

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Fellow in Maine would have the opportunity to work with a range of programs that focus on the needs of children and women of reproductive age housed in the Divisions of Family Health and Chronic Disease within Maine Health and Human Services (HHS) Public Health. Epidemiological support for these programs is provided by a team of four experienced epidemiologists employed by the University of Southern Maine's Department of Applied Medical Sciences and based at Maine HHS Public Health. The MCH fellow would work closely with this epi team and Public Health program managers on ongoing surveillance activities and analyses that meet program goals and objectives.

The Asthma Program in Maine provides several opportunities for epidemiological experience in surveillance and program evaluation. With funding from the CDC, Maine's asthma program has developed and conducted the only statewide survey of childhood asthma in the United States. Opportunities exist, using multiple data sources, to investigate whether efforts of the State Asthma Program are increasing the use of asthma management plans among children. The Fellow could participate in the development of an asthma surveillance report and evaluation of the State's asthma interventions. Innovative interventions are currently being developed to improve childhood asthma management including a collaboration of the Asthma Program and the Public Health Nursing Program. This collaboration seeks to improve asthma management among children through home visits.

Program evaluation opportunities are also available within the injury prevention field. The Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program is in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of a suicide prevention program in several schools around the state using hospitalization data and Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey data. Additional opportunities within suicide prevention include: (1) helping to develop a systematic method of collecting and analyzing school data to facilitate the early detection of youth at-risk for suicide in schools; (2) exploring the feasibility of conducting an in-depth review of all youth suicides through the Maine Child Death and Serious Injury Review Panel or a subsidiary panel, and (3) analyzing Maine's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data on adult suicidal behavior.

Possible projects in other programs include: (1) developing a teen and young adult pregnancy surveillance system; (2) contributing to the development of Maine's Maternal and Infant Mortality and Resiliency Review (MIMRR); and (3) conducting analyses of a Maine Department of Health and Human Services department-wide survey of caregiving and its effects on employee health and well-being. In addition, the WIC program collects a wealth of data that will be linked with appropriate MCH databases for analysis to inform program planning and priorities. Finally, the primary mentor of the MCH Epidemiology Fellowship conducts research on the effects of intimate partner violence and sexual assault on women's and children's health. She is currently in the process of exploring the development of a statewide surveillance system for intimate partner violence and sexual assault. Interested fellows are welcome to collaborate with her in this effort.

We would also encourage the MCH fellow to get involved in the MCH Block Grant renewal process. Maine's MCH leadership is at the forefront of investigating measures of community and individual level strengths that promote health (e.g., community connectedness, social support). There are ongoing efforts within many of the programs at Maine HHS Public Health to

identify strength-based measures of health promotion. Developing a strength-based needs assessment is a priority of Maine's MCH program and has been encouraged by the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Opportunities exist to work with the interdisciplinary MCH block grant committee to develop measures and conduct analyses to identify protective factors for health.

In addition to the specific projects outlined above, the MCH fellow would have the opportunity to learn to conduct analyses using state-based data systems including vital statistics, hospitalization, emergency department, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and BRFSS. The experience and knowledge of the epi team also would allow a fellow to receive supervision in using complex survey analyses and other innovative methodologies including GIS analyses, mixed models, and sample selection.

In addition to MCH projects, the Fellow would have the opportunity to participate in outbreak or field investigations with members of Maine's Infectious Disease Epidemiology group. The Fellow is also encouraged to attend monthly epidemiology seminars highlighting epidemiology projects in a wide variety of topic areas.

Members of the epi team are part of Maine's bioterrorism response team. The response team offers ongoing training, in which the Fellow can participate. The Fellow would be linked with appropriate personnel on the bioterrorism response team to discuss possible projects.

Assignment Location: Augusta, Maine

Primary Mentor: Erika Lichter, ScD, MPH
MCH Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: ScD, Harvard School of Public Health (2004)
MS, Harvard School of Public Health (2001)

Secondary Mentor: Katie Meyer, ScD, MPH
Chronic Disease Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: ScD, Harvard School of Public Health (2002)
MPH, University of Minnesota, School of Public Health (1997)