QUARTERLY REPORT
January 1, 2005 – March 31, 2005
Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health
TS-0734

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Introduction

This report covers the second quarter of Year 4 of the Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project, TS-0734, January 1 through March 31, 2005. This project continues one year past the original funding dates through a no cost extension.

Adherence and Progress towards Achieving Goals and Objectives

1. Hathy Simpson, Project Coordinator, met with the Electronic Resources Librarian at the Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School, in January 2005. We developed a page on the project’s Web site, Evidence-Based Resources for Public Health Practice Available for Free Online Access, http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph/ebresources.cfm (Attachment 1). Other updates to the project’s Web site include updating the public health journals list at http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph/journallist.cfm and links to related Projects. The project’s Web site had 2125 visitor sessions in January, 2443 visitor sessions in February, and 3097 visitor sessions in March 2005 (Attachment 2, Usage Statistics Chart for the Project’s Web Site). This work relates to Objective 2: To identify any existing preliminary models or products for assessing the quality of public health literature and to Objective 6: To develop a set of “lessons learned” and recommendations for developing a “preferred” model (database, electronic publication, and Web site).

2. The project has received interest from the public health community in the U.S. and abroad. We received and responded to inquiries about the project this quarter from the Madison County Health Department, Richmond, KY; and the New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice, Durham, NH. The project and its resources were cited in articles published in the Journal of Public Health and the Journal of the Medical Library Association:

3. We submitted an abstract, Enhancing Evidence-Based Information Access to Inform Public Health Practice, for presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, November 5-9, 2005, New Orleans, LA (Attachment 3). This relates to Objective 1: To identify at least three models of evidence-based literature approaches to clinical medicine and review their applicability to the literature of public health; Objective 2 as described above; Objective 3: To evaluate the models/products for effectiveness; identify their pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses; scalability; usefulness; and Objective 4: To identify a narrow subject area and pilot test it within the models (products) identified for applicability with public health.

4. We worked with librarians at the National Library of Medicine who are working to develop Public Health filters for PubMed. We provided a list of possible words and phrases to use to
search for journal articles on model public health programs, best practices, and other evidence-based publications.

5. We met with Dr. Roger Luckmann and Dr. Nancy La Pelle who are serving as expert consultants for the project on January 20, February 3 and 27, and March 10 and 24, 2005. We discussed the findings of the informant interviews and prepared for a presentation and focus group with participants at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) in the Division of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Family and Community Health.

6. We presented a review of our findings to staff previously interviewed in the Division of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Family and Community Health, MDPH on March 23, 2005. We provided handouts and presented a summary of our findings from the informant interviews from public health professionals in the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and the Division of Community Health Promotion at MDPH. (Attachments 4 - 6). We presented examples of the identified models of information resources as well as a hypothetical model that addressed many of the expressed needs (Attachments 7 and 8). The participants of the focus group stated their preferences for information accessing models and features. The participants stated the need to access information beyond the medical and traditional public health domains to meet their emerging needs. These areas include return on investment strategies, social marketing and advertising, worksite behavior modification, health insurance, health communication in specific venues, and built environmental interventions. We are in the process of writing a paper for publication based on our research findings. This work relates to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described above.

Preliminary Plans for the Subsequent Quarter

1. Continue to work with Dr. Roger Luckmann and Dr. Nancy La Pelle to determine the information needs and preferences of public health professionals. We plan to develop a presentation on the project’s findings, *Enhancing Evidence-Based Information Access to Inform Public Health Practice*, for presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, November 2005, New Orleans, LA (Attachment 3). The presentation will be based on the findings of the informant interviews of public health professionals from the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, MDPH and the Division of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Family and Community Health, MDPH. This work relates to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described above.

2. Write a research paper for publication on the findings of the qualitative study at MDPH. This work relates to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described above.

