

The Division of Family Health Services within the Florida Department of Health provides oversight for the bureaus of WIC and Nutrition, Child Nutrition, Public Health Dental, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Family and Community Health. Within Family and Community Health resides the Infant, Maternal and Reproductive Health unit responsible for the analysis and evaluation of surveillance and programmatic data related to maternal and child health in Florida. This unit includes a data and evaluation team 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 program monitoring and evaluation. Significant emphasis is placed on working with local communities to increase their data capacity. In 2004 three infant mortality technical assistance teams were created to focus on providing assistance to local communities experiencing upward trends in infant mortality. This assistance included instruction in the analysis of Florida's official matched file which includes birth certificate data linked to infant and fetal deaths as well as prenatal screening data. There is also the capacity to link this file to prenatal services data from the state Healthy Start program.

The data and evaluation team also provides 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 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 assess the impact of smoking on low birth weight in Florida, to participate in the potential revision of Florida's universal prenatal risk screening instrument, as well as other projects of special interest to the fellow. In addition, the successful recruitment of an assignee would extend the depth of the team and permit joint efforts with the Bureau of Epidemiology and other units in the Division of Disease Control at FDOH.

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 includes 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.

Florida_ Sappenfield

Assignment Location: Tallahassee, FL

Primary Mentor: William M. Sappenfield, M.D., M.P.H.
Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist
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Advanced Degrees: M.D., Louisiana State University Medical Center, New Orleans, LA,
1976-1980
M.P.H., Epidemiology, Harvard School of Public Health, Harvard
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Secondary Mentor: Carol A. Graham, PhD, MS
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Advanced Degrees: PhD, The Florida State University (1996)
MS, The Florida State University (1983)