

# MCH PRACTICE FELLOWSHIP

## 2024-2025 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

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## Introduction to Project Management

### *Accompany Doula Care*



**Supervisor & Mentor:** Christina Gebel, MPH (direct report)

[christina@accompanydoulacare.com](mailto:christina@accompanydoulacare.com)

**Location:** Remote – virtual office

**Background:** Accompany Doula Care (also referred to as "Accompany") is a Boston-based non-profit and professional home for community doulas focused on reducing health inequities and improving birth outcomes in MassHealth members through payers and two hospitals.

Accompany was co-founded in 2016 by six doulas, three of whom are BUSPH alumni, who sought to fully integrate doulas into the healthcare system, such that every birthing person would have access to doula services, particularly those populations who experience healthcare inequities and could most benefit from doula care but may face barriers to accessing doula support. Accompany strives to center the client in his/her/their preferences for qualities and demographics in doula services, including race, ethnicity, and primary language spoken by matching the client with one of our over 20 community doulas who speak a variety of languages.

Accompany is seeking an MCH fellow to assist with social media presence, communications (newsletter and website), client-facing evaluation tools (in partnership with SisterWeb in San Francisco through Compyle), building an onboarding and continuing education experience around the intersection of birth work and health equity (Google Classroom), and working toward the implementation of a MA DPH Maternal and Child Health grant.

### **Fellowship Description**

The fellow will work closely with the Director of Grants & Strategic Partnerships (Gebel, SPH '14). While there are many activities related to this fellowship's goal, the fellow will work together with Accompany staff to carve out portions of that work that best match their skills and interests. Needs and interests at this time are listed in the bullets below.

Activities may include the following (fellow and preceptor will find a balance between what's needed a fellow's strengths and interests):

Using programmatic data points for postings on Facebook, LinkedIn, MailChimp (newsletter), and Instagram, utilizing Canva templates for visual appeal

Disseminating the five-year impact report findings to a variety of audiences

Working with the data specialist, Jeannette Myrick (BUSPH alum), to explore client-facing data analysis through Compyle in conjunction with technical assistance from SisterWeb, a San Francisco-based community doula organization

Working with the Director of Grants and strategic Partnerships to create an onboarding experience for new-to-Accompany doulas and staff, focusing on the intersection of birth work and health equity

Supporting the implementation of a large grant awarded to Accompany from MA DPH

### **Additional Qualifications**

A strong candidate will be detailed-oriented, creative, organized, have strong writing skills, demonstrate capacity to be a team player and ability to foster positive relationships with diverse stakeholders. A strong candidate will have a passion for maternal and child health, doula care, health equity, and reducing birth inequities. The ideal candidate will have a "jump right in" approach and can take initiative and work independently on projects in an organization, which tends to have a startup-like culture.

For this fellowship, we welcome students who are bi-lingual in one of the 11 languages spoken by Accompany Doula Care doulas and clients (Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, and Portuguese (Brazilian), to name a few).

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## **Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) Referrals Quality Improvement Initiative: Improving Access to Developmental Services and Promoting Wrap-Around Care *Boston Medical Center***



### **Supervisor & Mentor:**

Boston Medical Center's Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics: Audrey Christiansen, MD - Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Fellowship Director Katie Campbell, MA - Referral Coordinator DBP/Autism Resource Transition Specialist

### **Location**

Boston Medical Center  
801 Albany Street, Boston, MA 02119

### **Background:**

The Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP) clinic at Boston Medical Center (BMC) serves children and adolescents from birth to 22 years with a variety of developmental and behavioral challenges including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and language developmental delay (SLDD), learning disability (LD), anxiety disorders, school challenges and behavioral problems. Through a three-part evaluation process, DBP patients undergo evaluation and receive ongoing follow-up care as appropriate. In line with BMC's mission, DBP is dedicated to providing accessible and high quality health care for all pediatric patients and their families. When considering developmental health, such accessible and high quality care includes early identification of developmental concerns, timely diagnosis, and access to appropriate developmental services.

Early identification of developmental disabilities and delivery of services is key in improving outcomes and progress, thus early identification, evaluation and connection to services is critical. Primary care serves as the hub for referral to services and subspecialists however there is currently a lengthy waitlist to see a developmental pediatrician for evaluation. Data is needed to quantify the DBP wait list crisis, identify avenues for solutions and serve as leverage to direct the development of future healthcare resources, implementation of new initiatives and improvement of care coordination. We aim to alleviate extensive wait times for families accessing pediatric developmental care.

