

Chronic Disease

The proposed assignment for the Fellow will be located in the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Bureau in Albuquerque, NM. The Fellow will primarily be involved in applied epidemiology activities related to obesity, physical activity, nutrition, and cardiovascular disease. The Fellow will serve as an integral team member of the NMDOH Physical Activity and Nutrition for Healthier Weight (PAN4WH) program, which is funded through a cooperative agreement with the CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity. The PAN4HW program is currently in its fourth year of "capacity building" funding, and has recently completed and disseminated "The NM Plan to Promote Healthier Weight: 2006-2015." The Plan was developed by a Steering Committee with broad stakeholder input from across the state. PAN4HW is transitioning to an exciting new phase that will include piloting an intervention that supports components of the Plan in one selected community. This experience will be used to apply for a higher level of "basic implementation" funding from CDC to facilitate implementation in additional communities. In direct support of these activities, the Fellow will be involved in the practical application of surveillance data to strategic planning at the program and state levels. The Fellow will analyze, apply, and disseminate PAN4HW-relevant surveillance data from sources such as the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System, the Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey, and the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System. S/he will also serve in an advisory capacity regarding NMDOH surveillance system questionnaires and methodologies to ensure that PAN4HW's data priorities are represented. Evaluation of current surveillance sources will be an important function, and the development of new surveillance activities to fill identified data gaps (e.g., height and weight in elementary and middle school students) will be explored. The Fellow will work with the contracted evaluation team from the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center to plan, conduct and report the results of evaluation activities, which, in turn, will drive programmatic changes.

The Fellow will have opportunities to develop fact sheets and reports for print and web site dissemination, to write articles for the NMDOH Epidemiology Report, to present at the NMDOH Quarterly Epidemiology meetings and annual NM Public Health Association meetings, and to provide training or technical assistance to contractors and community members. S/he will develop relevant portions (e.g., surveillance and evaluation) of the PAN4HW annual cooperative agreement application for CDC funding and program update reports to CDC. S/he will also be encouraged to participate in PAN4HW-relevant legislative bill analyses during the annual 1-2 month state legislative session, which represents a unique opportunity to inform decision makers.

In addition to PAN4HW-related activities, the Fellow will be encouraged to participate in efforts to establish a new Cardiovascular Health program to be housed in the Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Bureau. This is being undertaken in conjunction with partners such as the New Mexico Chronic Disease Prevention Council, the New Mexico Stroke Task Force, and the local American Heart Association affiliate. The Fellow's role will include identifying and summarizing data from a number of sources.

The Fellow will also potentially have the opportunity to access and evaluate data from a statewide stroke registry that is currently under development and which will utilize web-based data gathered from healthcare facilities through the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's "Get with the Guidelines" initiative.

Although Chronic Disease Bureau staff have not traditionally been included in State Emergency Preparedness efforts, this situation may change given increasing recognition of the need to prepare for chronic medical needs in the setting of a disaster. A Fellow with a particular interest in addressing these issues will be encouraged to pursue opportunities for involvement.

In summary, the Fellow will serve as an active, integrated team member working with a variety of partners to shape the future of physical activity, nutrition, healthier weight, cardiovascular, and emergency preparedness programs in New Mexico.

Assignment Location: Albuquerque, NM

Primary Mentor: Susan Baum, MD, MPH
Medical Officer/Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: MD, University of Vermont College of Medicine
MPH, University of Utah School of Medicine

Secondary Mentor: Elizabeth Ficek, PhD, MA
Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: PhD Health Education, University of New Mexico
MA Economics, University of New Mexico