be another important activity in which the Fellow may take the lead.

In summary, the Fellow will serve as an active, integrated team member working with a variety of partners to shape the future of chronic disease prevention and control in New Mexico.

Day-to- Day Activities

The Fellow will spend the majority of time working at his/her workspace at the CDB. There will be opportunities to participate in state workgroup and council meetings (e.g., Chronic Disease Prevention Council, Arthritis Advisory Group, NM Cancer Council, etc.) and to work with not-for-profit health advocacy organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Heart Association.) Fellows are encouraged to develop opportunities to work with and give presentations to community partners (e.g., tobacco control coalitions, community health workers, etc.) Fellows will also actively participate in NMDOH Quarterly Epidemiology Meetings and the annual NM Public Health Association meeting.

Potential Projects include:

The Fellow's work will be guided by CDC/CSTE Fellowship competency requirements, CDB and partner needs for epidemiology support, and the Fellow's own special interests related to chronic disease prevention and control.

Potential projects might include:

- updating a comprehensive report on heart disease and stroke in New Mexico;
- evaluating whether the current method for collecting and reporting NM BRFSS data by race/ethnicity should be revised;
- conducting multi-year analyses of BRFSS and YRSS data in order to provide stratified estimates for high priority chronic disease indicators made available to the public on the NM-IBIS website;
- analyzing and presenting data on arthritis prevalence, co-morbidities, and self-management programs to support the work of the Arthritis Program and the Arthritis Advisory Group;
- developing a protocol and database to enhance coordinated interagency management of public queries regarding perceived cancer clusters;
- measuring and creatively addressing social determinants of health through public health activities in order to decrease health inequities in NM;
- using tools such as the CDC Cost Calculator to generate estimates of health care costs in NM associated with select chronic conditions.
- The Fellow will also have opportunities to participate in an outbreak investigation with NMDOH public health nurses and/or epidemiologists.

Preparedness Role

Although CDB staff have not always been included in State Emergency Preparedness efforts, this situation has recently changed during heightened public health planning and response to the H1N1 flu epidemic. There has also been increasing recognition of the need to prepare for chronic medical needs in the setting of a disaster such as Hurricane Katrina. The Fellow will be expected to complete online Incident Command System (ICS) training required of all NMDOH staff. A Fellow with a particular interest in addressing emergency preparedness issues will have opportunities for additional involvement in this area, e.g., participation in regional planning meetings, tabletop exercises and drills, etc. as available. In the event of a public health emergency, the Fellow would be integrated into CDB emergency response deployment activities.

Assignment Location: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Primary Mentor: Susan Baum, MD, MPH

Medical Officer/Epidemiologist
New Mexico Department of Health

Secondary Mentor:

Libby Bruggeman, PhD, MA
Epidemiologist, New Mexico Department of Health