

**ID: 44620251**

**Maternal and Child Health - Host Site Description**

**Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

**Assignment Location:** Madison, US-WI  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
Division of Public Health

**Primary Mentor:** Angela Rohan, PhD, MA  
Senior Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist / CDC Assignee  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services

**Secondary Mentor:** Emily Morian-Lozano, MPH, MSW  
Maternal Mortality Review Epidemiologist  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services

**Work Environment**

Hybrid

**Assignment Description**

The Family Health Section (FHS) in the Bureau of Community Health Promotion (BCHP) in the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) consists of cross-cutting and integrated programs throughout the lifespan: maternal and child health (MCH), birth defects surveillance, reproductive health; genetics, universal newborn hearing screening, children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN), and most recently a maternal and infant mortality prevention unit, which houses the maternal mortality program. The FHS also has partnerships with physical activity and nutrition (including WIC), state tribal agencies, and community-based organizations. The Wisconsin Maternal and Child Health program has been recognized as an innovator in health promotion and systems change. This characteristic is illustrated by new objectives identified for the most recent 2021-2025 Title V block grant cycle: promoting social connectedness and decreasing African American infant mortality.

This placement will provide the Fellow with the opportunity to work on a diversity of available projects. The proposed surveillance evaluation of assessing measurements of maternal transfer will allow the fellow to become familiar with multiple datasets (vital records and hospital discharge data) and key partner agencies (Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care and the University of Wisconsin-Madison). FHS Data Team members have extensive experience conducting surveillance evaluations and will be available to support the Fellow in this project. The proposed projects will allow the Fellow to take advantage of the rich data sources and linked files available in DPH, as well as leverage community partnerships to impact public health practice.

The mentors look forward to working with the Fellow to identify challenging analytic opportunities to enhance their skills in analyzing and translating data into evidence-informed public health practice. The CSTE Fellow will have exposure to all areas of epidemiology, program evaluation, and disease surveillance in FHS, which has eight full-time epidemiologists and data staff specializing in various areas of Family Health. These individuals, along with students from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UWMSPH) and a number of Fellows and trainees, make up a learning community that contributes to public health workforce development.

The Fellow will work closely with the mentors and other staff members daily through project meetings. They will be provided the opportunity to work both independently and as part of a team, as well as to take the lead on projects. The mentors will also identify opportunities for the Fellow to attend other meetings as an observer to understand more about how applied epidemiology fits in to the overall work of the Division of Public Health.

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Additional activities include:

- Be an active participant in the Family Health Section (FHS) Data Team, which meets monthly and includes the CDC Assignee (primary mentor), Title V Epidemiologist/Evaluator, State Systems Development Initiative (SSDI) coordinator, children and youth with special health care needs epidemiologist, the PRAMS project director and MCH epidemiologist, the reproductive health/family planning epidemiologist, the newborn screening data integration specialist, the WIC epidemiologist, the maternal mortality epidemiologist (secondary mentor), and other Fellows
- Participate in the following additional meetings: Division-wide Epidemiology Seminars and events; Family Health Section meetings (monthly); Bureau-wide meetings (quarterly); Preparedness meetings and trainings (as appropriate); SAS and GIS user group meetings according to Fellow interest
- Attend weekly progress meeting with mentors (2-4 hr/wk as specified, minimum)
- Attend and make at least one presentation in a learning session at DPH or with a partner organization
- Attend weekly public health seminars at University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UWSMPH) as applicable
- Choose one or more epidemiologic surveillance, program evaluation, or policy development projects and follow it/them from development to investigation to data collection to analysis to report or manuscript completion
- Become comfortable with indicator development, database linkage, GIS mapping, and evidence-based public health
- Participate in policy development and implementation

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

In addition to the mentors, the fellow will have access to statistical and data analysis support through other epidemiologists, the FHS Data Team, the Office of Health Informatics, the CDC MCH Epidemiology Program, and nearby university training, staff, and resources. Datasets to which the fellow will have access include, but are not limited to:

- Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA) data
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- Youth Risk Behavior System
- Vital statistics data (birth, death, fetal death, linked infant birth/death files)
- Maternal Registry (linked births to the same mother across time)
- Hospital discharge and emergency department data
- Medicaid claims data
- Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)
- Wisconsin Family Health Survey
- Wisconsin Violent Death Reporting System
- Child Death Review Case Reporting System

