

Maternal and Child Health

Assignment Description

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), the Healthy Youth Survey, and maternal mortality surveillance.

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 be actively engaged in project planning, providing analytic and epidemiologic support to programs within DOH, developing research projects, and conducting program evaluations. Activities include both individual self-directed work and collaboration on workgroups. There will be frequent opportunities to meet and consult with colleagues to review collaborative projects, present materials, and gather feedback. The Fellow will also meet regularly with the mentors to review approaches, discuss questions or challenges, and to learn about the Department of Health. The fellow will participate fully in Assessment activities, including bi-weekly staff meetings, Department of Health brown bag seminars, trainings, advisory committees, and other workgroups. The Fellow may also have the opportunity to attend state and regional conferences making presentations to both professional and lay audiences.

Potential Projects include:

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- Conducting a bias analysis for the 2010 Healthy Youth Survey to evaluate school participation, student response, and completion rates.
- Evaluating the Birth Defects Surveillance System to determine process improvements to improve completeness and timeliness of case reporting, and facilitate reporting and referrals to Public Health coordinators to provide timely and appropriate services for affected children.
- Conducting a bias analysis for the 2010 PRAMS system using mapping software.
- Collaborating on the development of a statewide evaluation plan for Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions of Unmet Needs in Children's Health). The primary goals of Project LAUNCH are to improve overall childhood wellness through a) providing services related to social/emotional development and b) improving the overall coordination and collaboration across systems of care, including health, education, and family.
 - Evaluating the Pregnant and Parenting Teens Grant which provides support to pregnant and parenting teens and improves services to pregnant victims of domestic violence. The evaluation includes developing performance measures and collaborating on the national evaluation.

- Analyzing PRAMS data on H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccination and barriers to influenza vaccination.
- Analyzing hospitalization data to look at time to surgery for infants born with birth defects and evaluate any potential disparities in care (e.g. insurance, race/ethnicity, education).
- Analyzing the impact of different race/ethnic classifications on birth outcomes. Use the information to make a policy recommendation.
- Analyzing the method of delivery on infant and maternal morbidity, length of stay and re-hospitalization rates.
- Analyzing infant death data from vital statistics records and Child Death Review database. Use the information to support development of prevention priorities.
- Researching surveillance options to assess the health of young children. Use the information to put together a proposal for implementation, or to support a grant application.
- Participating as the epidemiologist on a statewide group developing universal developmental screening in Washington. Participation will involve ensuring the data system can be used for statewide surveillance and evaluation goals.
- Using PRAMS data to analyze preconception and interconception practices in Washington to inform program planning.
- Using PRAMS data to evaluate birth outcomes and maternal behaviors for American Indian/Alaska Native women.
- Using Vital Statistics, PRAMS, Healthy Youth Survey, or Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data to write a chapter of the Health of Washington State. (see <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hws/MCH2007.shtm>)
- Analyzing PRAMS data to describe perceived discrimination and its association with reproductive health behaviors and outcomes
- Analyzing health behavior trends by grade and gender using the Healthy Youth Survey data. Collaborating on development of the Healthy Youth Survey Report, and writing topic-specific fact sheets.
- Analyzing Healthy Youth Survey data to inform questionnaire revision and the development of the 2012 Healthy Youth Survey questions.

Preparedness Role

There are several opportunities for involvement in emergency preparedness depending on the interest and expertise of the Fellow. 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. The Fellow could participate in these activities, in activities related to the National Stockpile or other activities. Additional projects may include work to extend emergency preparedness plans to specialized populations such as pregnant women, infants, and children with special needs.

Assignment Location: Olympia, Washington

Primary Mentor: Cathy Wasserman, PhD, MPH
Epidemiologist-
Washington State Department of Health

Secondary Mentor: Katie Hutchinson, PhD, MSPH

Research Investigator
Washington State Department of Health