

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) proposes mentoring a Fellow through a collaboration of the Non-Infectious Conditions Epidemiology (NICE) unit and the Chronic Disease Prevention and Risk Reduction Programs section (CDPRR). NICE resides in DOH'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 and supports Communicable Disease Epidemiology and Environmental Health Programs in the event of a biological or chemical terrorism event, respectively. NICE personnel also have emergency response roles related to Washington nuclear power facility and a chemical weapons depot located six miles south of Washington in Oregon.

CDPRR contains three units focusing on cancer (the Washington State Cancer Registry, Washington Breast and Cervical Health Program, and Comprehensive Cancer Control), a large unit that includes programs for diabetes control, heart health, and nutrition and physical activity. CDPRR also houses the STEPS to a Healthier US Program and the Asthma Program, and has close ties with the Tobacco Control Program. 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 NICE.

The Fellow will have the opportunity to select one of several established surveillance systems to evaluate following the CDC's Updated Guidelines for Evaluating Public Health Surveillance Systems, including the Washington State Cancer Registry, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), or the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS). 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 hands on experience in collecting, managing, analyzing and interpreting data; for developing recommendations for system-related policy; and for developing the Fellow's major project. Current studies and evaluation projects in which the fellow could work on an interdisciplinary team include assessing

- Impacts of programs to increase physical activity and healthy eating habits. This might include developing a survey of local policies that affect physical activity, nutrition and tobacco use. This could serve the STEPS program need to evaluate the impact of their local interventions against the background of statewide activities being implemented by the Physical Activity and Nutrition Unit and the Tobacco Prevention Program. It could also include assessing the impact of school policies on students' physical activity and food choices.
- Impacts of programs to improve healthcare quality for chronic disease screening and management through adoption of best practices. This might include a focus on the Diabetes Collaborative, the broader Chronic Care Collaborative that include diabetes, heart disease and cancer, or the STEPs program that includes asthma, diabetes, tobacco and obesity.
- Whether disparities in mortality rates of chronic disease decrease after controlling for poverty and education.
- Chronic disease in relation to the "reactions to race" module included in the Washington 2004 BRFSS.

- The relationship between late stage cancer diagnosis, poverty and the impact of the Breast and Cervical Health Program.
- The implications of race misclassification, population definitions and age-adjustment on cancer among American Indian populations in Washington;
- Estimates from school-based surveys administered the spring and fall to identify whether there are any significant differences in survey findings and provide a recommendations about whether Washington's fall survey can adequately substitute for future national spring administration requirements.
- The impact of the Tobacco Program's funding for American Indian tribes in Washington for the past 5 years. This would involve collecting information and writing an evaluation report.
- Differences in rates of hospitalization for cardiovascular disease by county

Major activities throughout the course of a week include meeting with supervisors, coworkers or external partners to plan projects and develop collaborative portions of projects; implementing studies including analysis of previously collected data and development of studies requiring collection of new data; preparing written documents such as study proposals, Institutional Review Board applications, and reports of study findings; and preparing oral presentations for both professional and lay audiences. The Fellow would have opportunities to attend several state and regional conferences making presentations to both professional and lay audiences. The Fellow would also have the opportunity to be involved in a chronic disease cluster investigation and training for emergency response.

Assignment Location: Olympia, Washington

Primary Supervisor: Juliet VanEenwyk, PhD, MS
State Epidemiologist for Non-Infectious Conditions (2000-present)

Advanced Degrees: PhD, University of Illinois in Chicago (1990)
MS, Roosevelt University, Chicago (1975)

Secondary Supervisor: Amira El-Bastawissi, PhD, MS
Epidemiologist III (2002-present)

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