Focusing on the intersection of health equity and developmental pediatrics, the DBP Referrals QI Initiative aims to pave new pathways for improving access to developmental care. Through referral process analysis, strengthening partnerships with referring clinicians and translating data into action through referral systematic improvements and targeted educational efforts to health care centers, we hope to address the unmet developmental service needs affecting the pediatric population served at BMC DBP and identify the barriers and systematic errors contributing to such access to developmental care.

### **Project Goals**

Utilizing a quality improvement approach, the project will involve several phases of data analysis, workflow refinement, systems improvement, and education efforts for families and referring clinicians in order to streamline the DBP referral process and create change in the following areas:

1. Reduce wait times for established care in DBP;
2. Improve intake and testing appointment show rates;
3. Improve care provided during DBP appointments;
4. Increase patient access to developmental services and supports prior to DBP evaluation;
5. Improve PCP satisfaction with referral process.

The first phase in the QI project involves reducing erroneous and inappropriate referrals. Through review and analysis of referrals data, trends in erroneous/inappropriate referrals will be identified, and preventative measures incorporated into operations and communicated to stakeholders. This will allow for identification of more accurate referral numbers - critical data for refining workflows. The second phase will involve improving the quality of referrals, by reviewing and analyzing referrals paperwork and services in place upon referral. Referral quality data will be made actionable by providing targeted education to health care centers on recommended developmental screenings, tips on how to connect families to services, and review efficacy of service delivery. Collaboration with referral and clinical teams at referring sites will be embedded throughout the initiative as some of the key stakeholders in the patients' medical care, in efforts to improve wrap around patient care.

### **Fellowship Description**

1. Perform quantitative data analysis of referral data to identify erroneous/inappropriate referrals and quality of referrals.
2. Utilize findings to determine opportunities for operational workflow and system improvements to reduce errors and improve efficiency of referral review.
3. Gather input from referring clinicians to support with establishing effective communication pipelines and identifying opportunities for improving wrap around care for the target population.
4. Contribute to the development of lessons learned to share back into the community through targeted health care center referral support.
5. Define a plan for training and resource creation targeted to individual health care centers on topics surrounding developmental screenings, support and services.
6. Develop a strategic plan for assessing the efficacy of newly implemented operational changes, collaborative efforts and education dissemination.
7. Opportunity to work towards poster presentation and/or publication of completed project.

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## Mental Health Advocacy Project for Kids

### *Health Law Advocates*

#### **Supervisor & Mentor:**

Marisol Garcia, JD, Project Director

Patricia Elliott, DrPH, Clinical Associate Professor, CHS Dept.



**Location:** Remote/One Federal Street, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02110

**Background:** Health Law Advocates' innovative Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids) eliminates barriers to mental health care for at-risk youth with mental illness. The program embeds lawyers in state-funded Family Resource Centers in all counties across Massachusetts. These attorneys advocate on behalf of children with schools, state agencies, the court system, and health insurers to improve access to mental health care. A multi-year independent study by BUSPH found that the program significantly improves the mental health of participating children and their parents, significantly improves family functioning and significantly improves school attendance. Additionally, the study concluded that MHAP for Kids significantly reduces the need for children's emergency room visits, inpatient admissions and incarceration, thereby saving the state significant sums. HLA's goals are to expand MHAP for Kids statewide and to secure state dollars as the primary sustainable funding source.

As HLA aggressively works toward expanding MHAP for Kids across Massachusetts and nationally, HLA seeks assistance with collecting information to support, inform, and guide our efforts.

#### **Fellowship Description:**

The MCH Practice Fellow will:

- contact families and schedule interviews
- conduct interviews with parents and stakeholders in-person, by zoom, or by phone
- help prepare collect and analyze data
- maintain accurate records of interviews, safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects
- participate in administrative duties related to study management, analysis, and dissemination of findings
- work within the team of staff attorneys and paralegals to support the program
- job-shadow or attend meetings/sessions to learn about the broader work of Health Law Advocates, the public interest law firm where this program sits

Ideal candidates will have a flexible schedule.

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## C<sup>2</sup> Podcast Fellowship

### *BUSPH Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health*



**Supervisor:** Anisa Saleh (MCH CoE Deputy Director) will check in with fellow weekly, including monthly strategy meetings. Dr. Lois McCloskey (MCH CoE PI/Director) will provide additional supervision as appropriate.

