

CDC/CSTE FELLOWS

The Future of Applied Epidemiology

CLASS OF 2008



**CSTE
APPLIED EPIDEMIOLOGY
FELLOWSHIP**

A two-year fellowship program that provides hands-on training in the field of applied epidemiology at a state or local health agency under the guidance of experienced mentors.

CSTE Fellowship

The CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship was created to strengthen the workforce in applied epidemiology at state and local health agencies. The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), established the two-year Fellowship program to give recent graduates from schools of public health preparation and advanced training for successful careers as state or local epidemiologists.

Using a mentorship model, the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship offers an opportunity for graduates to acquire rigorous preparation and to develop applied epidemiologic skills during a high quality, on-the-job training experience. Recent graduates who are interested in the practice of public health at the state or local levels are eligible for this two-year Fellowship.

Fellows are matched to a state or a local health agency based on their career aspirations and available host positions.

Program Areas Include:

Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Chronic Disease
Environmental Health
Infectious Disease
Injury
Maternal and Child Health
Substance Abuse Epidemiology

Under the guidance of an experienced mentor, Fellows will be expected to achieve competencies related to:

Epidemiologic Methods
Communication
Public Health Practice, Policy, and Legal Issues

Fellows demonstrate acquired core competencies by participating in prescribed activities.

Amanda C. Bennett, MPH

Program Area: Maternal and Child Health

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology, University of Illinois at Chicago

Host Site: Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Myrtis Sullivan, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Craig Conover, MD, MPH and Deborah Rosenberg, PhD, MS, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship:

I chose the Fellowship because it is an excellent opportunity to utilize my graduate school training in epidemiology and gain practical experience by applying it as a tool for affecting the health of women, children, and families. This Fellowship will provide the opportunity to see how research is translated into practice and policy at the state level and will provide me with valuable guidance from experienced mentors. I believe that the diverse range of experience I will obtain by completing the Fellowship's core competencies will enable me to become a well-rounded, adaptable epidemiologist.

Future plans after the Fellowship: While I expect that my experience during the Fellowship will give me a better understanding of my career goals, my general plan is to continue to work as a maternal and child health epidemiologist at the state level after the Fellowship. At some point in the future, I plan to complete my doctorate degree in epidemiology.

Katelin Bugler, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Saint Louis University

Host Site: Washington State Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Kathryn MacDonald, PhD

Secondary Mentor: Charla DeBolt, RN, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship:

I chose the Fellowship because it provides me with a unique opportunity to begin my public health career in a structured and nurturing environment. The chance to be involved in a variety of activities that might not be available in an entry-level position at a health department is a tremendous benefit of the program. The Fellowship will prepare me as an epidemiologist by sharpening my technical and communication skills, and give me the confidence to be a successful public health professional.

Future plans after the Fellowship: In the future, I hope to work as an infectious disease epidemiologist in a state or local health department. Ultimately, I would like to pursue a doctoral degree in epidemiology to further my knowledge and become a senior level epidemiologist.

Ashley Busacker, PhD

Program Area: Maternal and Child Health

Highest Degree Obtained: PhD, Environmental Health Epidemiology, Colorado State University

Host Site: Wyoming Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Joseph Grandpre, PhD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Angela Crotsenberg, MS



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship for several reasons. The Fellowship provides me with the opportunity to build upon the knowledge and skill set I have gained from my coursework and research in epidemiology while working to achieve certain competencies under the guidance of two senior level mentors. I am also interested in the diversity of experiences offered by the Fellowship in different public health areas including emergency preparedness/response, public health policy, and health communication. Lastly, the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship offers a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive set of core epidemiology skills while allowing me to make a contribution to the health of the state/community to which they are assigned.

Future plans after the Fellowship: My long term career goal is to work as an epidemiologist at a public health agency in maternal and child health or chronic disease epidemiology. My ambition is to be able to combine work in public health with academic epidemiological research. Eventually, I would like to have an adjunct professor appointment at a university, which will allow me to combine my public health work with teaching and research.

Dina Dobraca, MPH

Program Area: Environmental Health

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology, University of Minnesota

Host Site: California Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Robert Harrison, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Daniel Smith, Dr.PH., MS



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship because it provides a key transition from my schooling to a career as an epidemiologist. The structure of the Fellowship, its core competencies, and access to mentors, creates a unique learning environment that an entry-level job could not provide. Through the Fellowship, I will be able to refine my career interests, develop a skill and knowledge base regarding health issues and epidemiologic methods and use this base to assess and improve the health of the community.

