

## 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). The fellow will have opportunities within the division's seven bureaus, which represent a spectrum of MCH interests including children with special health care needs and birth defects, lead programs, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), school and adolescent health, family planning, early intervention, and oral health. The integration of all of these areas under one Division provides unique opportunities for interdisciplinary work and work that cuts across multiple important areas of maternal and child health.

The fellow's day to day activities will include contributing to priorities within a few core areas of interest to the fellow, conducting statistical analyses with support from the supervisors and The Ohio State University (OSU) statisticians, communicating project results within and outside of the department, and attending meetings and site visits to understand the operations of MCH programs internally and in communities. Specifically, the fellow could:

- Work with the bureau for children with medical handicaps (BCMh) to build upon their birth defects surveillance system and enhance analysis and application of available data related to children with special needs;
- Assist with evaluation of the state's birth outcomes improvement initiative, an initiative that integrates and expands the state's efforts to improve birth outcomes;
- Work with the WIC, Child and Family Health Services, and Early Intervention programs to enhance their utilization of the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) and Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System (PNSS) data in program planning and evaluation as well as outreach efforts;
- Explore opportunities for expanding data integration across the Division's data systems.

The fellow's interests and individual training needs will drive the specific analysis projects undertaken. Potential projects include:

- Analysis of the National Survey of Children with Special Healthcare Needs and the Ohio Family Health Survey to examine issues related to access to care;
- Assessment of pregnancy and infant risk factors using data from the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and vital statistics. Specifically, risks for poor birth outcomes could be assessed;
- Analysis of nutrition risk data from the PedNSS and PNSS, which include participants in the WIC program. These systems have been operating since 1995 and 1999, respectively;
- Assessment of the problem of youth suicide or risk behaviors related to teen pregnancy in Ohio using data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) to examine mental health issues and risk behaviors in Ohio's 9-12th graders using YRBSS; and
- Analysis of data from the Ohio Family Health Survey to understand why there are racial differences in dental service utilization among children (<18).

Opportunities for evaluating surveillance systems include the following:

- Evaluate the state's birth defects surveillance system for the timeliness and effectiveness of its referral to services component. The system is currently in a pilot phase and will go statewide in 2007.

- 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.
- Evaluate newborn screening to assess gaps in diagnosis and treatment of disorders. Determine strategies to find and follow up with children who are not receiving treatment. Determine if treatments meet ODH's treatment definitions.
- Evaluate Ohio's PedNSS and PNSS surveillance systems. Ohio's WIC program will be undertaking changes in its computerized data collection system, affording an opportunity to respond to recommendations to enhance Ohio's participation in and utilization of these systems.

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 majority of the fellow's projects, analytical and otherwise, 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 staff across the divisions and often with partners in other divisions or outside of the department. The fellow will be encouraged to publish the results of at least one of their projects.

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, including 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)

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