**Duration:** December 2024 – December 2025

**Time Commitment:** Roughly 8-10 hours a week, however, the nature of the work allows for remote work, nights, evenings, and small segments of time throughout the week.

**About MCH CoE:** We are one of 13 Centers of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (MCH CoEs) in the United States, funded by the [Maternal and Child Health Bureau \(MCHB\)](#) of the Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA 2 T76 MC00017). As a Center, we offer specialized educational, leadership, research, and practice programs to give students pursuing an MCH education a leg up in their ultimate aim: to prepare for a dynamic career in MCH, be it designing and managing community programs, advocating for national policies, developing communication strategies, or participating in research with an international NGO.

#### **Fellowship Description:**

The C<sup>2</sup> Podcast Fellowship offers an opportunity for a fellow to launch their podcasting journey in public health and at the intersection of maternal and child health. The C<sup>2</sup> Podcast Fellowship will support the Center's first podcast [C<sup>2</sup>: Critical Conversations that Lie at the Heart of Health Justice](#). The fellow will be essential in supporting the goal of C<sup>2</sup> - highlight conversations that inform and educate our audience of MCH students/professionals, public health students/professionals about health issues and highlight how these issues are impacting BIPOC/historically under-resourced communities. The BUSPH curriculum in combination with the Center's extra-curricular opportunities will give you the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience you need for your chosen area of practice.

#### **Duties:**

- In partnership with the Deputy Director, build a plan for the continuation of Center's podcast, [C<sup>2</sup>: Critical Conversations that Lie at the Heart of Health Justice](#)
- Create monthly episodes featuring guests that highlight important health justice topics and how it relates to historically under-served communities
- Coordinate scheduling potential guests to feature on the podcast
- Create interview guides
- Conduct and edit podcast interviews
- Publish episodes on specified platforms (Spotify, SoundCloud, Anchor)
- Design cover art for episodes
- Build a promotion and outreach strategy for the podcast episodes

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## MCH National Network Fellowship

### *BUSPH Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health*



**Supervisor:** Anisa Saleh (MCH CoE Deputy Director) will check in with fellow weekly, including monthly strategy meetings. Dr. Lois McCloskey (MCH CoE PI/Director) will provide additional supervision as appropriate.

**Duration:** December 2024 – December 2025

**Time Commitment:** Roughly 8-10 hours a week, however, the nature of the work allows for remote work, nights, evenings, and small segments of time throughout the week.

**About MCH CoE:** We are one of 13 Centers of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health (MCH CoEs) in the United States, funded by the [Maternal and Child Health Bureau \(MCHB\)](#) of the Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA 2 T76 MC00017). As a Center, we offer specialized educational, leadership, research, and practice programs to give students pursuing an MCH education a leg up in their ultimate aim: to prepare for a dynamic career in MCH, be it designing and managing community programs, advocating for national policies, developing communication strategies, or participating in research with an international NGO.

#### **Fellowship Description:**

This **MCH National Network (MCH NN) Fellowship** offers a student the opportunity to lead a newly formed [MCH nationwide network](#) of students and emerging professionals, all committed to MCH (broadly defined) practice, policymaking and advocacy, and research. Initiated by and for students and alumni of MCH Centers of Excellence and Catalyst Programs, the MCH NN aims to bring people all over the nation together to share information, collaborate on advocacy and research initiatives, and to support one another in the pursuit of meaningful, productive MCH-related careers.

#### **Duties:**

- Act as the network Director to lead the continued development and sustenance of the national MCH NN Board, consisting of 10 other students/alumni representing a wide range of MCH CoE's/Catalyst Centers and other Schools and Programs of PH with MCH programs
- Lead monthly board meetings, plan monthly virtual events in collaboration with fellow board members and in-person events when appropriate, and collaborate with students from other schools to share resources and learning opportunities
- Maintain network engagement through social media platforms to connect students and alums, and share resources/opportunities (collaborating with the Communications Committee)
- Create and implement a strategy to engage alums in the MCH NN
- Outreach to MCH student interest groups and leaders at SPH CoE and Catalyst programs
- Manage network subscriber list, newsletter distribution, and promotion of network efforts
- Host gatherings at national/regional meetings or conferences, as applicable

The fellow will develop skills in management, coordination, communication and have the opportunity to meet and work with MCH students, faculty and community organization members across the country.

