

**What is the Connecticut Practice-Based Research Network?** The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health established the Connecticut Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) one of a growing number of such networks nationally, to advance public health systems and service research that will support evidence-based practice and policy. The PBRN's leadership team includes research champions from Yale University, the University of Connecticut, Southern Connecticut State University, the Institute for Community Research, and local health directors. The PBRN is supported by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

### What is Public Health Systems and Service Research?

Public health systems and service research has been defined as a newly emerging field of study that examines “the organization, financing, and delivery of public health services within communities, and the impact of these services on public health.” [1] That is, this research focuses on how structure, governance, and other factors impact the direct delivery of public health services.

### What are the Overall Goals of the PBRN?

The PBRN's overall goals are:

- To *increase understanding and appreciation* of the nature and value of applied research and of the emerging field of *public health systems and services research* (PHSSR) among governmental public health practitioners;
- To *develop and implement an applied public health research agenda* for Connecticut that reflects the major public health issues impacting the state and aligns with the priorities of practitioners operating in the governmental public health arena;
- To coalesce and harness the public health research expertise that resides in the state in *support* of *collaborative and sustained practice-based research endeavors* with an emphasis on local governmental public health;
- To *enhance the evidence base* of public health program and policy interventions

statewide and  
the practice and policy settings;

*increase application of research findings in*

- To *better position* the governmental public health system *for national accreditation* of health departments; and
- To *contribute to the national PHSSR agenda* by generating knowledge about public health practice in Connecticut that may be applicable in other settings.

**What Research is the PBRN Currently Pursuing?** The following research activities have been initiated by the PBRN:

- *Quick Strike Research: Local Responses to Public Health Funding Reductions.* Principal Investigator: David Gregorio, Ph.D. Aims to: (1) investigate the implications of public health funding reductions on the delivery of local public health programs and services, (2) investigate whether funding cuts resulted in consolidation or expansion of District Departments of Health, and (3) evaluate the extent to which state per capita funding serves as an incentive for consolidation or expansion of District Departments of Health.

- *PBRN Pilot Research: Examining the Relationship Between Local Health Department (LHD) Fee for Service Structures and Service Profile/Program Outcomes.* Principal Investigator: Debbie Humphries, Ph.D. Aims to investigate: (1) how the mix of fee revenue and other sources of revenue vary by year, (2) which factors best predict the proportion of fee revenue, controlling for rural/urban distinctions and baseline population, and (3) whether the mix of fee revenue and other sources of revenue affect services provided.

Final Reports:

[Revenue Streams and Service Delivery in Connecticut Local Health Jurisdictions: Final Report](#)

[Revenue Streams and Service Delivery in Connecticut Local Health Jurisdictions: Qualitative Analysis](#)

- *Characteristics of a Local Health Department that Support Use of Social Determinant Data to Mitigate Health Disparities.* Principal Investigators: Michael Knapp, Ph.D. and Moira

Lawson, PhD, MPH. Aims to: (1) Enhance the existing methodology of the [Health Equity Index](#) to include temporal analysis and more selective stratification methods, and (2) Study and identify the characteristics most significantly associated with a local health department's capacity to use the Health Equity Index and incorporate consideration of social determinants to address health inequities.

- *Research Implementation Award: Measuring Quality in Local Public Health Emergency Preparedness: the H1N1 Experience.* Principal Investigators: Emil Coman, Ph.D. and Steve Huleatt, MPH, RS. Aims to: (1) develop measures of quality in public health practice that are specific to the H1N1 context, (2) validate and test measures, (3) apply measures to compare quality of response to H1N1 across local health departments at different stages of the epidemic, and (4) identify factors that contribute to differential quality of response to H1N1 across the LHD sample.