Software to which the fellow will have access include but are not limited to:

- SAS
- ArcGIS software
- Tableau

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**Projects**

**Surveillance Activity Title: High-quality Perinatal Care Baseline Report**

*Surveillance Activity Description:*

Wisconsin has selected "High-quality Perinatal Care" as one of its focus areas for the MCH Program for 2021-2025. Multiple partners in Wisconsin have a vested interest in the quality of care that Wisconsin women receive before, during, and after pregnancy, including the Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Perinatal Quality Collaborative, Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care, the Maternal Mortality Review Team, and the University of Wisconsin's new Prevention Research Center. The Fellow will have the opportunity to utilize multiple data sources to produce a comprehensive baseline assessment of preconception, prenatal, perinatal, and postpartum care in the state, including birth records, hospital discharge data, physician licensure (specialty) lists, the Linked Birth Outcomes Surveillance System (LBOSS), Maternal Mortality Review Findings, and Medicaid claims data. Aspects of this work could include: describing what types of providers Wisconsin mothers are seeing for their prenatal care and deliveries; utilizing GIS to understand patterns of transfer for women around the time of delivery; and assessing the level of obstetric care delivered by critical access hospitals.

*Surveillance Activity Objectives:*

Objectives:

- Become familiar with key perinatal datasets available in Wisconsin
- Describe the current availability of high-quality perinatal care in the state

Deliverables: a report along with an accompanying presentation of key findings

*Surveillance Activity Impact:*

Report findings will be used to inform efforts of the Title V MCH Program and Maternal and Infant Mortality Prevention Program, and disseminated to key partners, such as the Wisconsin Perinatal Quality Collaborative, for their use.

**Surveillance System Evaluation Title: Maternal Transfer**

*Surveillance System Evaluation Description:*

DHS and the Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care are conducting an assessment in 2023 to understand the obstetric and neonatal level of care capacity of all birthing facilities in the state. Assuring that all deliveries occur at a facility equipped to deliver risk-appropriate care may at times require maternal transfer before delivery. While maternal transfer is documented in both vital records and hospital discharge data, the two sources have relatively low agreement. This surveillance evaluation will examine how well each of these sources is able to identify maternal transfer, characteristics of transfers identified in each data source, reasons for discordance, a recommendation for how to best track maternal transfers, and suggestions for measure improvement.

*Surveillance System Objectives:*

Objectives: understand the quality of existing measures of maternal transfer

Deliverables: a surveillance evaluation report and presentation, along with recommendations for ongoing measurement of maternal transfers

*Surveillance System Impact:*

Improved measurement of maternal transfers will help to inform and track efforts to assure a strong maternal transfer network as part of a high-quality perinatal care system for the state.

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**Major Project Title: Factors Contributing to Inequity in Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in Wisconsin**

*Major Project Description:*

Previous reports on maternal mortality and morbidity in Wisconsin have described stark inequities by race, with African American women having five times the pregnancy-related mortality ratio and nearly two times the rate of severe complications compared to non-Hispanic White women in Wisconsin. However, these analyses have not assessed the factors contributing to these inequities. The major project will include an in-depth analysis and reporting of these inequities, including a cause-specific analysis of maternal deaths and preterm births; an examination of prevention recommendations needed to reduce inequities; and linkage to additional data sources (census, justice, education, and local health care and other resources) to provide a picture of the socioeconomic community context in which maternal deaths occur. The fellow will have the opportunity to work with internal, external, and community partners in the development of this project and dissemination of the findings. Additionally, the fellow will be able to design multiple dissemination products, including presentations, reports, and infographics. This project will be influential for public health practice, policymaking, and community-based efforts to reduce racial health inequities in Wisconsin.

*Major Project Objectives:*

Objectives: identify and describe the root causes of inequities in maternal mortality and morbidity in Wisconsin

Deliverables: data report and accompanying presentation

*Major Project Impact:*

Report findings will be used to inform efforts of the Title V MCH Program and Maternal and Infant Mortality Prevention Program, and disseminated to key partners, such as Wisconsin ACOG and the MMR Impact Team, for their use.

