

Chronic Disease

Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology (NICE) unit and the Office of Community Wellness and Prevention (CWP) propose mentoring a chronic disease Fellow at the Washington State Department of Health (WSDOH). NICE focuses on epidemiology of chronic disease, injury, and non-infectious aspects of maternal, child, and environmental health. NICE provides epidemiologic services to state and local health, other health-related organizations, and the public. NICE has responsibility for chronic disease cluster investigations. CWP contains programs for chronic disease and related risk factors, including prevention and control of cancer, asthma, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity and tobacco use. CWP also has programs to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. CWP's programs target the general population, as well as low-income residents; programs target both children and adults. Programs focus on individual-level change, as well as policy and environmental change to help people lead healthier lives.

Day-to-day activities include working with supervisors, coworkers, and external partners to plan projects; develop study protocols; analyze and interpret data; and prepare, review and present findings. Fieldwork includes study implementation and cluster/outbreak investigations.

Potential Projects :

The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program will pilot the use of web panels to conduct media planning and evaluation. This methodology uses web surveys to collect feedback from approximately 500 adult and youth smokers for media campaign development. The Fellow could participate in project planning, data analysis, and dissemination of results.

To understand the state's system for chronic illness care, programs in CWP surveyed primary care providers to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to chronic disease, obesity, and tobacco use. The Fellow could lead the data analysis and report development for the asthma, diabetes, coronary heart disease, and obesity measures.

Washington's breast cancer incidence rate is among the highest in the country. WSDOH first investigated this phenomenon in the early 2000s using multiple survey and population-based data. The Fellow could update and expand this analysis and prepare written and oral material to present results.

The Washington State Adult Health Survey is a door-to-door cluster survey that collected questionnaire, anthropometric, and biological data related to heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Over 600 Washingtonians participated. A Fellow could analyze the relationships among behavior, healthcare, demographics and selected chronic diseases, pre-diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

WSDOH employs a policy and environmental approach for obesity prevention and control. Lack of data on obesity among young children hampers evaluation of these efforts. The Fellow could search literature to learn how others have collected heights and weights on young children and contact the few schools in Washington that have collected these data to understand their approaches. Based on this

information, the Fellow could assist in developing a pilot project for assessing heights and weights in Washington's elementary schools.

The School Health Profiles Survey (Profiles) is a biennial survey that monitors school policies and programs related to physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco-use. The Fellow could analyze the 2008 Washington data, compare 2008 and 2006 results, and update fact sheets that WSDOH and schools use allocate resources, guide professional development, and improve school health programs and policies. Profiles could be linked to the Healthy Youth Survey that provides self-reported, health-related information from students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. By linking these datasets, the Fellow could assess the associations of school policy with student reports of physical activity, nutrition, and smoking.

WSDOH receives about 18 inquiries annually regarding clusters of chronic diseases. The Fellow would be involved in responding to these clusters. The Fellow could work with a local health department on an infectious disease outbreak.

Program or surveillance system evaluation:

Over the past several years, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey has amended administration procedures. The Fellow could evaluate the current system focusing on how changes have affected the representativeness of the sample. The Breast and Cervical Health Program's system is currently used primarily as an administrative database. The Fellow could evaluate this system to determine its usefulness for surveillance. The Fellow could also evaluate data related to heart disease and stroke and make recommendations for development of a routine surveillance system.

The Washington State Collaborative (Collaborative) is based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's evidence-based program designed to improve the quality of primary care for people with chronic disease. In 2008, WSDOH modified the design of the Collaborative. The Fellow could evaluate the effectiveness of these modifications on clinical outcomes, participation, team satisfaction, and other parameters.

Emergency preparedness:

NICE supports several WSDOH programs in responding to natural disasters, pandemics, and industrial or terrorist events. The Fellow can participate in table top exercises and receive training in handling emergency medical materials and in staffing the public emergency call center.

Assignment Location: Olympia, Washington

Primary Mentor: Juliet VanEenwyk, PhD, MS

State Epidemiologist for Non-Infectious Conditions

Section Director, Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology

Advanced Degrees: PhD, University of Illinois, Chicago (1990)

MS, Roosevelt University, Chicago (1975)

Secondary Mentor: Amira El-Bastawissi, PhD

Senior Epidemiologist, Washington State Department of Health

Offices of Epidemiology and Community Wellness & Prevention

Advanced Degrees: PhD, University of Texas (1993)

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