

Maternal and Child Health

The Division of Family and Community Health Services (DFCHS) at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) directs programs and data systems fundamental to maternal and child health (MCH). Of the division's seven bureaus, the fellow will work most closely with the Bureau of Health Services Information and Operational Support (BHSIOS), which provides data and analytic services, and the two bureaus which serve children with birth defects. They are the Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMh) and the Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS). The mission of BCMh is to assure, through the development of high quality, coordinated systems, that children with special health care needs and their families obtain comprehensive care and services which are family-centered, community-based, and culturally competent. BCMh oversees a birth defects surveillance system which passively ascertains cases through hospital based reporting. It began as a pilot in 2006, and is phasing into statewide reporting in the winter of 2007-8. It also oversees a number of programs including diagnostic, treatment, metabolic formula, and genetics. BEIS oversees an innovative statewide program for mothers-to-be, new mothers and young children; among the comprehensive system of services in the program are supports and services for children who have developmental disabilities.

The fellow's day to day activities will contribute to Ohio's production and use of data for the development of programs and policy aimed at meeting the needs of its Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) population. This will be accomplished through conducting special investigations and assessments, conducting statistical analyses with support from supervisors and The Ohio State University (OSU) statisticians, communicating results. The fellow will have opportunities to participate in meetings, local conferences and site visits to enrich the internship experience. The majority of the fellow's projects will be completed with interdisciplinary teams. Defining a public health problem, planning and completing a project, and communicating results will require that the fellow work with individuals across and outside of the department. The fellow will be encouraged to publish the results of projects. Specifically, the fellow could:

- Contribute to continuous data quality improvement in Ohio's birth defects surveillance system. The fellow could conduct assessments of data quality and develop protocols for quality monitoring.
- Evaluate Ohio's capacity to meet the health needs of children with birth defects and other special health care needs with a focus on the top priorities identified in the state's last Title V needs assessment. Those priorities include access to health care and insurance, care coordination and medical home, and availability of congenital and genetic services.
- Assess newborn screening for gaps in diagnosis and treatment of disorders by working closely with the state laboratory and analyzing data from state-funded regional genetics centers. Determine strategies to find and follow up with children who are not receiving treatment.

The fellow's interests and training needs will drive the development of specific analysis projects. Potential projects include the following:

- Analysis of the National Survey of CSHCN or the Ohio Family Health Survey on the quality of care coordination, and medical home among CSHCN on the access to comprehensive preventive and treatment services among Ohio's CSHCN
- Produce population estimates of birth defects prevalence among children birth to 5 years of age using data from Ohio's birth defects surveillance system. Develop a protocol for the production of such estimates.

Opportunities for evaluating surveillance systems include the following:

- Evaluate the referral to services component of the birth defects surveillance system. Determine if the system results in children receiving more timely services.
- Evaluate the state's birth defects surveillance system with a focus on data quality. Conduct special studies to assess the quality and completeness of case ascertainment (e.g., sensitivity and predictive value positive).
- Evaluate the Ohio Family Health Survey as a system for monitoring children with special health care needs. Compare with the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, which provides Ohio-specific data.

Opportunities for outbreak investigations are available within DFCHS' sister division, the Division of Prevention, which has extensive experience supervising Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officers. The primary supervisor also has outbreak investigation experience.

The fellow will be invited to participate in trainings, planning meetings (such as the Bioterrorism Steering Committee Meeting), desktop exercises, and other elements of Ohio's emergency preparedness plan such as school emergency planning. The Division of Prevention has committed to providing additional support and opportunities for the fellow's involvement in emergency preparedness.

Columbus, Ohio is a growing, culturally diverse city with many excellent schools, colleges and universities, and a variety of affordable housing options. Greater Columbus is a thriving metropolitan area of 1.6 million people (Columbus is the 15th largest city in the U.S.). It is home to The Ohio State University, four major healthcare systems, nightlife, family attractions, and diverse sporting events and cultural arts.

Assignment Location: Columbus, OH

Primary Supervisor: Elizabeth Conrey, RD, PhD, Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist

Advanced Degrees: PhD in Community Nutrition with Epidemiology Minor, Cornell University (2003)
MS in Human Nutrition, Cornell University (1999)

Secondary Supervisor: William Ramsini, PhD, Chief of the Bureau of Health Information Services and Operational Support

Advanced Degrees: PhD, Agricultural Extension and minor in research methodology, Ohio State University (1980)
MSc, Agricultural Extension, Ohio State University (1977)