4-8-2014

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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Keeneland Conference on PHSSR • Lexington KY • 8 April 2014
Vicious cycles to learning systems

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
Public health’s role in population health

**Health System**
- Scale of operations
- Resources & expertise
- Participation incentives

**Population & Environment**
- Needs
- Preferences
- Risks
- Threats
- Resources
- Perceptions

**Public Health Agency**
- Legal authority
- Governing structure
- Leadership
- Legal authority
- Funding levels
- Staffing levels & mix
- Intergovernmental relationships

**Strategic Decisions**
- Decision Support
  - Accreditation
  - Performance measures
  - Practice guidelines

**Outputs and Outcomes**
- Reach
- Effectiveness
- Timeliness
- Adherence to EBPs
- Efficiency
- Equity

Mays et al 2009
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

In a learning health care system, research influences practice and practice influences research.

**Evaluate**
- Collect data and analyze results to show what does and does not work.

**Implement**
- Apply the plan in pilot and control settings.

**Design**
- Design care and evaluation based on evidence generated here and elsewhere.

**Adjust**
- Use evidence to influence continual improvement.

**Disseminate**
- Share results to improve care for everyone.

- Internal and External Scan
- Identify problems and potentially innovative solutions.

Internal

External
