

ID: 35771427

Infectious Diseases - Host Site Description

New Jersey Department of Health

Assignment Location: Trenton, US-NJ
New Jersey Department of Health
HIV, STD and Tb Services/STD Services

Primary Mentor: Jessica Antiskay, MPH
Health Data Specialist
New Jersey Department of Health

Secondary Mentor: Christina Tan, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist/Assistant Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health

Work Environment

Hybrid

Assignment Description

The Fellow will report to the Director for the STD Services Program. This position will help evaluate the need for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) referral for persons with multiple Chlamydia/Gonorrhea diagnosis to prevent subsequent HIV diagnoses within the Division of HIV, STD and TB Services (DHSTS). The Fellow would analyze the existing data, develop the criteria for which reports should have follow-up and evaluate the implementation of the intervention as the program has numerous Disease Intervention Specialists funded under the DIS Workforce initiative. The Fellow will become proficient in SAS (if not already so) by learning how to merge multiple datasets that have no unique identifier, building evaluation metrics, and provide recommendations to the Director. This Fellow will have numerous leadership and collaboration opportunities with the numerous areas within DHSTS to help our program move forward. DHSTS works closely with the Communicable Disease Service providing numerous opportunities to participate in infectious disease surveillance. DHSTS employs approximately 150 people to conduct disease surveillance for HIV, STD and TB as well as prevention for these 3 program areas.

Describe Statistical and Data Analysis Support, Such as Databases, Software, and Surveillance Systems Available to the Fellow

NJDOH will provide SAS and Tableau licenses to the Fellow. In addition, other software programs will be made available upon request. The Fellow will have access to CDRSS, New Jersey's electronic, web-enabled system where public health partners statewide can instantly report and track incidences of communicable diseases. The Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS) facilitates the timely reporting and immediate sharing of pertinent data, thus supporting appropriate public health responses, be they isolated incidences or multi-state outbreaks. Positive laboratory reports of communicable diseases are entered into CDRSS either by electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) transmissions or are entered manually on a daily basis from clinical laboratories and acute care hospitals. Follow up information is added by hundreds of trained users in various public health roles. The CDRSS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and weekly transmissions to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) support national as well as statewide surveillance.

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Projects

Surveillance Activity Title: Assist Syphilis Reactor Desk Team

Surveillance Activity Description:

The Fellow will support the Syphilis Reactor Desk Team to participate in the day-to-day activities and evaluate if there are efficiencies to be gained either through practice or ELR rules. The Fellow will assist with calling providers to learn more about the incoming lab report to understand if this is a true case of syphilis or previously identified/treated.

Surveillance Activity Objectives:

1. Understanding of how electronic lab reports become case reports
2. Understand limitations of lab data
3. Provide at least 2 areas of efficiencies that can be gained by current STD Surveillance Unit

Surveillance Activity Impact:

Increased timeliness and completeness of syphilis case reporting

Surveillance System Evaluation Title: Evaluation of HIV Partner Services Initial Reports

Surveillance System Evaluation Description:

HIV lab reports come to the STD Program from raw feeds. The STD Program evaluates the reports and attempts to classify those who are most likely to be new HIV cases vs. prior diagnoses or false positives. The Fellow would evaluate the raw reports to determine which cases were not prioritized for Partner Services/assignment to DIS. The Fellow will provide recommendations to the Program in order to improve the timeliness of HIV partner notification by NJDOH staff.

Surveillance System Objectives:

1. Review previous raw data reports sent to STD Services
2. Classify cases to identify missed opportunities
3. Evaluate missed opportunities to make recommendations for Program

Surveillance System Impact:

HIV cases that should be prioritized for follow-up will be more timely and complete.

Major Project Title: Determine Profile of Persons with Prior STD diagnoses (Chlamydia/Gonorrhea/Syphilis) at Increased Risk of Subsequent HIV Infection

Major Project Description:

Persons diagnosed with STDs are at increased risk for subsequent HIV diagnosis. These persons are candidates for Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) - one pill a day to prevent HIV. Often, those diagnosed with an STD are not tested for HIV or recognize their risk for subsequent HIV diagnosis. In 2021, CDC awarded additional funding to the STD program to increase Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) to reduce the spread of STDs. By identifying the profile of those with multiple STD diagnoses who should have a subsequent HIV test, PrEP or care referral will aid in preventing the spread of both STDs and HIV.

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Major Project Objectives:

1. Profile of persons with multiple prior STD diagnoses at risk for HIV
2. Staff analysis to understand the capacity of the STD program to respond to those at increased risk

Major Project Impact:

Reduced HIV transmission in New Jersey.

Additional Project #1 Title: Identifying Gaps in STD Care Locations in New Jersey

Project #1 Type: Major Project

Project #1 Description:

While New Jersey is one of the smaller states, there are limited locations for persons to go to in order to get STD Clinical or Family Planning Care. This project would involve geocoding the STD case reports in ArcGIS, geocoding various clinics including, but not limited to, STD Clinics, Family Planning clinics and potentially urgent care/Emergency rooms. Analysis will include further insights on STD clinical care deserts and allow for better understanding on how far people need to travel to obtain care.

Project #1 Objectives and Expected Deliverables:

- 1) Geocoding STD maps to the census tract level to understand where STDs are hardest hit
- 2) Analysis of distance to STD care from residential address to understand and identify service gaps
- 3) Recommendations for areas to focus resources/outreach (e.g., DIS work) based on census tract analysis

Project #1 Impact:

New Jersey would understand a more granular level of where persons with STD live in order to target outreach and identify clinical services that can provide STD clinic services to their residents.

Please Describe the Fellow's Anticipated Role in Preparedness and Response Efforts – Include Activities and Time Allocation (Required Competency of Fellowship)

The Fellow will have the opportunity to participate in an evaluation activity surrounding preparedness and response efforts. While COVID-19 has allowed NJDOH to apply numerous preparedness and response efforts, hot wash activities and winding down are hopefully in the future to allow the Fellow an opportunity to understand what goes into analyzing response efforts.

Please Describe the Fellow's Anticipated Role in Cluster and Outbreak Investigations – Include Activities and Time Allocation (Required Competency of Fellowship)

Cluster Detection Response (CDR) is a critical component of the federal initiative to End the HIV Epidemic by 2030. CDR uses data routinely reported to health departments to identify communities where HIV may be spreading rapidly. This information can then be used to identify gaps in prevention and care services to ensure that services reach the populations that need them quickly. The STD Services unit is responsible for field follow-up on all clusters to determine missing persons and halt cluster growth. The Fellow would be able to participate and lead these cluster analyses at NJDOH. In Year 2, this activity may account for 25% of the Fellow's time.

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Please Describe the Fellow's Anticipated Role in the COVID-19 Response – Include Activities and Time Allocation

The Fellow will have the opportunity to participate in an evaluation activity surrounding COVID-19 contact tracing outcomes. In addition, the Fellow may join the contact tracing small group to understand the nuts and bolts of maintaining this program.

Please Describe Opportunities for Fellows to Work in Health Equity as well as Incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into their Work

Learning more about STDs and the factors that sustain STD epidemics is important to helping affected communities to improve their health status and advance health equity.