

Maternal and Child Health

Assignment Description:

The Bureau of Family Health (BFH) is the unit within PADOH that is responsible for women, children, and adolescent health in the state. The Bureau is also the unit charged with the management of Title V Block Grant funding and programming. Programs under the Title V Block Grant generate data that are used to describe health conditions for women and children in the state. PADOH's programs offer the fellow ample opportunities in many areas of Maternal and Child Health on a daily basis. Collaboration with other state agencies like the Departments of Public Welfare, Aging, Agriculture, Environmental Protection, and Education, provides additional opportunities for the fellow. At the population level, there is access to a number of data sets including vital statistics (mortality records and birth records), statewide cancer incidence records, and patient hospitalization records through the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council [HC4]. The linkage of birth records with hospitalization records has been piloted as a surveillance tool for birth defects, representing another potential data set. Also the Division of Community Epidemiology is evaluating other Pennsylvania public health related databases, including Medicaid Patient Encounter and Hospitalization Records, representing another opportunity for the fellow.

Day-to-Day Activities:

The fellow will have a day-to-day role in the evaluation of the quality and utility of these data sources for public health purposes. The fellow's work will involve assessment of available data for descriptive epidemiology, including analyses of disease measures, interpretation of findings and report development. This will lead to the creation of reports that will describe the distribution and impact of conditions related to maternal child health on the state. The MCH fellow will also have the opportunity to actively participate in other activities in BOE, including outbreak investigations and bioterrorism preparedness exercises.

Potential Projects:

The Bureau of Family Health has responsibility for programs that target many diverse populations in the state. Data are collected that can be used to describe health conditions and disease impacts in defined population groups. Some of the specific areas of analysis are:

- a. Data analysis of the PRAMS survey.
- b. Evaluation and description of factors related to child deaths using the Infant Death Review Program data.
- c. Evaluation of the relationship between oral health and adverse pregnancy outcome.
- d. Description of trends and geo-spatial characteristics of low birth weight in Pennsylvania.
- e. Evaluation of available data to identify factors that contribute to continuing economic and race- specific differences in maternal mortality, low birth weight, pre-term births, pre-natal care, and access to health care.
- f. Evaluation and description of the population of Children with Special Health Care Needs.
- g. Evaluation of childhood cancers in Pennsylvania.

Preparedness Role:

The fellow will work with the Planning & Preparedness section on wide range of topics related to Emergency Preparedness from Bioterrorism to Influenza. This fellow will also support on any public emergencies (i.e. pandemic H1N1 outbreak) that occur during the fellowship period. The fellow will also attend meetings and conferences that are attended by fellow bureaus and departments such as Office of Public Health Preparedness, Bureau of Laboratories Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Assignment Location: Harrisburg, PA

Primary Mentor: Ronald Tringali, PhD
Epidemiologist
Pennsylvania Department of Health

Secondary Mentor: Gene Weinberg, DrPH
Epidemiology Manager
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