

Chronic Disease

1. **Program Description.** The Washington State Department of Health proposes mentoring a Fellow through a collaboration of the Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology (NICE) unit and the Office of Community Wellness and Prevention (CWP). NICE resides in the Department's central epidemiology office and has a broad scope of work including chronic disease, injury, and the non-infectious aspects of maternal and child and environmental health. NICE provides epidemiologic services to programs in state and local health, external health-related organizations, and the public. NICE also has responsibility for chronic disease cluster investigations. CWP contains the Cancer Prevention and Control unit that houses the Washington Comprehensive Cancer Control Partnership, the Washington State Cancer Registry, and the Washington Breast and Cervical Health Program; the Chronic Disease & Prevention unit that includes programs for Diabetes Prevention and Control, Heart Disease and Stroke, Asthma, Nutrition, and Physical Activity; the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program; the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and Quality Improvement, Planning and Policy Unit that houses Steps to a Healthier WA which broadly addresses chronic disease prevention. The collaboration offers an opportunity for the Fellow to become immersed in chronic disease epidemiology on a day-to-day basis while developing a broader applied public health perspective through the connection with CWP programs.

2. **Day-to-day activities.** The two most common daily activities are meetings and computer work. Meetings are generally with supervisors, coworkers, or external partners to plan projects, develop collaborative work, and review analytic findings and reports. Computer work includes activities such as analyzing data, writing reports, preparing oral presentations, and developing study protocols and related written material. On a weekly basis, the Fellow would have opportunities for field work related to study implementation, responding to public concerns regarding clusters of chronic disease, or presenting study findings to professional and lay audiences. NICE can support travel for regional and national conferences and training opportunities.

3. **Potential projects** offering opportunities for data analysis, field investigations and participation on a variety of interdisciplinary teams include

4. **Program or surveillance system evaluation.** The Fellow will have the opportunity to evaluate one of several established surveillance systems, including the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey or the Healthy Youth Survey. Less well-established systems and systems that are currently used primarily as administrative databases, such as those used to monitor asthma, diabetes, heart health or the Washington Breast and Cervical Health Program, may also be appropriate for evaluation. These systems offer opportunities for in-depth understanding of how data are collected and managed, as well as opportunities for data analysis for developing recommendations for system-related data interpretation or policy.

- Using Healthy Youth Survey data to examine risk and protective behaviors for chronic disease, such as nutrition and physical activity, intentional and unintentional injury, and substance abuse.
- Analyzing data collected as part of the Washington Adult Health Survey, a statewide field study focusing on undiagnosed hypertension, high blood cholesterol and diabetes. Data include biological samples, anthropometric measures, and questionnaires.
- Identifying common goals and objectives across programs in CWP and testing the feasibility of implementing evidence based interventions to fulfill these common goals.
- Completing a cancer fact sheet for 39 counties in Washington describing the burden of cancer.
- Estimating costs for implementing each prioritized activity in the Comprehensive Cancer Control Partnership in Washington.
- Validating self-reported data on a statewide telephone survey of community environments, conducted to measure the impact of Washington State's Nutrition and Physical Activity state plan on policy and environmental change, through comparing self-reported and observational data.
- Conducting data analysis to measure the economic impact of the Washington State Collaborative on patients with diabetes who are on Medicaid or Uniform Medical Plan.
- Collecting regional and county level data on heart disease and stroke to help identify gaps and areas for improvement/planning for regional councils regarding dealing with cardiac and stroke emergencies.
- Performing data analysis for the Washington State School Health Profiles (SHP) data and updating the state fact sheets:
- Planning, developing, or revising the data collection instrument, and analyzing the Healthy Worksite Survey data.

5. State emergency preparedness. NICE supports Communicable Disease Epidemiology and Environmental Health Programs in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or terrorist event. NICE personnel also have emergency response roles related to Washington's nuclear power facility and a chemical weapons depot located in Oregon just south of Washington. The fellow will have the opportunity to participate in emergency preparedness activities, attending trainings and tabletop exercises as appropriate and available.

Assignment Location: Olympia, Washington

Primary Mentor: Amira El-Bastawissi, PhD, MS
Epidemiologist III (2002-present)
Washington State Department of Health

Advanced Degrees: PhD, University of Texas School of Public Health (1993)
MS, Ohio State University (1984)

Secondary Mentor: Lillian Southwick Bensley, PhD, MS
Non –Infectious Conditions Epidemiology Section
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Advanced Degrees: PhD, Psychology, University of Washington (1982)
MS, Psychology, University of Washington (1979)