QUARTERLY REPORT
January 1, 2002 – March 31, 2002

Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health

TS-0734

Principal Investigator:
Elaine R. Martin
Director of Library Services
elaine.martin@umassmed.edu
508-856-2399

Project Coordinator:
E. Hatheway Simpson
e.hatheway.simpson@umassmed.edu
508-856-3594

The Lamar Soutter Library
University of Massachusetts Medical School
55 Lake Avenue North
Worcester, MA 01655
Introduction

This report covers the second quarter of the Evidence-Based Practice for Public Health Project, January 1, 2002 through March 31, 2002.

Adherence and Progress Towards Achieving Goals and Objectives

We purchased computer and office supplies for the Project Coordinator, Hathy Simpson. We were fortunate to be able to use a computer that our library already owned, so we requested that the money originally allocated to purchase a computer be put towards buying computer communications equipment and towards project-related travel expenses. We received approval of this request via e-mail from Jocelyn Rankin, the Technical Advisor of the project, on January 28, 2002, (Attachment 1, Approval of Budget Revisions).

We sent a letter to Stacia Hall, the Assistant Director of the ATPM/CDC CA Subawards Program on February 7, 2002 requesting a carry over of unexpended contract funds (Attachment 2, Request for Carry Over of Unexpended Funds). The reason for the request was because the project funds were awarded for the budget period of September 30, 2001 through September 29, 2002. However, we did not receive the final subaward agreement until December 28, 2001. This resulted in a three-month delay to use contract funds and begin the project. We requested a carry over of the unexpended funds until December 31, 2002.

We met with Dr. Roger Luckmann, Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, an expert advisor to the project, on January 23, 2002, March 6, 2002, March 15, 2002, and March 27, 2002. We discussed the project and preliminary tasks we would undertake, as well as tasks related to the specified objectives outlined in the research plan. We discussed the need to determine available sources of public health literature, and decided that two of our preliminary tasks for the project would be to compile a list of public health journals and a list of bibliographic public health databases. An additional preliminary task we identified is to determine what the core areas of public health are and outline the domain of public health. We discussed the need to determine what area of public health we will focus on for the project, and to find out what the information needs of public health practitioners are in the chosen public health subject area. We will need to determine who wants access to evidence-based public health information, the public health literature sources available to obtain quality information, and the format that would work best to deliver evidence-based information to public health practitioners.

We had two conference calls with Jocelyn Rankin, the Technical Advisor, on January 8, 2002 and March 20, 2002 to discuss the preliminary tasks we would undertake, and how these tasks related to the original objectives from the research plan. In addition, Elaine Martin, the Principal Investigator, met with Jocelyn Rankin on March 25, 2002 to review the project and its progress to date.

Elaine Martin attended the National Library of Medicine (NLM) Public Health Partnership Steering Committee Meeting on March 25, 2002 at the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda MD and presented an overview of the project. Representatives from the American Public Health
Association (APHA), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the NLM were there and reacted favorably to the project.

We created a list of the top 25 public health journals by impact factor (Attachment 3, Top 25 Public Health Journals by Impact Factor). We used the Institute of Sciences (ISI)’s *Journal Citation Reports Science Edition 2000* to rank journals in the subject category, “Public, Environmental, and Occupational Health” by impact factor. A journal’s impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year. We also determined how these journals are categorized in the National Library of Medicine’s *List of Journals Indexed in Index Medicus 2001*. We determined whether these journals are available online, and if they are available at the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in either print or in electronic form.

We created a list of 591 public health journals (Attachment 4, Public Health Journals). The list was created by combining (1) a list of the most frequently requested journals through the CDC Information Center’s Document Delivery Service; (2) the most frequently cited journals from pre-formulated search strategies of the *Healthy People 2010 Information Access Project*; and (3) the Core Public Health Journals Project draft master list. We determined if these journals are available online, and if they are available at the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in either print or in electronic form. We included Internet addresses for public health literature available for free to all users.

We created a list of public health bibliographic databases (Attachment 5, Public Health Bibliographic Databases). To create the list, we included databases listed on schools of public health library websites, the consensus from reference librarians at the CDC Information Center of bibliographic databases used for mediated searches, and publications that index or abstract articles from the *American Journal of Public Health*, the *Annual Review of Public Health*, and the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. We provided a brief description of each database and included information on how to access the database. If a database is available for free on the Internet, we listed the Internet address.

**Preliminary Plans for the Subsequent Quarter**

Preliminary plans for the subsequent quarter respond to the first four objectives of the research plan.

1. Determine what the core areas of public health are and outline the domain of public health. This will help us to choose a subject area of public health to focus on for the project. We will use the following library and public health sources to identify the domain of public health: (1) the National Library of Medicine’s Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) for “public health” and related categories; (2) the Library of Congress’s *Subject Headings for Public Health*; (3) the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) *Core Areas of Study in Public Health*; (4) the American Public Health Association’s (APHA) *Sections and Special Interest Groups Sections*; (5) the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion’s *Healthy People 2010*
focus areas; (6) health topics in the *Guide to Community Preventive Services*; (7) subjects covered in the public health textbook, *Maxcy-Rosenau-Last Public Health & Preventive Services*; (8) bureaus and programs of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; (9) subfields for the public health literature collection at the Public Health Information Services and Access (PHISA), School of Public Health, University of Michigan; and (10) collection categories of the *American Journal of Public Health*. For each subject area of public health we will identify available sources of public health information. This will include public health journals, books, and databases. We will use the previously created lists of public health journals and databases. (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.)

2. Determine what area of public health we will focus on for the project. We will use the above-described domain of public health to choose a focus area. We plan to determine what the information needs of public health practitioners are in the chosen public health subject area. (Relates to Objective 4: To identify a narrow subject area and pilot test it within the models (products) identified for applicability within public health.)

3. Search for and examine public health websites. We will look at websites that provide public health information and review them for their design elements and content in order to generate ideas for the website that we will develop for the project. We will identify any websites that provide evidence-based public health information, and identify any existing evidence-based projects aimed at assessing the quality of public health literature. (Relates to Objective 2: To identify any existing preliminary models or products for assessing the quality of public health literature.)

4. Identify at least three models of evidence-based literature approaches to clinical medicine and review their applicability to the literature of public health. Prepare an evaluative chart describing the features of each model. (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.)

5. Evaluate the identified evidence-based models for their effectiveness, and identify their pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses, etc. (Relates to Objective 3: To evaluate the models/products for effectiveness; identify their pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses; scalability; usefulness; etc.)

6. Continue to meet with Dr. Roger Luckmann, Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, who is serving as an expert advisor for the project and helping to identify and evaluate evidence-based medicine models.

7. Meet with Dr. Sharon Telleen, Research Associate Professor of the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She will serve as an expert advisor for the project.
8. Travel to the CDC Information Center in Atlanta, GA to meet with Jocelyn Rankin, the Technical Advisor of the Project, to discuss the project and plans for future work.

Problems, Risks, Questions, Concerns That Have Impacted Progress

We have found that before we begin to identify and evaluate clinical evidence-based models and review their applicability to public health literature, we have needed to do some preliminary tasks that were not part of the original research plan. These included creating inventories of public health journals and databases, and determining the core areas of the domain of public health.