

PHHS BLOCK GRANT SUCCESS STORY 2016

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

EPIDEMIOLOGISTS GAIN HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE.

Issue: You may not know what an epidemiologist is, but your life has probably been impacted by one. That's because epidemiologists are scientists who study the cause, patterns, and effects of disease in populations. The recent outbreak of tuberculosis at your local high school? ... investigated by an epidemiologist. Data on the growing problem of obesity in children? ... collected and analyzed by an epidemiologist.

- California needs epidemiologists to investigate diseases at local and state levels to keep diseases under control.
- Epidemiologists attend graduate school, acquiring a Master's degree or PhD, but often receive little real-world experience as part of their training. Programs that provide hands-on training for epidemiologists help create a public health workforce that is ready to protect the health of communities.

Intervention: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) runs the California Epidemiologic Investigation Service Fellowship Program (Cal-EIS) to provide 1-2 years of hands-on training to recent public health school graduates interested in a career in epidemiology.¹

- PHHS Grant Block funds are critical to the existence and success of Cal-EIS; no other federal or state funds are available to administer the program.
- Cal-EIS Fellows work at local health departments (LHDs) across California and at the state level, receiving close mentorship from experienced epidemiologists. LHDs and state programs partner with Cal-EIS to provide a stipend to Fellows working at their agencies.
- Fellows have the opportunity to work on a variety of public health projects during their training.
- In 2015, and again in 2016, 13 Fellows participated in a hands-on, local-level field experience: a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) that addressed health impacts of the California drought in Mariposa County. A CASPER allows rapid assessment of a community's status and need in a disaster setting.
- A collaboration between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDPH, and the Mariposa County Health Department, this CASPERs gave Cal-EIS Fellows opportunities to interview local residents about water use, hygiene, food affordability, behavioral health effects, and impacts of the drought on chronic diseases.

Impact: Cal-EIS plays a critical role in protecting the health of Californians by graduating qualified epidemiologists.

- Of the 151 Cal-EIS graduates since 1989, 78% are employed in public health agencies.
- Block Grant dollars have leveraged over \$2 million in state and county funds over the last 5 years, for Fellow stipends and travel support, while providing communities with epidemiology support.
- The Cal-EIS Fellows who participated in the CASPERs in Mariposa County gained valuable field experience and contributed to a better understanding of how drought impacts the health of local residents.