Assignment Description

The fellow will be placed in the Health Department’s Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, which resides within the Public Health Bureau. The Public Health Bureau protects the health and safety of Monterey County residents and visitors, provides credible information to enhance health decisions, and partners with federal, state, and local organizations to promote sound public health practice and policy. Key responsibilities of the Bureau include preventing and controlling infectious diseases; performing laboratory testing for infectious diseases and water contamination; preventing injury, chronic disease, and premature death; improving the health of county employees and reducing employer costs; preparing for and responding to emergencies and disasters; linking families to community and government services; improving the health of mothers, babies, and young girls; improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs for homeless individuals; ensuring access to pediatric specialty health care services, improving nutrition for low-income families, registering births and deaths, and issuing burial permits. The Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control includes the HIV, STD, Immunization, Epidemiology and Surveillance, Tuberculosis Control, and Communicable Disease Units, as well as the Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Hospital Preparedness, Vital Records, and Medical Marijuana Identification Card Programs. The fellow will work collaboratively with individuals within the Division, Bureau, Department, and community to improve surveillance for communicable diseases, collect and analyze health information during disease investigations, and create epidemiologic profiles to guide local program strategies.

Day-to-Day Activities

The fellow’s anticipated day-to-day activities include obtaining access to relevant databases, extracting information, cleaning data, and developing SAS code for analyzing data. He/she will attend meetings with Department staff and community partners and participate in statewide teleconferences. He/she will investigate incidents and outbreaks of communicable diseases, coordinate with public health nursing, laboratory, and environmental health staff. The fellow will review reports from other agencies, create epidemiologic summaries, identify health disparities, and inform stakeholders of local morbidity and mortality trends. The fellow will plan, implement, and evaluate surveillance systems.

Potential Projects

Surveillance Activity  Enhanced Coccidioidomycosis Surveillance

The fellow will conduct detailed interviews of Monterey County residents recently diagnosed with coccidioidomycosis. He/she will obtain and review medical records, extracting relevant health information. The fellow will enter information into the California Reportable Disease Information
Exchange (CalREDIE) and extract key variables. He/she will analyze the data for health disparities, risk factors for infection, and trends, then compile a summary report for local stakeholders.

**Surveillance Evaluation**

**Evaluation of compliance with reporting requirements by laboratories and clinicians**

The fellow will evaluate compliance with reporting requirements by laboratories and clinicians. Local mandatory reporting requirements were updated on October 1, 2019. Changes included new diseases and variables to be reported by laboratories and clinicians. The fellow will conduct an evaluation of compliance with the new requirements, including such key variables as reporting of pregnancy status among individuals diagnosed with an STI, completeness of race and ethnicity data, and treatment information. He/she will perform the full scope of the evaluation process including describing the surveillance system, planning the evaluation methods, performing the evaluation, and drafting a report for the Program Manager and Director of Public Health proposing any recommended actions to improve the system.

**Major Project**

**Electronic Syndromic Surveillance**

The fellow will plan and implement an electronic syndromic surveillance system utilizing the BioSense platform. The fellow will follow the National Syndromic Surveillance Program’s guide for onboarding to implement a transfer of electronic data from local hospitals and other priority stakeholders. He/she will work with Department information technology staff, community stakeholders, and Division management to engage stakeholders and secure BOPAs. The fellow will plan the implementation process and inform stakeholders on necessary steps for implementation. He/she will facilitate conversations between hospitals and information technology staff to establish data connections and validate electronic messages. The fellow will coordinate with NSSP BioSense staff throughout the process. Once messages are being received and validated, the fellow will monitor connections and review received data.

**Preparedness Role**

Public Health Emergency Preparedness is also located in the Division of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, in which the fellow will be placed. He/she will have opportunities to attend preparedness trainings and participate in preparedness exercises. The Fellow will complete Incident Command System (ICS) training. The Fellow will be called upon to assist with large outbreaks and public health emergencies, should they occur. The Fellow will be assigned a position in Epidemiology Unit of the Department Operations Center during events.
**Mentors**

**Primary**  
Kristy Michie MS  
Epidemiologist & Program Manager

**Secondary**  
Edward Moreno MD, MPH  
Health Officer & Director of Public Health