Future plans after the Fellowship: I plan to apply the skills I have learned during my education and during my experience in the CDC/ CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship and work as a senior epidemiologist the local, state, or federal level.

Paul Gacek, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology,
University of Connecticut

Host Site: Connecticut Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Mark N. Lobato, MD

Secondary Mentor: Lynn Sosa, MD



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: Prior to entering the Fellowship, I worked as a genetic epidemiologist for two years and interned as an infectious disease epidemiologist for nine months. Upon completing my M.P.H., I wanted to expand my skill set as an infectious disease epidemiologist. The CDC/CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship will allow me to continue to develop my skills as an infectious disease epidemiologist alongside two well-trained public health mentors. The structure of the Fellowship ensures that all Fellows learn the applied epidemiology core competencies, preparing us for successful careers as epidemiologists.

Future plans after the Fellowship:

Upon completion of the Fellowship, I hope to work as an infectious disease epidemiologist either at the state or federal level.

Michelle Glaser, MPH

Program Area: Injury

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology,
George Washington University

Host Site: New York City Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene

Primary Mentor: Laura DiGrande, DrPH, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Catherine Stayton, DrPH, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: The Fellowship provides a unique opportunity to apply the skills and practices I learned at the graduate level to the professional world. The core competencies will provide me with the tools I need to advance my knowledge in the field of public health and applied epidemiology. The extensive experience that I will receive while working with The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will prepare me to begin my career working at the local or state level. I believe that this Fellowship will increase my understanding of public health practices and will provide me with invaluable experiences in applied epidemiology.

Future plans after the Fellowship: After the Fellowship, I plan to pursue a PhD in epidemiology. Ultimately, I plan to work as an epidemiologist at the local or state level.

Lauren Gross, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology, Columbia University

Host Site: Illinois Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Craig S. Conover, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Connie Austin, DVM, MPH, PhD



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: The Fellowship gives new epidemiologists a unique opportunity to “hit the ground running” that is unparalleled in other entry-level positions in the field. As an intern at a local health department during graduate school, I found the assignments to be diverse, challenging, and fulfilling. The Fellowship allows me to play a more responsible role in this type of work and to put the skill set that I developed during my graduate training into practice. The range of projects and subject areas, training opportunities, and guidance of my mentors make this program an asset to my professional goals.

Future plans after the Fellowship: After the Fellowship, I plan to pursue a career in a local or state department of health working in infectious disease epidemiology. Eventually I hope to pursue a PhD in epidemiology.

Bonnie Hatcher, MPH

Program Area: Substance Abuse

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Community Health Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles

Host Site: Georgia Division of Public Health

Primary Mentor: John Horan, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Lydia Clarkson, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship because it is an ideal transition from graduate school into a position where I can be involved in assessing public health issues at the state and local levels. I believe that working with experienced epidemiologists and achieving key competencies in epidemiologic methods, communication, and public health practice will provide a well-rounded training experience that will help me reach my career goals. In addition, the Fellowship seems like an excellent opportunity to apply the analytical skills I developed in graduate school. This specific Fellowship position is particularly appealing to me because it includes projects in the area of alcohol epidemiology, which incorporates some of my other interests in injury epidemiology and sexually transmitted disease prevention.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Following the Fellowship, I will seek a position where I can use my training and experience in public health to contribute to the evidence-base for community-based prevention programs and policy change.

Tiffany Marchbanks, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Saint Louis University

Host Site: Pennsylvania Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Perrienne Lurie, MD, MPH, FACPM

Secondary Mentor: Veronica Urdaneta, MD, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: The Fellowship will provide me with the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in applied epidemiology while having the continual support of two highly trained mentors. Knowing that these two individuals will aid in the transition from academia to the workforce is the most appealing aspect of this program. I am also confident that the knowledge and skills gained from this experience through various cross-training activities and completion of the required competencies will prepare me for a long-term career in infectious disease epidemiology.

Future plans after the Fellowship: After completing the Fellowship, I hope to secure a position as an infectious disease epidemiologist in either a state or local health department.