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## Health Transition Toolkit – Review & Soft Launch

*DPH Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (DCYSHN)*

**Supervisor & Mentor:** Amy Benison, Program Support Specialist, DPH Division for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs;  
[Amy.Benison@mass.gov](mailto:Amy.Benison@mass.gov); 781-670-4887

**Location:** Mostly online (possible hybrid online/in-person work TBD, depending on project needs and DPH space availability).

**Timeframe:** 2025 calendar year. The deliverables for the internship are flexible based on the availability of the intern or practicum student. Extending the length of the internship is an option for interested candidates.

**Hours:** 8-10 hours/week; negotiable.

**Compensation:** A stipend is paid through the Title V Block Grant and BU SPH.

### **Background: Brief description of DCYSHN**

The [Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs \(DCYSHN\)](#) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition works with families, providers, and others to support children and youth with special health needs ages birth to 22 and their families. This includes children and youth with chronic medical, physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional conditions.

### **Overall purpose or goal of the project**

The Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (DCYSHN) and previous intern cohorts have worked to create a holistic comprehensive Health Transition Toolkit that provides information and resources to youth and young adults with special health needs, as they transition from pediatric to adult healthcare and adulthood. This project will include seeking stakeholder feedback and reviewing and editing assigned sections of the Health Transition Toolkit. The sections will be pilot tested and evaluated one at a time during a soft launch.<sup>1</sup>

### **Background information**

In Massachusetts, only 24.2% of YSHN aged 12–17 years have reported receiving the services necessary to make transitions to appropriate adult health care, work, and independence (NSCH 2020-21). While this has significantly improved in the past few years (15.4% in 2016) and is higher than the nationwide percentage of 20.5%, the data confirm the clear need for continued improvement. Stakeholders have described several limitations of the state health care system to facilitate a smooth transition for youth and young adults with special health needs (YYASHN) (ages 12-22), including a general delay in starting this process in the young person's life. Specifically, YYASHN and their families need better local resources and guidance to understand and navigate the health care transition process, as well as promotion of self-management and independence skills. "Health transition" is a term that broadly includes the

transition of YYASHN from pediatric to adult health care as well as the transition to self-management of one's health (nutrition, physical activity, mental health, etc.) and health care (taking medications, scheduling medical appointments, monitoring one's health, etc.) in young adulthood.

Massachusetts Title V has long focused on improving health-related transition to adulthood for YYASHN. Interns will increase access to health transition resources and information for YYASHN, their families and providers, by reviewing, getting stakeholder feedback on, and preparing for the soft launch of a Health Transition Toolkit. The interns will draw upon previous findings from literature reviews, key informant interviews, focus groups and advisory meetings conducted separately with caregivers and YYASHN, and subject matter expert interviews in FY21-FY24. They will begin the sequential review of each of the toolkit sections below developed by previous interns as time allows.

- The foundational toolkit includes the following topics: Health Care, Self-Management & Personal Health, Public Benefits, Caregiver & Family Wellbeing, Shared Decision Making & Guardianship, Advocacy, and Community Support.
- Additional toolkit sections address: Sexual & Reproductive Health, Mental Health, Oral Health, and Healthy Lifestyles (Nutrition, Physical Activity and Substance Use Prevention).
- Future projects will enhance the health transition toolkit further by adding information for providers, ensuring the information provided is culturally and linguistically appropriate, offered in multiple languages, addresses health literacy and utilizes plain language and universal design to be fully accessible and ADA compliant.

This project supports Massachusetts' Title V State Action Plan to increase the annual performance indicator for the percent of youth with special health needs (YSHN) who have received services necessary to transition to adult health care for National Performance Measure 12 (NPM 12). NPM 12 supports effective health-related transition to adulthood for this population.

**Project Description:**

- What will the student do? The initial task of the intern(s) will be to become familiar with the organizational structure, functions, and staff within the Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (DCYSHN) as related to Health Transition. The intern(s) will be provided with supervision, guidance, and support from the preceptors, while receiving a general onboarding and orientation to the agency, including specific trainings required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for all personnel and interns. Orientation will also include familiarization with the social, political, and cultural environment of Health Transition for YYASHN in Massachusetts and with background information about key partners and stakeholders in Health Transition. Meetings will be arranged to orient the interns with broad awareness about Title V Maternal & Child Health (MCH) priorities and Health Transition subject matter experts. The intern(s) will work closely with the Title V Health Transition Implementation Team and will consult with the DPH Office of Communications as needed.

Following orientation, the student intern(s) will first develop a team charter and a full work plan. They will then review, edit and/or finalize as a team a selected section of the Health Transition Toolkit one-by-one by engaging stakeholders for their feedback. Once the editing is complete, they will seek DPH approval and then conduct the soft-launch pilot test of their section. One or more interns will collaborate on this project.

