

PROFESSIONAL POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Research Associate I
Division: Population Health and Health Policy
Department: Muskie School of Public Service
Location: Augusta, Maine
Schedule: 40 hours per week
Reports to: Research Faculty

STATEMENT OF THE JOB: The Research Associate I works with a team of USM epidemiologists dedicated to building public health surveillance and epidemiology capacity at USM and the Maine Center of Disease Control and Prevention (the state's public health agency). The Research Associate I is responsible for aspects of creating, implementing, and sustaining systems for public health surveillance within the Maine CDC. This includes assessing the burden and trends of health-related outcomes, including morbidity, mortality, natality, cancer incidence, and risk/protective factors in the general population and among sub-populations. In addition, the RA I will collaborate on epidemiologic and evaluation studies in program-specific areas. This position is embedded at the Maine CDC's Data, Research, and Vital Statistics Program (DRVS) and will work primarily with the Maine CDC's Maine Cancer Registry (MCR) within that program.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Creating and analyzing program-specific indicators for programs.
- Analyzing and providing data for surveillance needs, such as for data requests or program-specific indicators, on a timely basis.
- Designing and maintaining continuous surveillance systems of morbidity, mortality, incidence, quality of life, health services, and risk factors of public health importance.
- Developing surveillance documents and plans.
- Assisting in the evaluation of public health data systems and programs.
- Performing complex statistical analyses using multivariate methods, interpreting those results, and providing written summaries of public health data for use in program planning, policy development, annual reports, grant applications, and peer-reviewed journals.
- Liaising with public health, health care, and/or grant staff to promote communication and collaboration.
- Analyzing cancer incidence and mortality data, interpreting results, and communicating findings through a variety of media and venues to the Department and others. This includes preparing an annual special topic report for the Maine Cancer Registry annual cancer snapshot and assisting in preparing abstracts and presentations for conferences and meetings.
- Leading epidemiologic analyses related to public inquiries about possible cancer concerns, including communicating with those concerned, analyzing data, interpreting findings in the context of known cancer etiology and specific environment of the concern, preparing and giving presentations for the Maine Cancer Inquiry group, and preparing written responses to constituents. Working with the Department, medical providers, public health departments, civic leaders and others to identify possible areas of concern that may need further study to

determine if the incidence or mortality data indicates the possibility of a greater than expected number of cancer cases or deaths.

- Leading annual data linkages for the Maine Cancer Registry with Indian Health Service, Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, the National Death Index, and others as needed.
- Geocoding Maine Cancer Registry data using the Texas A&M Geocoder tool or other adopted tool, reviewing geocode results for quality control, and preparing write-back files.
- Assisting with annual data submissions of Maine Cancer Registry data to the U.S. CDC and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries.
- Analyzing and interpreting data from additional sources maintained by DRVS, including but not limited to vital statistics, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey (PRAMS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS).
- Assisting with funder reporting requirements, including written reports and preparing and giving presentations for funder site visits.

SPECIAL ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES*:

(Eliminate any that do not apply)

- Ability to provide own transportation (fully-insured vehicle), provide proof of a valid driver's license, and compliance with Maine law regarding vehicle insurance.
- Control over, access to, or security of restricted levels of information technology systems that would allow the person to harm the IT systems or the information contained in them.
- Work on federally funded projects.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: None

BUDGET RESPONSIBILITIES: None

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO JOB PERFORMANCE:

1. Presents and prepares reports and articles on study findings for state and national conferences or publications, as well as professional and peer review journals.
2. Presents to professional and lay audiences on public health surveillance topics.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTACTS:

Internal: USM epidemiology team; faculty; additional research staff

External: Maine CDC staff, including the DRVS and MCR directors; federal funders

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

Required:

- Demonstrated mastery of basic principles of epidemiology and public health.
- Demonstrated knowledge of public health surveillance systems.
- Ability to identify the need for applied epidemiologic studies.
- Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills, including knowledge of major computer-based statistical packages, preferably SAS or R.
- Possess an attitude that fosters a respectful, non-threatening workplace environment.

- Demonstrated ability to communicate and work effectively with a broad spectrum of administrators, researchers and other professionals.
- Demonstrated ability and experience performing complex data analysis using large population-based data sets.

Preferred:

- Demonstrated capacity and knowledge of cancer epidemiology, including understanding of cancer etiology and experience using SEER*Stat, Joinpoint, and other specific statistical programs for analysis of cancer incidence and mortality data.
- Familiarity with central cancer registry operations.
- Knowledge of and familiarity with principles of surveillance system evaluation and health equity.
- Experience operating, evaluating, and analyzing data from public health surveillance systems including vital statistics, cancer registries, and population surveys.
- Experience designing, planning, and implementing epidemiologic studies.
- Knowledge of population-based programs as they relate to the promotion of health and quality of life.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Required:

- **Master's Degree in Epidemiology or related field, preferably from an accredited school of public health and a minimum of two years of related work experience**
- **Strong quantitative data analytic skills, including knowledge of major computer-based statistical packages, preferably SAS or R.**
- **Demonstrated ability to communicate and work with a broad spectrum of administrators, researchers and other professionals.**
- **Demonstrated knowledge of public health surveillance systems.**
- **Demonstrated mastery of basic principles of epidemiology and public health.**

NOTE: All individuals who are recommended to fill and subsequently offered a position with **special essential responsibilities as checked above, or other licensure or certification, shall have the following additional applicable background screening completed (in addition to regular and standard background screening) based on the responsibilities of the position: Credit history screening, and/or Sex offender registry screening, and/or Federal criminal history screening and/or License/certification verification.*

Date Approved: 10-2020

Date Revised:

Job Family: 7902

Salary Band: 04

Unit: UMPSA

CUPA code:

Employee:

Position #: 00024670