

Maternal and Child Health

Description:

The Louisiana MCH Program is located in the historic city of New Orleans. In the four years since Hurricane Katrina, the city has united to rebuild a strong community that once again offers a culturally diverse experience unlike most any other place. The cultural experience includes world-renowned music, dining, and festivals, with many opportunities to enjoy the arts, theater, history, sporting events, and many family friendly events.

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program of the Louisiana Office of Public Health offers a multi-disciplinary team approach to using data driven decisions to guide program activities. Within the MCH Program, the Epidemiology, Assessment, and Evaluation (EAE) Unit provides superior support and expertise on data use, analysis, and translation for all MCH staff and partners. As part of that effort, the Louisiana State Systems Development Initiative (SSDI) provides specific focus on data linkages. Ongoing data sharing agreements are in place with Louisiana Vital Records, Hospital Inpatient Discharge Data (LaHIDD), Medicaid, WIC, STD, and HIV programs. The MCH program has maintained operational responsibility for the Louisiana Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (LaPRAMS) since 1997.

The fellow will have the opportunity to attend local trainings and meetings in line with fellowship goals. Opportunities for outbreak investigations are available through the State Infectious Disease program, headed by the State Epidemiologist. This program routinely hosts EIS officers and other trainees through various national programs. The State Infectious Disease Program is also responsible for assuring the appropriate investigation of any suspected outbreak or cluster state-wide. The MCH EAE team actively participates in outbreak and cluster investigations related to reproductive health and pregnancy outcomes. In the past few years, MCH has assisted with cluster investigations into fetal losses, Gastroschisis cases, and anencephaly cases in varying geographic regions of Louisiana. Opportunities to complete this competency for the CSTE fellow do not need to be limited to the MCH field, as the Infectious Disease Program oversees all outbreak and cluster investigations occurring in the State.

The MCH Child Health Medical Director serves on the State emergency preparedness committee, and is available to introduce and include the fellow in emergency and disaster planning meetings. The MCH EAE Unit currently employs five full-time epidemiologists, three of whom hold doctoral degrees. EAE epidemiologists work closely with other epidemiology and program staff from Children with Special Health Care Needs, Birth Defects, Newborn Screening, Injury Prevention, Lead, and Infectious Disease to further the scope of epidemiologic capacity in the State.

EAE staff maintain strong relationships with CDC through the MCH Epidemiology Assignee and PRAMS. In addition, EAE epidemiologists mentor students from two local schools of public health and interns through the Graduate Student Internship Program. The primary and secondary mentors serve as faculty at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and actively participate in the Tulane MCH Leadership Training grant housed in the Community Health Sciences Department. The

mentors are committed to facilitating the best possible experience for the fellow to maximize professional development. Long-term placement of a successful fellow in the MCH EAE unit will be sought.

Day-to-Day Activities:

The CSTE fellow will be part of the Epidemiology, Assessment, and Evaluation (EAE) team and will have opportunities to become familiar with the entire scope of work performed by the EAE Unit. Daily activities will include participating in a few projects of interest to the fellow, including design, analysis, and translation of analytic or evaluation studies. EAE staff epidemiologists routinely meet or exceed all data needs of MCH program staff, assuring that students and fellows are afforded the opportunity to pursue interests that promote their individual interests and training goals. The fellow will be expected to attend MCH staff meetings that foster a collaborative and/or learning environment, such as the bi-monthly MCH Issues and Approaches meeting designed to address important and emerging topics relevant to MCH populations. The fellow will also be encouraged to attend as many trainings and stakeholder meetings as feasible, while allowing sufficient time to complete CSTE competencies and projects.

Potential Projects:

Ongoing data sharing agreements are in place with Louisiana Vital Records, Hospital Inpatient Discharge Data (LaHIDD), Medicaid, WIC, Newborn Screening, Birth Defects, STD, and HIV programs. The MCH program has maintained operational responsibility for the Louisiana Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (LaPRAMS) since 1997.

While specific projects selected will be based on the fellow's interests and goals, some potential projects include:

- conduct data linkage and analysis projects using Vital Records (birth, death, fetal death certificates) and Medicaid, WIC, and other program data to investigate racial disparities;
- analyze surveillance (PRAMS and/or BRFSS) data to develop a Louisiana Pre- and Inter- conception Health Profile, in alignment with the newly released preconception indicators;
- examine State of Louisiana and US data to develop a Louisiana Obesity Profile for women and children;
- working with Census and Louisiana program data to simultaneously investigate individual and group level factors using multi-level modeling;
- analyze the Caring Community Youth Survey (CCYS) data to characterize and define high-risk students who use tobacco, alcohol, and other substances;
- investigate the reporting quality of fetal and infant deaths in the years following the 2005 Hurricanes, Katrina and Rita. A summary of infant death reporting quality from 1997 to 2004 is available for comparison; and
- analysis and evaluation of ongoing efforts to monitor program achievements of the Louisiana Medicaid Family Planning Waiver. Existing surveillance systems available for evaluation include the Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network (LBDMN), Louisiana PRAMS, Maternal Mortality Review, and the Louisiana FIMR Network. These data collection systems have been operational for at least four years, and none

have been evaluated in the past two or more years. Reports from previous evaluations of LBDMN and PRAMS are available for review.

Emergency Prep Role:

The MCH Child Health Medical Director serves on the State emergency preparedness committee, and is available to introduce and include the fellow in annual state emergency planning meetings. The Office of Public Health wrote and accepted an emergency preparedness policy to address continuity of operations in future emergency or health outbreak situations. The MCH program actively participated in this plan by identifying specific activities for which the MCH program would maintain responsibility for in any future emergency. One role of the fellow might be to review this document and make recommendations for any changes based on current policy and/or any available national recommendations.

Assignment Location: New Orleans, LA

Primary Mentor: Lyn Kieltyka, PhD, MPH
State MCH Epidemiologist
Louisiana Office of Public Health

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Secondary Mentor: Tri Tran, MD, MPH
Senior MCH Epidemiologist
Louisiana Office of Public Health