

Maternal and Child Health

Assignment Description

This Fellow would be assigned to the Multnomah County Health Department's Community Health Services (CHS) group with a primary focus in the area of maternal child health. The CHS group includes early childhood services, WIC, environmental health, communicable disease services, STD/HIV/Hepatitis C services, community wellness and prevention, and infrastructure for public health services (IPHS). IPHS includes resources for all of CHS including epidemiology, informatics, and quality improvement support. CHS programs also work closely with the Office of the Health Officer.

We also have close ties with our neighboring counties, and would encourage tri-county projects that benefit the region. This assignment emphasizes a population-level public health perspective to promoting health and reducing the consequences of disease in our communities. The Fellow in this assignment will address public health surveillance priorities and assessments; participate actively in applied public health research; and learn how to investigate public health events. He or she will apply epidemiologic principles and analytic tools to proactively support the planning and implementation of public health services and response; and will provide consultation to Health Department managers and staff in the areas of epidemiological science, analysis, biostatistics, surveillance and applied research. This position will participate in sharing information through professional networks (meetings, conferences, peer-reviewed journals, etc.).

The Fellow in this position will gain an understanding of the health of the communities we serve and the use of epidemiologic science to support front-line public health work. Specifically, this assignment will benefit the Fellow in the following competencies: advanced knowledge of the methods and techniques of investigative research; strong methodological and analytic skills in applied epidemiology; significant expertise in research design and quantitative survey methodology; communication skills; expert knowledge of public administration principles, best practices, and procedures appropriate to departmental scientific and technical research/evaluation practices; principles and practices of effective leadership; knowledge of scientific and technical management principles and practices for project management, strategic planning, and other functions; knowledge of federal, state, and local laws, and regulations related to public health practice.

Day-to- Day Activities

The Department will involve the Fellow in day to day activities and research projects that provide "hands on" epidemiology experience. Functional responsibilities include:

- performing epidemiologic studies and developing public health surveillance systems
- providing consultation to county managers and staff on scientific, analytic, and technical aspects of epidemiologic investigations and public health surveillance
- working with program managers to develop health interventions, policies, or programmatic systems based on epidemiologic findings
- working with partners across Community Health Service programs to define meaningful health outcomes

- participating in or leading public health emergency preparedness; and responding to public health events
- writing material for internal reports, public information, and peer-reviewed journals
- participating in internal and external meetings as needed to involve project stakeholders and learn how public health systems operate

Potential Projects

Examples of potential projects are provided below, but others can be developed based on the wide array of options available to the fellow.

MCH-specific:

- o Study health outcomes of infants enrolled in two different MCH nurse home visit programs
- o Conduct a follow-up study of vaccine hesitancy with the goal of improving childhood vaccination rates in the county.
- o Evaluate the impact of health disparities on preconception health practices and birth outcomes in the county
- o Study the role of neighborhood-level violence on birth outcomes in Multnomah County
- o Assess novel outcomes for MCH surveillance activities that incorporate cohort effects

Other areas:

- o Integrate social determinants of health into general public health surveillance activities
- o Work with law enforcement and social services agencies on analytic approaches to better understand the dynamics of youth violence in the county.
- o Develop routine tri-county surveillance system for influenza
- o Study factors affecting overdose mortality in opiate users
- o Participate in outbreak investigations
- o Develop novel surveillance systems that address climate change
- o Teach basic epidemiology to public health workers and participate as a guest lecturer at local schools and colleges.

Preparedness Role

The Fellow will have the opportunity to participate in emergency preparedness and response activities and to attend Incident Command training. The person in this position is expected to share 24/7 coverage activities by participating in the weekly after-hours on-call rotation (with appropriate training and Health Officer support). The fellow may be called upon to represent the County at the local, state, and national level in matters affecting epidemiologic activities --including multi-agency public health emergency preparedness planning.

Assignment Location:

Portland, Oregon

Primary Mentor:

Amy Sullivan, PhD, MPH
Program Manager, Communicable Disease Services
Multnomah County Health Department

Secondary Mentor:

Robert Johnson, MD
Program Manager, Infrastructure for Public Health Services
Multnomah County Health Department