An Nguyen, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease- Quarantine

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Health Policy and Management/Epidemiology, University of Georgia

Host Site: Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Primary Mentor: Daniel Fishbein, MD

Secondary Mentor: Harvey Lipman, PhD



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: The Fellowship provides a great opportunity for me to further my training in infectious diseases under the guidance of experienced epidemiologists in the field. Through the various objectives and competencies that are structured as part of the Fellowship requirements, I will gain exposure to a wide variety of activities that will enable me to become a skilled epidemiologist.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Following completion of the Fellowship, I hope to use my experience and training to pursue work in epidemiology at a federal or state level public health agency.

Susan Reese, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease- Quarantine

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of California, Berkeley

Host Site: Texas State Department of Health Services

Primary Mentor: Luis Escobedo, MD

Secondary Mentor: Miguel Escobedo, MD, MPH and Adriana Corona



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: State and local health seems to be where most public health action takes place. This Fellowship is the ideal way to employ the information learned in my master's program while having ample opportunity to learn applied epidemiologic skills under the guidance of highly qualified mentors. The Fellowship provides the freedom to explore projects of interest, yet it also provides a structure to ensure that a range of competencies are met.

Future plans after the Fellowship: After completing the Fellowship, I plan to pursue a PhD in epidemiology or to continue working as a leader in applied public health epidemiology at the state or local level.

Rebecca Reik, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease-Quarantine

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology, Emory University

Host Site: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Detroit Quarantine Station and the Michigan Department of Community Health

Primary Mentor: Curi Kim, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Mary Grace Stobierski, DVM, MPH, DipACVPM



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship because it provides rigorous on-the-job training. Working with skilled mentors will allow me to expand my range of skills and become familiar with state and federal agencies. I am excited to participate in the practice of infectious disease epidemiology, and I know that the experience I gain will prepare me for a productive career in applied epidemiology.

Future plans after the Fellowship:

After completing the Fellowship, I plan to continue to work in applied epidemiology. My long term goal is to be an infectious disease epidemiologist at the state, local, or hospital level.

Angela M. K. Rohan, PhD

Program Area: Maternal and Child Health

Highest Degree Obtained: PhD, Population Health,
University of Wisconsin

Host Site: Wisconsin Department of Health
and Family Services

Primary Mentor: Murray Katcher, MD, PhD

Secondary Mentor: Mark Wegner, MD, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship as an opportunity to apply my previous research and work experiences in a non-academic setting. The Fellowship also provides the opportunity to be exposed to the state public health system and it provides an environment conducive to developing additional skills to prepare me for a career as a public health epidemiologist. I believe that the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship program will provide exposure to and the chance to develop a variety of new skills such as project management, program planning, program evaluation, budget development, grant writing, and interagency collaboration.

Future plans after the Fellowship: My career objectives are to be a member of the public health epidemiology workforce in my native state of Wisconsin and eventually move into a leadership role in state public health. I would ideally also like to combine work in applied public health with academic teaching and research. In my future work, I plan to continue to integrate my background experiences in epidemiology, population health, and anthropology to examine and address issues of health disparities.

Naomi Shinoda, MSPH

Program Area: Environmental Health

Highest Degree Obtained: MSPH, Epidemiology,
Emory University

Host Site: Minnesota Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Allan Williams, PhD, MPH, MA

Secondary Mentor: Jean Johnson, PhD, MS



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: Through my academic training and my experience serving as an environmental volunteer in the Peace Corps, I have become interested in the subtleties of disease and health in terms of social and racial disparities, especially in the context of environmental and occupational exposures. I believe that this Fellowship will allow me to marry the hard analytic skills gained in graduate school with the community fieldwork experience gained in Peace Corps. My hope is that as I will further develop my skills in applied epidemiology through this Fellowship. In turn, I will add to the capacity and capability of health departments, resulting in improved public health services to communities.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Public service is an important part of my career and life goals. A challenge for me is to find a balance between my interests in international health and my desire to maintain a connection to local communities in the U.S. With the growing refugee and immigrant populations in cities throughout the U.S., I believe that a leadership position in a state health department would be an ideal way to provide both cross-cultural stimulation as well as fulfillment of my commitment to local populations.

