

The Data Evaluation Team (DET), within the Division of Family Health, is responsible for the analysis and evaluation of surveillance and programmatic data related to maternal and child health in Florida. The DET works on issues related to maternal mortality and morbidity, prematurity, infant mortality, SIDS, low birth weight and racial disparities relating to access to health care for reproductive and child health services. The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) works closely with 31 Healthy Start Coalitions and the FDOH vital statistics staff to gather data for purposes of evaluation. In June 2003, the DET conducted a 3-day training on vital statistics and low birth weight for the Healthy Start Coalitions, and 28 coalitions had one or more staff members trained. The team is currently working with the vital statistics staff on the revision of the 2004 birth certificate form for the state and has been involved in the development of instructions to train hospital personnel on the new certificate.

During the first six months of 2003, the DET conducted an investigation of infant mortality in a county on Florida's East Coast and developed an evaluation protocol for the sickle cell mortality in Florida. This IRB approved study will focus on changes in mortality since the 1988 implementation of newborn screening for sickle cell disease in Florida. The DET is also involved in ongoing reviews of maternal mortality and fetal/infant mortality, with assessment of trends in infant mortality and low birth weight deliveries on a county level for all of the 67 Florida counties. The requested fellow would work with the team on these projects.

The team has routine access to the data collected by interview in PRAMS, a CDC-funded study on pregnancy outcomes. The DET staff has also worked jointly with CDC and the Healthy Start Coalitions from the 7 largest urban counties (Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Jacksonville, West Palm Beach and Orlando) on Perinatal Periods of Risk (PPOR), an in-depth examination of how adverse maternal and infant outcomes occur.

The successful recruitment of a CSTE fellow would enable the team to expand its efforts to assess the impact of sexually transmitted diseases on reproductive health outcomes, to work with medical examiners to assess how SIDS deaths are evaluated in different districts throughout the state, to assess the impact of smoking on low birth weight in Florida and other projects. In addition, the successful recruitment of an assignee would extend the depth of the DET and permit joint efforts with the Bureau of Epidemiology and other units in the Division of Disease Control at FDOH.

Bioterrorism training would include an orientation to the programs in which key epidemiologists at the DOH are cross trained in syndromic surveillance to monitor emergency rooms for evidence of bioterrorism in the form of infectious diseases. The fellow would also be trained in the assessment of the impact of a biologic agent and surveillance for such agents.

The fellow will have the opportunity to use the CDC report, *Updated Guidelines for Evaluating Public Health Surveillance Systems* (CDC, 2001) to evaluate at least one surveillance system. Potential systems to be evaluated include the newborn screening system for metabolic diseases, or the reporting of communicable diseases of particular importance for maternal child health (such as chlamydia, Group B strep, and neonatal Listeria and E. coli meningitis).

In addition, the fellow will be involved in an assessment of the impact of reproductive technologies such as fertility drugs and in vitro programs on multiple births, low birth weight and prematurity in Florida. The 2004 birth certificate will include such data and an assessment will be conducted with the goal of presenting the results at a national meeting and in a peer-reviewed journal. Other projects will include a linkage of Group B strep meningitis data with birth certificates to assess the risk factors for Group B strep.

Assignment Location: Tallahassee, FL

Primary Mentor: Joann M. Schulte, DO, MPH
Medical Epidemiologist, CDC Assignee to FL DOH (December 2002-present)

Advanced Degrees: DO, Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (1988)
MPH, Emory University (2002)

Secondary Mentor: Carol A. Graham, PhD, MS
Associate in Research, Center for Prevention and Early Intervention
Policy (August 1999-present)

Advanced Degrees: PhD, The Florida State University (1996)
MS, The Florida State University (1983)