

ID: 86843975

Infectious Diseases - Host Site Description

New Jersey Department of Health

Assignment Location: Trenton, US-NJ
New Jersey Department of Health
Division of Syndemic and Substance Use Services- HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Services

Primary Mentor: Danica Kuncio, MPH
Director-HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Services
New Jersey Department of Health

Secondary Mentor: Greta Anschuetz, MPH
Assistant Commissioner-Division of Syndemic and Substance Use Services
New Jersey Department of Health

Work Environment

Hybrid

Assignment Description

The CSTE Fellow will be assigned to the HIV Surveillance and Epidemiology Services Unit, supporting all active and passive surveillance activities for HIV in NJ. Under the supervision of the primary supervisor and other research scientist staff, the Fellow will support data quality and assurance programming. This will include supporting the data management of primary investigations, stored in a REDCap database, as well as data quality projects using multiple data sources and databases. For example, the Fellow will be tasked with performing and importing data matches with other disease areas and resources such as STDs, viral hepatitis, and other syndemic groups. The Fellow will also support routine dissemination of data to community groups through reports, presentations, and data dashboards.

Through routine and special projects the Fellow will become proficient in SAS (if not already so), by learning to code using large and often complex datasets under the guidance of Senior Epidemiologists. The Fellow will also learn to think critically and troubleshoot data collected as a part of routine surveillance activities. They will work as a part of the HIV Epi and Surveillance team, to improve data quality and improve the utility of HIV surveillance data in NJ.

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

NJDOH will provide a SAS and Tableau licenses to the Fellow. The Fellow will be provided access to the Enhanced HIV/AIDS Reporting System (eHARS) and a REDCap database, in which the HIV program houses surveillance data and tracking information to ensure timely completion of surveillance activities. In addition, other software programs will be made available upon request. The Fellow will also have access to The Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS), New Jersey's electronic, web-enabled system where public health partners statewide can instantly report and track incidences of communicable diseases. HIV Partner Services data is stored in CDRSS and the Unit will be working to fully integrate HIV surveillance into CDRSS during the Fellow's tenure.

The Fellow will use SAS for basic and moderately complex analyses, leveraging existing CDC and NJ DOH codes, as well as training from the supervisors and other senior epidemiologists.

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Projects

Surveillance Activity Title: Support HIV Surveillance Investigation Data Management

Surveillance Activity Description:

The Fellow will support the maintenance and use of the REDCap database to track HIV surveillance investigations. They will utilize SAS code, manual review, and REDCap processes to assign, track, and report on HIV investigations. They will perform primary data management roles to ensure quality and timely completion of HIV investigations.

Surveillance Activity Objectives:

1. Understand flow of HIV data and investigations in eHARS and REDCap.
2. Utilize SAS and manual techniques to manage REDCap data.
3. Run and modify reports for REDCap to support data management and investigation completion.
4. Advise process improvements as necessary.

Surveillance Activity Impact:

Increased timeliness and completeness of HIV surveillance investigations.

Surveillance System Evaluation Title: Sensitivity of HIV Not in Care Measure

Surveillance System Evaluation Description:

The HIV Surveillance data is used to assess what people living with HIV are not receiving HIV care services. The Fellow will use multiple methods to assess the sensitivity of this measure to assess who is not in care (NIC). These methods will include cross referencing other databases, performing medical chart abstractions, and utilizing other sources of data collected by DSSUS for previously unreported or discrepant data with that which is in eHARS. The Fellow will perform a sensitivity analysis of data in eHARS used to measure NIC compared to additional data acquired from additional sources.

Surveillance System Objectives:

1. Understand ELR, reporting regulations, and data flow for HIV surveillance.
2. Use data matching and SAS programming to identify gaps in NIC measure.
3. Review medical charts as necessary.
4. Perform a sensitivity analysis of NIC.

Surveillance System Impact:

Resources for linkage to care, federal and state funding, and other programming rely heavily on state assessments of who is out of care for their HIV. Knowing that there are limitations and gaps to our current measurements means that the allocation of time and resources in NJ may be misplaced. This project will help refine our HIV Out of Care estimates, and improve the data system and processes moving forward.

Major Project Title: Medical Monitoring Project Profile

Major Project Description:

The Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) has been a CDC-funded project for the past 25 years, focused on identifying characteristics, access to care, and other details about people living with HIV in NJ. The Fellow will utilize the past five years of MMP data to identify trends and characteristics of participants. The Fellow will help identify gaps and opportunities for Division-wide programming to address barriers to care and positive outcomes for people living with HIV.

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Major Project Objectives:

1. Understand the protocols of the MMP project.
2. Create a basic report format for MMP to be run on an annual basis.
3. Create and complete an analysis to explore and utilize MMP data.
4. Make at least 2 recommendations for opportunities for improvement in HIV care in NJ.

Major Project Impact:

Improved utilization of HIV Epi and Surveillance Unit data. Data-informed programming recommendations to HIV Prevention and NJ DOH teams.

Additional Project #1 Title: HIV and Aging Profile

Project #1 Type: Major Project

Project #1 Description:

With the advent of safe, effective, and widely available HIV treatment, people are living with HIV longer than in the past. Understanding the characteristics, experiences, and needs of this aging population is critical to maintain adequate services in NJ. The Fellow will leverage HIV surveillance data, SAS, and any additional required resources to create and HIV and Aging Profile for NJ that can be used internally at NJ DOH and shared with external partners.

Project #1 Objectives and Expected Deliverables:

1. Clean and analyze HIV surveillance data to define and understand HIV among older people in NJ.
2. Measure trends and identify opportunities for public health improvement projects.
3. Create an internal report to inform NJ DOH programming.
4. Create a report for external dissemination.

Project #1 Impact:

Improved understanding and programming for the aging population with HIV in NJ. Improved health outcomes for these communities.

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

DSSUS will collaborate with the Communicable Disease Service to ensure the fellow has an outbreak investigation role as they have more outbreak investigations than our Division. This collaboration has worked in the past and is supported by the State Epidemiologist. In addition, if an HIV outbreak is detected during the fellow's tenure, they will have the opportunity to participate in the outbreak investigation.

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

The HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Services Unit performs Cluster Detection analyses on a monthly basis, spearheading many response activities for any cluster or outbreak discovered. DSSUS performs numerous activities once a cluster/outbreak is detected to collect and analyze additional information, coordinate with community partners, the HIV Planning Group, and the general public. The Fellow will assist in secondary data collection and analysis during responses, attending all interdisciplinary team meetings, and supporting the drafting of communications with internal and external partners.