Sally Stephens, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology,
Emory University

Host Site: San Francisco Department of Public Health

Primary Mentor: Kyle Bernstein, PhD, ScM

Secondary Mentor: Jeffrey D. Klausner, MD, MPH



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship because it provides a good opportunity to gain exposure in applied epidemiology at a local health department under the guidance of two accomplished mentors. The Fellowship is particularly appealing because it allows for hands-on experience within a defined framework of specific competencies and objectives. Additionally, this program provides valuable insight into professional opportunities in applied epidemiology and public health.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Following the CSTE/CDC Fellowship, I intend to continue gaining experience in infectious disease epidemiology through employment at a local or state health department.

Nicole VanKim, MPH

Program Area: Chronic Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology,
University of Minnesota

Host Site: New Mexico Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Susan Baum, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: Libby Bruggeman, PhD, MA



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: The Fellowship program provides an opportunity for practical application of epidemiology from my academic training. Working through the set of competencies, under the guidance of qualified mentors, ensures well-rounded development and expansion of skills and knowledge. The competencies also create opportunities for training and exposure to a variety of areas in epidemiology.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Following the Fellowship program, I intend to pursue a doctorate in epidemiology. Eventually, I would like to pursue an epidemiology position at the state level, as well as teaching and conducting research with a university.

Kristina Weis, PhD, MPH

Program Area: Infectious Disease

Highest Degree Obtained: PhD, Epidemiology,
University of South Carolina

Host Site: Florida Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Carina Blackmore, DVM, PhD

Secondary Mentor: Roberta Hammond, PhD, RS



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I chose the Fellowship because I am interested in pursuing a career in public health practice. All of my experiences to date have been in academia. In this Fellowship, I will continue to improve the skills that I have gained in school while experiencing an entirely new area of public health that is rarely taught in the classroom. The mentorship model offered by the CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship is an excellent way to become immersed in public health practice, and it will provide me with the skills needed to have a successful career in applied epidemiology at the state level.

Future plans after the Fellowship: I hope to continue working at the state level as a senior epidemiologist. I would eventually like to have a joint appointment with a School of Public Health so that I can use my experiences to prepare future students for careers at the state or local level.

Elizabeth Wirsing, MPH

Program Area: Environmental Health

Highest Degree Obtained: MPH, Epidemiology,
Emory University

Host Site: Vermont Department of Health

Primary Mentor: Austin Sumner, MD, MPH

Secondary Mentor: William Irwin, ScD



Why you chose the CDC/CSTE Applied

Epidemiology Fellowship: I believe the Fellowship provides a great opportunity to gain applied epidemiology experience through interdisciplinary collaboration to solve public health problems, practice sound methods in a field setting, and use data sources and scientific information to support changes in policy or prevention messages. In the past, I have worked in epidemiology research and statistical analysis settings. The Fellowship provides a learning environment representing the larger public health picture that includes hands-on experience and a diverse range of projects.

Future plans after the Fellowship: Over the course of the Fellowship I hope to focus my interests within environmental health and continue working as an epidemiologist at the state level in the future.

CSTE

Current Fellow Projects

Fellows are currently undertaking a variety of projects that offer an exceptional learning experience while providing valuable information to their host health agencies. Listed below are just a few examples of projects that current and former Fellows have led:

- Conducting an evaluation of the impact of mandatory active surveillance for Methicillin-resistant Staph-ylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Investigating the role of children in influenza transmission by designing a study using the Vaccine Safety Data Unit
- Leading an investigation of a multi-state outbreak of Selenosis from consumption of a tainted nutritional supplement
- Lead epidemiologist on a new MRSA surveillance system that was mandated by the governor in Washington State
- Evaluating the impact of family case management on low birth weight, very low birth weight, and infant mortality
- State lead for a multi-state outbreak of Salmonella schwarzengrund associated with dry pet food
- Assessing the circumstances surrounding fatal fall injuries in the elderly
- Evaluating an HIV-exposure and partner notification surveillance system
- Conducting an analysis of exposure patterns after a release of methylmercury
- Evaluating a poison control center to determine if the data can predict carbon monoxide poisonings
- Examining the rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in pregnant women in New York State
- Conducting tuberculosis surveillance system for migrants
- Conducting a seroprevalence and behavioral study of intravenous drug users
- Utilizing the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to determine gambling patterns among youth
- Evaluating a childhood lead poisoning surveillance system
- Linking data to assess birth defects to infants born to women with diabetes
- Examining the relationship between socioeconomic and demographic factors and type of treatment for colon cancer
- Developing a document that characterizes the burden of obesity in North Carolina
- Creating a Neonatal Herpes Simplex Virus surveillance system

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