

Chronic Diseases, Chronic Diseases

New Jersey Department of Health, Family Health Services - Community Health and Wellness

Trenton, New Jersey

Assignment Description

The fellow will be assigned to the Community Health and Wellness Unit (chronic disease prevention and control) within the Family Health Services Division of the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). The fellow will be housed in the Epidemiology, Surveillance and Evaluation (ESE) sub-unit of the Community Health and Wellness Unit and will be supervised by the Epidemiologist.

Day-to-Day Activities

The fellow will primarily work with mentors and other staff to plan projects, develop timelines for work, analyze data and report findings in accordance with the Action Plan. Day to day activities will include analyzing developing analytical plan to accomplish projects, analyzing data, and developing dissemination products based on findings. The fellow will have the opportunity to participate in program evaluation planning by attending evaluation planning meetings and working with evaluation staff to operationalize evaluation plans. The fellow will be integrated into the Epidemiology, Surveillance and Evaluation (ESE) team within the Community Health and Wellness Unit and will therefore also support operations there by helping to fill ad hoc data requests as needed and by participating in relevant meetings.

Potential Projects

Surveillance Chronic Disease Surveillance Using the New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey Activity

The New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (NJBFRFS) is an important data source that is used frequently for chronic disease surveillance in New Jersey. This survey collects extensive information about chronic diseases and associated risk factors among New Jersey adults. In an effort to identify chronic disease surveillance needs as it relates to analysis of the NJBFRFS, the fellow would meet with chronic disease program and evaluation staff to learn about their evidence-based work in the areas of cancer, asthma, diabetes, heart disease & stroke, obesity, and tobacco. The fellow would summarize his or her findings around chronic disease surveillance needs relating to analysis of the NJBFRFS. With support from mentors, the fellow would then design and implement at least one NJBFRFS analytic study that will inform New Jersey's efforts around chronic disease prevention and/or control.

Surveillance Screening Data from the New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection Evaluation Program: Applications for Chronic Disease Surveillance

The New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection Screening Program (NJCEED) is part of the Community Health and Wellness Unit at the NJDOH. NJCEED provides comprehensive screening services for breast, cervical, prostate, and colorectal cancer. These services include education, outreach, early detection, case management, screening, tracking, and follow-up for low-income residents who are either uninsured or under-insured. The program collects extensive data on residents who receive these services; therefore, the Community Health and Wellness Unit is interested in evaluating the use of this data as a source for chronic disease surveillance. With support from mentors, the Fellow would be tasked with engaging a diverse group of stakeholders, describing the surveillance system, focusing the evaluation design, gathering evidence regarding level of usefulness and system attributes, making recommendations, and then sharing lessons learned.

Major Project Factors Associated with Successful Cessation Among New Jersey Quitline Callers

Quitlines use the telephone to provide evidence-based behavioral counseling and support to help tobacco users who want to quit. The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends quitline interventions, based on strong evidence of effectiveness in increasing tobacco cessation among clients interested in quitting. The Community Health and Wellness Unit, within the New Jersey Department of Health, manages the state's Quitline and is interested in identifying factors that are associated with successful cessation among recipients of these services. Therefore, the major project aim would be to identify factors that are associated with successful cessation among New Jersey Quitline callers. With support from both mentors, the Fellow would be tasked with planning an epidemiologic study including:

- Performing a literature review in order to identify what is already known about this issue
- Engaging stakeholders in the NJDOH Office of Tobacco Control (OTC)

- Developing an analytic plan
- Conducting analysis using SAS and other software as needed (e.g. ArcGIS)
- Sharing findings through presentations and peer reviewed manuscript(s) as appropriate

Additional Time Sensitive Investigation Project

In accordance with the applied epidemiology core competencies, the fellow will also have an opportunity to participate in a time-sensitive investigation. Our last CSTE fellow met with NJDOH communicable disease staff and subsequently participated in an outbreak investigation. Other opportunities exist within the NJDOH and can be tailored to the fellow’s interests with regard to time sensitive investigations. For example, the occupational health surveillance program develops intervention strategies and practical solutions to reduce hazards in the workplace and that would be another option for consideration.

Preparedness Role

To fulfill the Bioterrorism Preparedness Requirement the fellow can take the Incident Command System (ICS) Training Courses offered by FEMA. He or she can take the two Basic Level Courses, ICS-100 and ICS-700. The fellow can also meet with preparedness staff in order to learn more about this area and to explore opportunities for participation

Additional Activities

The fellow would be integrated with evaluation staff in the Community Health and Wellness Unit; therefore, he or she would be uniquely positioned to meet other epidemiology core competencies by providing support to chronic disease evaluation efforts. This includes such competencies as designing a data collection tool and creating a database.

Mentors

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| Primary | Melissa Santorelli PhD, MPH

Research Scientist - Epidemiologist |
| Secondary | Uta Steinhauser MPH

Research Scientist - Evaluation Lead |

