

Maternal and Child Health

The Division of Family and Community Health Services (FCHS) is the maternal and child health arm of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The fellow would be located in the Office of Program Decision Support (OPDSa). OPDS conducts research to inform policy development and programmatic decision-making and supports the MCH research and evaluation needs of several programs throughout the Division of Family and Community Health Services. These programs include Maternal and Child Health and Children with Special Health Care Needs (Title V), Family Planning (Title V, X, XX), the Texas Oral Health Program, the Texas EPSDT Program (Title XIX), the Texas Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, and Texas WIC Program. Much of the work completed in OPDS is through interdisciplinary teams with a strong focus on application and translation of research to practice. The fellow will have the opportunity to learn how to prepare information for use by program staff and how to best present information and methods to engage a broad audience of scientists, policy makers, lay people, and program staff. With a strong link between research and program, there are many opportunities to select a relevant program or surveillance system for evaluation. Once the fellow has been oriented to the FCHS programs, s/he will work with the primary and secondary mentor to identify the program or surveillance evaluation project that will meet the fellow's interests and have the most impact on public health research and practice.

Leadership throughout Family and Community Health Services will work with Dr. Gita Mirchandani and Dr. Kayan Lewis and Brian Castrucci to develop a fellowship that addresses the CSTE program design and the professional interests of the fellow. This includes creating opportunities to network with public health leaders and professionals throughout Texas, opportunities for publication and presentation of the fellow's work, and developing and improving interviewing skills to aid in job placement.

On a day-to-day basis, the fellow's activities will be determined by the individual's interests in combination with the needs of FCHS. The fellow will work collaboratively with researchers and statisticians in OPDS, have opportunities to attend internal and external meetings, attend and present at DSHS Grand Rounds, and attend trainings and presentations offered throughout DSHS.

Analyses conducted by staff in OPDS are disseminated through internal journals, peer reviewed manuscripts, and presentations, both internal and at local and national conferences. It is expected that the fellow will have opportunities to prepare manuscripts for peer review and successfully publish his/her findings. The following is a list of potential projects reflecting the databases and program breadth available to the fellow:

- Analysis of Existing Survey Data. The National Survey of Children's Health, BRFSS, PRAMS, and YRBSS are all available for analysis. The fellow will learn how these data are collected, have opportunities to review and add questions, and design and execute studies.
- Breastfeeding Studies. Work to analyze the 2007 and 2009 Texas WIC Infant Feeding Practices Survey. This comprehensive survey on breastfeeding practices, beliefs, and attitudes has

approximately 6,000 responses in each year. Texas is also considering the development of a hospital-based study to explore breastfeeding policies and practices.

- **Analysis of Administrative Data.** The fellow will have access to birth and death files, family planning data, data from Texas WIC, hospital discharge data, and other administrative data sets. FCHS is working closely with the Department of Family Protective Services to explore unique data linkage projects.
- **Needs Assessment.** The fellow will be in Texas in a unique time period as the Office of Title V prepares and implements its federally required 5-year Needs Assessment (due July 2010). This will be a unique opportunity for the fellow to work as part of the Needs Assessment team and contribute to this important product that will guide the Texas Title V Program.
- **Funded Studies.** FCHS funds studies conducted by university partners on topics that include obesity and adolescent pregnancy. The fellow will work with these partners in the development and execution of analyses.

Through collaboration with the State Epidemiologist, there are several opportunities for outbreak field investigations that have linkages to maternal and child health. The fellow will participate in weekly meetings of infectious disease epidemiologists to discuss the status of outbreak investigations statewide. The fellow will have the opportunity to choose an outbreak investigation that is interesting to him/her and provides the maximum professional development opportunities.

The fellow will have opportunities to participate in emergency preparedness trainings and, if interested, participate as part of an emergency response.

Assignment Location:	Austin, Texas
Primary Mentor:	Gita Mirchandani, PhD, MPH Research Specialist, Division of Family and Community Health Services Texas Department of State Health Services
Advanced Degrees:	PhD, Johns Hopkins University (2005) MPH, Johns Hopkins University (2000)
Secondary Mentor:	Kayan Lewis, PhD, MA Research Specialist, Texas Department of State Health Services
Advanced Degrees:	PhD, University of Southern California (2002) MA, University of Southern California (1998)