

Maternal and Child Health

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) proposes placing a CSTE Fellow with the Maternal and Child Health Assessment Section (MCHAS). This section is located within the Office of Maternal and Child Health and provides epidemiologic and assessment services to programs in state and local health, external health-related organizations and agencies, and the public.

MCHAS has approximately 12 staff who focus on issues related to maternal and child health. Analytic staff currently includes 6 epidemiologists and 1 researcher. MCHAS conducts or coordinates several surveillance activities, including the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), the Birth Defects Surveillance System (BDSS), and the Healthy Youth Survey (a bi-annual survey of students in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades). The MCHAS section works closely with the program sections within the Office of Maternal and Child Health (OMCH) including Maternal Infant Child and Adolescent Health (MICAHA), Children with Special Health Care Needs, Immunizations/Child Profile (immunization registry) and Genetic Services. OMCH has a number of initiatives that cross program lines. It has strong collaborative relationships with other programs in the Department of Health and with other agencies around the state. OMCH is committed to using data in the development of programs and policy recommendations.

Day To Day Activities: The placement offers an opportunity for the Fellow to become immersed in issues related to MCH epidemiology on a day-to-day basis. The fellow will participate fully in Assessment activities, including weekly staff meetings, Department of Health brown bag seminars, trainings, advisory committees, and workgroups. The fellow will also be actively engaged in project planning, providing analytic and epidemiologic support to programs within DOH, developing research projects, and conducting program evaluations. The Fellow will also have the opportunity to attend state and regional conferences making presentations to both professional and lay audiences.

Potential surveillance and evaluation projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluation of the Healthy Youth Survey, National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs and/or the National Survey of Children's Health. These systems offer opportunities for hands on experience in managing, analyzing and interpreting data and using surveillance data for program evaluation.
- Evaluation of PRAMS surveillance data and its ability to meet state perinatal data needs
- Use mapping software to assess bias in PRAMS participation
- Conduct a bias analysis for the 2008 Healthy Youth Survey to evaluate school participation, student response, and completion rates.
- Assist in the design of a surveillance system for monitoring access to obstetrical services.
- Evaluate the Maternal Mortality Surveillance system and revise the system to include severe maternal morbidity.

Potential projects may include:

- Analysis of PRAMS data on H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccination and barriers
- Analysis of maternal mortality and severe morbidity related to influenza
- Assist in the final evaluation of the Autism Awareness: Partnership for Change State Implementation Grant
- Analysis of method of delivery and infant and maternal morbidity, length of stay and re-hospitalization rates.
- Analysis of factors related to maternal and infant morbidity through multivariate analysis of PRAMS, birth, death or hospitalization data, or through linked data sets, such as those in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, Child Death Review, or census data.
- Analyses of infant death data in vital statistics records and Child Death Review database to support development of prevention priorities.
- Analysis of trend data and/or assess factors related to youth risk and protective factors in the Healthy Youth Survey to inform the MCH Five Year Needs Assessment.
- Research and develop a proposal for the implementation of child health surveillance system.
- Evaluate the 2003 revised birth certificate to understand the impact of the changes.

Emergency Preparedness Role:

As part of the department's Emergency Preparedness Planning, each division has designated emergency preparedness coordinators. The coordinators work with all staff in their respective divisions to provide training and opportunities to volunteer for specialized response efforts. Additional projects may include work to extend emergency preparedness plans to specialized populations such as pregnant women, infants, and children with special needs. MCH Assessment is currently overseeing surveillance of pregnant women hospitalized with H1N1, so the Fellow may be involved in evaluation of this surveillance and plans for future outbreaks in the MCH population. There may also be other opportunities to evaluate H1N1 prevention and surveillance efforts, depending on future developments with the outbreak.

Location: Olympia, Washington

Primary Mentor: Cathy Wasserman, PhD, MPH
Epidemiologist, WA State Dept of Health

Secondary Mentor: Katie Hutchinson, PhD, MPH

Epidemiologist, WA State Dept of Health