Public Health Services & Systems Research: Taking the Pulse of the Field

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Public Health Services & Systems Research: Taking the Pulse of the Field

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Vicious cycles to learning systems

Limited public understanding & political support

Incoherence in missions, Complex, fragmented, variable responsibilities & expectations financing & delivery systems

Large inequities in resources & capabilities Variable productivity and efficiency

Resources incongruent with preventable disease burden

Gaps in reach & implementation of efficacious strategies Difficulties demonstrating impact, value & ROI

Translate evidence for policy and administrative decisions & advocacy

Discover causes & consequences of variation in public health delivery
Standardization vs. Customization in Public Health Delivery Systems

**Standardization**

▼ Harmful variation
▼ Wasteful variation
▼ Inequitable variation
▼ Race to the bottom

▲ Network externalities: interoperability/coordination

**Customization**

▲ Target resources to greatest needs/risks
▲ Tailor approaches to values & preferences of stakeholders
▲ Deploy unique resources & skills to their best purposes

Effectiveness  
Efficiency  
Equity
## Taking stock
### RWJF-funded PHSSR Studies: 2009-13

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Research Currently Underway

- 29 studies (3 rounds) PHSSR annual solicitation
- 7 natural experiment studies
- 8 mentored research awards
- 9 predoctoral/postdoctoral research awards
- 11 PBRN Delivery and Cost studies
- 4 Quick Strike PBRN studies

See the PHSSR Research Inventory at: http://works.bepress.com/glen_mays/145/
Diffusion of Public Health PBRNs

First cohort (December 2008 start-up)
Second cohort (January 2010 start-up)
Affiliate/Emerging PBRNs (2011-14)
PBRNs as Research Engines

- 31 networks
- 1593 local public health agencies
- 35 state agencies
- 52 academic research units
- 58 professional & community organizations
- 60 competitively awarded research projects
- 68 articles in peer-reviewed journals
- 221 presentations and conferences & meetings
- 51 reports & tools in the grey literature
Upcoming research opportunities

- PBRN Dissemination and Implementation Research to Improve Value (DIRECTIVE) awards
- Predoctoral/postdoctoral research awards
- Quick Strike research studies
- 2014 PHSSR Annual Solicitation
- AJPH Call for Papers for Supplement Issue
Advancing Methods and Measures

- Measuring volume, intensity & quality
- Measuring costs
- Measuring complexity in delivery systems and strategies
- Estimating value: health & economic effects
- Accounting for heterogeneity in effects
National Coordinating Center

Data & Measurement Development
- Periodic census surveys of local and state agencies
- National Longitudinal Survey of Public Health Systems
- Public Health Activities and Services Tracking (PHAST): compiling existing administrative data across states
- Monitoring health reform implementation & effects

Dissemination & Translation
- Weekly Work in Progress Webinars
- Open-access journal: *Frontiers in PHSSR*
- Newsletters, Podcasts, Blogs
- Briefings with policy stakeholders
Where to from here? Advancing a Culture of Health

How best to use public health delivery systems to improve population health?

- Engaging communities
- Mobilizing and steering multi-sector action
- Aligning public health and medical care
- Facilitating policy adoption & implementation
- Targeting & tailoring for equity
- Addressing social determinants
Medical Care Delivery
- Fragmentation
- Duplication
- Variability in practice
- Limited accessibility
- Episodic and reactive care
- Insensitivity to consumer values & preferences
- Limited targeting of resources to community needs

Public Health Delivery
- Fragmentation
- Variability in practice
- Resource constrained
- Limited reach
- Insufficient scale
- Limited public visibility
- Limited evidence base
- Adaptation constraints

Inefficient delivery
Inequitable outcomes
Limited population health impact
Toward a “rapid-learning system” in public health

Always Open

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