What Public Health Practice says about Data Gaps for Advancing Rural Health Equity

National Committee on Vital & Health Statistics
April 1, 2021

Betty Bekemeier, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN
Professor, UW School of Nursing
Director Northwest Center for PH Practice, UW School of PH
bettybek@uw.edu
A Functional Local Health Department...

- “….addresses health disparities”
- “uses and contributes to”… the evidence-base for PH practice
- “provides expertise” in communities regarding PH issues

(NACCHO, 2005)
Evidence-based Decision-making Lacking

FIGURE Factors that influence resource allocation decisions.

(Bekemeier, et al., 2013)
Public Health Administrative Data

2800 local health departments in all 50 states

measure their activities & services differently
but need standardized, comparable data for
Rural Public Health Data Gaps

- Limited access
- Data unavailable
- Data not of sufficient quality
- Limited resources and experience
- Data needs are local and variable

COVID-19 Interviews with rural PH leaders
- Overwhelmed by data volume
- Data trustworthiness
- Lack of capacity for assessing, ensuring quality, communicating
- Lack of data for underserved groups

(Bekemeier, B., Park, S, Backonja, U, Ornelas, I, Turner, A., & 2019)
The PH Activities & Services Tracking (PHAST) Model

- Practice
- Research
- Bridging the gap

(Bekemeier & Park, 2018)
Practice: Data Need & Use

From PH Practitioners: Need for

- Standardized comparable data
  - To allocate resources
  - To advocate, educate
- ‘Accessible’ data
  - To identify, address PH equity
  - To communicate with decision makers

Evidence-Based Practice

- Provoke research question
- Support data-driven decision-making

Data Need & Use
- Need:
  - Lack of aligned measure & data
  - Lack of expertise
- Use:
  - Discover PH need
  - Communication with decision-maker

Data Generation & Analysis
- Standardized PH measure system
- Collection & integration of data
- Maintaining valid & reliable data quality
- Finding information & evidence

Data Access
- Web access & pipeline
- Data Visualization
- Coaching & Training for use of data

Input data

Bridging the gap

Provide support for designing system & teaching-learning

Improve data collection, maintenance, & quality
Research: Data Generation & Analysis

From Practice-based Researchers: Need to

• Develop standardized PH data
• Increase support for data collection & data integration
• Incentivize quality data collection
• Producing information & evidence to support practice
Bridging the Gap: Data Access

- **Reduce the gap between practice & research**
- **Develop supports:**
  - Online data capture tools,
  - Linking datasets
  - User-centered data dashboard,
  - Training to facilitate data use
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Gaps in Addressing Equity</th>
<th>Modifiable SHARE-NW Solutions to Help Address Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Limited Access                | • Link **datasets**  
• Create **dashboard** with multiple data sources  
  • Include **visualization** and easy-to-populate **infographics** for communicating |
| Data Unavailable              | • Training to **collect** data, **use** available data creatively |
| Data Quality                  | • **Incentivize** better data collection through data use  
• Training  
  • To evaluate data for its **utility**  
  • To evaluate when data are “**good enough**”  
  • About **alternative** sources of data |
| Limited Capacity for Data Use | • Training  
  • To lead community **conversations** about data  
  • How to navigate and use a data **dashboard** |
| Heterogeneity of Rural Jurisdictions | • Training  
  • To **compare** data with peers  
  • To collect/identify **alternative** sources of data |
| Address & Identify Health Inequities | • Training to use an **equity lens** in decision-making |
Larger Lessons Learned for Rural PH Data

- **PH Administration** data for assuring equitable resource allocation
  - Standardization
  - Substantial resources and time
  - Coordination
  - Mandates, incentives

- **Public health status** data for addressing local inequities
  - Data accessibility
  - Training—data use, understanding, collection, sharing, engagement with small populations to collect/share data
  - Resources for oversampling and data collection
REFERENCES