**Additional Project #1 Title: Qualitative Analysis of Maternal Mortality Review Recommendations**

**Project #1 Type: Surveillance Activity**

*Project #1 Description:*

One possible additional project for the Fellow would be to analyze the recommendations produced by the Maternal Mortality Review Team (MMRT), which produces recommendations for each preventable pregnancy-associated death reviewed by the team. Currently, the MMRT recommendations library houses over 300 recommendations made by the Team in recent years. These recommendations are designed to prevent future deaths to people who were pregnant or recently pregnant at the time of death. This project would allow the Fellow to design and conduct a qualitative analysis on these recommendations, as well as create a dissemination plan to ensure its results reach the appropriate audiences to prevent future deaths.

*Project #1 Objectives and Expected Deliverables:*

Objectives: identify the most common themes in the recommendations made by the MMRT

Deliverables: qualitative analysis report and accompanying presentation

*Project #1 Impact:*

Findings will be used by the MMR Impact Team and will be disseminated to key partners working to prevent future maternal deaths.

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**Additional Project #2 Title: Maternal Mortality Review Dashboard**

**Project #2 Type: Surveillance Activity**

*Project #2 Description:*

As part of a recent collaboration with the Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), the Maternal Mortality Review program is working on increasing transparency around maternal mortality data and attempting to release more real-time information related to the program. This project would give the Fellow the opportunity to create a dashboard with basic information related to the MMR program and pregnancy-associated and related deaths. This dashboard would use program data and could be designed using Tableau or other similar software. This project would be done in consultation with MMR leadership as well as BMMA.

*Project #2 Objectives and Expected Deliverables:*

Objectives: identify key indicators for the maternal mortality program

Deliverables: maternal mortality dashboard

*Project #2 Impact:*

Increased transparency of maternal mortality data and enhanced the ability of partners to use the information to prevent future maternal death.

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

The fellow will participate in ICS training and certification activities and will be assigned a specific role in the event of an incident, such as an environmental spill, pandemic flu outbreak, fire, weather, or other emergency, especially as it affects the MCH population. If interested, the fellow could also identify a preparedness project focusing on special populations, such as children, pregnant women, CYSHCN, individuals with chronic diseases and disabilities, low income populations, or those with limited English proficiency. Previous fellows have had the opportunity to participate in trainings, contribute to responses at federal and state levels, and attend table top and field exercises. Additionally, Wisconsin has been working to improve the readiness of MCH staff to participate in preparedness and response efforts, and the fellow will have a role in continuing these efforts. The time allocation is flexible based on the fellow's interests.

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

As soon as a new CSTE fellow starts in Wisconsin, we connect them to our colleagues in the Bureau of Communicable Diseases, who have also hosted multiple CSTE Applied Epi Fellows. This way the BCD team is able to reach out to the fellow as opportunities arise to participate in an outbreak investigation. Activities generally include participating in outbreak team meetings, conducting interviews, creating line lists and analyses, and writing up investigation reports. Fellows usually shift to working primarily on the outbreak when assigned, often for 1-2 weeks. In the past fellows have worked on investigations such as a miscarriage cluster, illness due to raw milk, and responses for flu, Zika, and COVID-19.

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

It is not currently anticipated that the fellow will have a direct role in the COVID-19 response. However, there will be opportunities to work on projects directly relating to COVID-19 and maternal health, including examining the impact of the pandemic on maternal mortality and morbidity and working with external partners to understand vaccine uptake during pregnancy. In 2021 Wisconsin observed an increase in COVID-19 deaths to individuals who were pregnant or had recently delivered, and these cases will be reviewed by the MMR team in late 2023.

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

The Wisconsin Maternal Mortality Review Program has been focusing on equity in a number of ways over the past year, and the fellow will have a key role in these activities. Through an ongoing partnership with CDC and the Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), the MMR Program is working on implementing recommendations from BMMA's Sharing Power with Communities report. These efforts include diversifying MMRT membership, improving data dissemination and communications products, increasing transparency, and reducing inequities in maternal outcomes. Additional training and opportunities for health equity work are also available through Health Equity Teams at the Bureau and Division levels.