

Environmental Health

The Clark County Department of Public Health offers a broad experience in applied epidemiology with emphasis in Environmental Health and Communicable Diseases. The Fellow will have the opportunity to develop comprehensive skills through participation in program design, implementation and evaluation, investigative fieldwork, statistical analysis and interdisciplinary teamwork.

Day-to-day activities will include: collaboration with other local health departments throughout Southwest Washington and the Portland metropolitan area, the Washington Department of Health and other local and state agencies and research institutions involved in the monitoring and control of infectious diseases and environmental health hazards. The Fellow will be a member of the Clark County Health Assessment and Evaluation team, and will have an opportunity to participate in investigation and control of notifiable diseases, including foodborne and waterborne outbreaks. The Fellow will work with the Health Officer and Emergency Preparedness and Response staff in developing the Health Department's capacity to detect and respond to bio-terrorism and other mass disasters. In addition, under the supervision of the Health Officer and Health Department epidemiologists, the Fellow will participate in the development of geographic information system tools that will enable health department and community partners to assess health issues at the neighborhood level.

The following list of potential projects, which are designed to provide maximum rigor and breadth of training, also allow significant flexibility to accommodate the specific interests and talents of the fellow:

A. Outbreak Investigations – Participate in local outbreak investigations; design questionnaires and other data collection tools, conduct interviews, analyze data; write reports and present results at local and regional meetings.

B. Environmental Health – Work with county, regional and state interdisciplinary teams to improve tracking, storing and integrating electronic information about environmental hazards, exposures and health outcomes; assist with site hazard assessments

C. Data Analysis/Investigations – The Fellow will advance the work done by the previous CSTE in developing a County Public Health Geographic Information System application capable of depicting a variety of health indicators at the neighborhood level. Vital statistics data, infectious disease data and environmental health data will be available for analysis. In addition, the Fellow will have an opportunity to participate in a funded multisite (Seattle, Olympia and Vancouver) randomized clinical trial adding a contraceptive dispensing component to a public health home visiting program (the primary mentor is Principal Investigator)

D. Health Data - The Fellow will evaluate local health databases and make recommendations for improvement, provide staff training to enhance quality, collection procedures, comprehensiveness and ease of georeferencing/linking data. In addition, the Fellow will assist with health research using inferential and spatial statistics and prepare reports and graphical presentations for public and professional meetings

E. Emergency Preparedness – The Fellow will assist with an assessment of health department policies, procedures and implementation efforts and participate in local, regional and state emergency response exercises and drills. The primary mentor and secondary mentors collaborate with the Portland metro area Health Preparedness Organization Steering Committee and are members of the Washington State Region IV Governing Council (The Council oversees public health preparedness planning efforts in Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties in SW Washington) and the Portland Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI). The primary mentor is now the Health Officer for all counties in Region IV. Both mentors will involve the Fellow in preparedness planning activities.

Assignment Location: Vancouver, Washington

Primary Mentor: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH

Regional Health Officer; Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Skamania Counties;
Washington

Advanced Degrees: MPH, University of Washington (1994)

MD, Tufts University School of Medicine (1977)

Secondary Mentor: John Wiesman, MPH

Director of Public Health, Clark County, Washington

Advanced Degrees: MPH, Yale University (1987)