3. Formulate recommendations for effective ways to organize, synthesize, and disseminate information needed by public health professionals to make informed decisions for practice. We will continue to review the findings of the informant interviews at MDPH and examine the previously identified evidence-based models and a hypothetical model (Attachment 8) to determine if any of these models or characteristics of these models can be applied for accessing evidence-based public health information. We will send a final report with our recommendations to the CDC and to the ATPM. This work relates to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4 as described above.
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4. Continue to update and post our findings on the project’s Web site, [http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph](http://library.umassmed.edu/ebpph) including public health journals and associated knowledge domains of public health, the top 25 public health journals by impact factor, public health databases, and evidence-based resources for public health practice. We plan to match the identified public health databases with the knowledge domains of public health and create a drop-down menu of public health databases by knowledge domain on the project’s Web site. This relates to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6 as described above.

5. Continue to work with Dr. Sharon Telleen, project consultant, on writing a paper for publication about our work on identifying the knowledge domains of public health and compiling a list of public health journals classified by public health knowledge domain. We plan to invite public health experts and health sciences librarians to review the list of public health journals. We will update the list of public health journals classified by knowledge domain and the list of the top 25 public health journals by impact factor. This works relates to Objectives 1 and 7 of the research plan.

6. Match the identified knowledge domains with NLM Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). We will add a “Hints for Searching” section to the project Web site and include MeSH for retrieving published public health literature. We will also formulate searches for PubMed to retrieve free online articles from PubMed Central for each public health knowledge domain. This relates to Objective 5: To develop a “Hints for Searching” section on the project’s Web site. This section will include NLM Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) for retrieving published public health literature.

7. Begin to look for other sources of funding to continue and expand these project research efforts past October 2005.

**Problems, Risks, Questions, Concerns That Have Impacted Progress**

Public Health is a multidisciplinary field ranging broadly across the health care spectrum. In order to develop an evidence-based tool appropriate to public health, it has been necessary to identify the knowledge domains of public health and the public health literature and databases associated with each domain. These tasks were not part of the original research plan but are necessary to undertake in order to create an evidence-based tool appropriate to public health.

There is disagreement amongst public health experts, associations, accrediting bodies, etc. as to what the knowledge domains of public health should be. Coming to consensus amongst project advisors and constituents has been a difficult, labor-intensive task. However, we feel we have made substantial progress in this endeavor and that it was worth the time and effort spent. The work we have put into this task will ultimately benefit the project outcome.

There are various ways to define “evidence” in public health. Public health evidence may include information from expert opinion, journal literature, books, government and foundation reports, conference proceedings, public health organization newsletters, listservs, and Internet sources.
We will need to investigate further what constitutes public health evidence.

Despite these issues, we feel that we have made substantial progress on this project. We have successfully met Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the Research Plan and we plan to pursue Objective 5. Now that we are in the process of analyzing the results of the key informant interviews of public health professionals, we expect to make rapid progress in meeting the remaining objectives for this project. Preliminary work suggests the needs are quite varied and more interviews than previous expected need to be conducted in order to derive meaningful results. However, we expect to continue making progress in meeting the remaining objectives for this project.

This project has sparked international interest from Canada, Australia, Israel, and China, and we will be thinking about ways of collaborating with others interested in this topic in the coming year. The challenge will be finding ways to do so, despite the distance. In addition, we will be looking for continuation funding from other sources to continue and expand this project.

Appendix


Attachment 2: Usage Statistics Chart for the Project’s Web Site

Attachment 3: Abstract Submitted for Presentation at the 2005 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting: Enhancing Evidence-Based Information Access to Inform Public Health Practice

Attachment 4: Handouts for Meeting with the Division of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Family and Community Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, March 23, 2005.
  - About the Project
  - Evidence-Based Resources for Public Health Practice Available for Free Online Access

Attachment 5: Community Health Promotion Summary Analysis

Attachment 6: Presentation to Division of Community Health Promotion, Bureau of Family and Community Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health,: Improving Access to Credible and Relevant Information for Public Health Professionals: A Qualitative Study of Information Needs in Two Domains of Public Health.

Attachment 7: Examples of Identified Models of Information Resources
  - HP2010 Information Access Project
  - Journal Watch
  - National Guideline Clearinghouse
  - Guide to Community Prevention Services
• UpToDate
• TB-Update Mailing List
• Evidence-Based Health Promotion

Attachment 8: Public Health Information Access Model