- What specific activities will be expected? Interns (with support from preceptors) will meet regularly to report on and seek guidance and support in the review, editing and soft launch testing/evaluation of an assigned Health Transition Toolkit section. They will present the toolkit section draft to stakeholders for their review and feedback with support from the Health Transition Implementation Team, DCYSHN staff, subject matter experts, providers, and youth and young adult with special health needs advisors. They will analyze collected feedback and edit the toolkit section accordingly. Once an assigned section draft is reviewed and edited, the interns will seek final DPH senior leadership approval before participating in the soft launch testing/evaluation pilot for each section, time permitting. They will repeat these steps fully for each subsequent section as time allows.
- What are the deliverables/products? The internship team will complete the following deliverables: team charter, project work plan, stakeholder interview guides and coded and summarized interview analysis, meeting agendas, edited toolkit draft sections, and final presentation PowerPoint slides. They will collaborate with project preceptors, the Health Transition Implementation Team and other subject matter experts TBD to meet, plan, interview, analyze, and edit their assigned section of the Health Transition Toolkit. The interns will complete these deliverables by the end of the internship including any written documentation and directions for future interns. They will present their work and recommendations to the Division team and other internal and external partners over the course of the project. Time permitting, they may plan and participate in the soft launch pilot including testing and evaluation of each toolkit section as part of a toolkit roll-out.

**Skills, knowledge and/or experience to be gained by the student**

Project planning; management and evaluation; policy analysis and setting, qualitative methods for facilitation of subject matter experts and stakeholder interviews, communication skills, continuous quality improvement methods, presenting and writing; reviewing and editing, understanding of disability justice, health transition, health literacy and racial equity.

**Desired qualifications:** Experience and familiarity with academic research, attention to detail, good writing, project management, analytical, and communication skills, excellent people skills, experience working with youth and young adults, experience working with people with special health needs.

**If interested in applying for this internship, contact:** Amy Benison, Program Support Specialist, DPH Division for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs;

[Amy.Benison@mass.gov](mailto:Amy.Benison@mass.gov); 781-670-4887

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## Emergency Preparedness for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs and their Families

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



### **Supervisor & Mentor:**

Elaine Gabovitch, Director, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs  
Amy Benison, Program Support Specialist

**Location:** 250 Washington Street, Boston MA, with the option to work remote or hybrid

**Background:** Massachusetts' Title V Division for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (DCYSHN) has long focused on improving health-related outcomes for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN). We would like to advance our work around emergency preparedness planning due to its critical importance for families of CYSHCN who are often overlooked and may be particularly compromised during emergencies due to a healthcare and social system not designed for them. This project will help support families with CYSHCN to prepare for emergencies in a way that many other families without CYSHCN do not have to consider. These include disease and illness crises, climate and weather crises, household and population-based crises such as immigration, housing and food insecurities, domestic and mass violence, and other emergent needs. The project will intentionally focus on the systemic barriers that create these inequities in health and health care. It will center racial equity and disability justice including using a racial equity lens and engage with families with different special health needs and of different races, ethnicities, backgrounds and regions to ensure that the project's recommendations meet the needs of *all* families of CYSHCN.

The DCYSHN is preparing to apply for our five-year Massachusetts Title V Block Grant application due to our federal funders in July 2025. This project will inform potential Block Grant priorities but will also support the DPH Commissioner's Strategic Plan for Advancing Racial Equity (SP-ARE) as well as the Governor's agenda.

DCYSHN webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-for-children-youth-with-special-health-needs>

DCYSHN Emergency Care Planning Page: <https://www.mass.gov/emergency-care-planning-for-children-youth-with-special-health-needs>

**Fellowship Description:** Interns will perform a needs assessment and write a report to the DCYSHN with recommendations about how to better support families with CYSHCN around emergency preparedness planning. The interns will conduct a needs assessment that would include an environmental scan, starting with a full literature review. They will then interview key informants internally/externally to determine what effective emergency preparedness practices exist and what are the evidence informed strategies for such planning and practices. They will then engage families via focus groups to understand their and their children's needs

around emergency preparedness. Finally, they will submit a report to the DCYSHN summarizing the needs assessment and proposing how to address these needs and respond to their findings, and advice on the DCYSHN workforce capacity to meet these needs. As time allows, they will assist in the roll-out of any approved recommendations as well as with the Division's internal emergency preparedness work and administer and update Division Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) plans.

Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in project pre-work
  - Attend DCYSHN Orientation to become familiar with the organizational structure, functions, and staff.
  - Create a logic model for the environmental scan and a flexible project work plan to steer and implement project activities.
- Perform background research to inform the environmental scan.
  - Write literature review
  - Review internally/externally existing emergency preparedness planning resources
- Conduct qualitative research based on the project work plan.
  - Develop key informant and focus group interview guides.
  - Conduct key informant interview panels
  - Possible interviewees include Division leadership, local non-profits serving CYSHN and their families, family and young adult leaders, and state emergency preparedness personnel.
  - Conduct one or more family focus groups
- Prepare an environmental scan summary report and propose actionable recommendations.
  - Propose ways to address the barriers and support the emergency preparedness planning needs of families and CYSHN
- Roll out and implement approved report recommendations according to the project work plan by working with the DCYSHN team, as time allows.
- Administer and update Division Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) plans, as time allows.

**Key skill or topic areas:**

- Topics areas:
  - Emergency and crisis preparedness and planning
  - CYSHN population needs
  - Blueprint for Change for CYSHN (including health equity, quality of life and well-being, access to services, and financing services)
- Skills:
  - Project planning and evaluation
  - Literature review skills
  - Family engagement skills
  - Community engagement and assessment skills

- Qualitative methods (Implementation)
- Qualitative methods (Analysis)
- Facilitation skills
- Communication and presentation skills

**Additional Qualifications:**

- Flexible, enthusiastic, self-motivated
- Committed to supporting MDPH's mission of promoting and improving health for all, with a focus on children and youth with special health needs
- Familiarity with Microsoft Office, in particular Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint.
- Access to a personal computer.

**Timeframe:**

- January-February: Pework (Orientation, logic model, and work plan)
- February-April: Background research for environmental scan (literature and resource reviews)
- May-August: Qualitative research (interview guides, key informant interviews, focus groups)
- September-November: Write report with recommendations, implement them and administer DCYSHN COOP plans as time allows

**Supervision:**

The MCH Fellow will be supervised by:

- Elaine Gabovitch, Director, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs, State Title V CYSHN Program Director, [Elaine.Gabovitch@mass.gov](mailto:Elaine.Gabovitch@mass.gov)
- Amy Benison, DCYSHN Program Support Specialist, [Amy.Benison@mass.gov](mailto:Amy.Benison@mass.gov)

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## Massachusetts Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Team: Using data on pregnancy-related deaths to inform prevention recommendations

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



### **Supervisors & Mentors:**

Susan Manning, MD, MPH, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition

Mahsa Yazdy, PhD, MPH, Director, Division of Surveillance, Research and Promotion of Perinatal Health

**Location:** 250 Washington St., Boston MA 02108/ Remote

**Background:** The MDPH Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Review Team (MMMRT) works to identify all pregnancy-associated deaths (death of a person while pregnant or within one year of the end of pregnancy) in Massachusetts; collects information from a variety of data sources to summarize the events leading up to the death; convenes a multidisciplinary review committee (the Massachusetts Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Review Committee, MMMRC) to determine if the death was related to pregnancy and make recommendations to prevent future deaths; and summarizes findings from MMMRC reviews to inform clinical and community-based prevention interventions.

**Fellowship Description:** As an integral member of the MMMRT, the BU SPH Fellow will provide valuable support by increasing the team's capacity to identify, gather information on, and review pregnancy-associated deaths and make actionable recommendations for preventing these tragic events. This will include continuous quality improvement activities to improve the efficiency, standardization, and timeliness of reviews of maternal deaths and assist in efforts to translate MMMRC recommendations into clinical, community-level and policy interventions.

Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Collect data on pregnancy-associated deaths: assist MMMRT staff in requesting, obtaining and compiling all available information about pregnancy-associated deaths from a variety of data sources (medical records, autopsy reports, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, police records, social media, and other relevant sources.).
- Develop standard operating procedures (SOP): work with members of the MMMRT to develop SOPs to standardize and document the steps in various critical MMMRT activities. This would include developing and documenting a standardized process to investigate death certificates with pregnancy indicated via a pregnancy checkbox to assess whether cases are truly pregnancy-associated deaths.
- Develop data briefs, infographics and presentations: work with the MMMRT epidemiologist and other team members to develop data products summarizing MMMRC findings and recommendations for various audiences.

### **Key skill or topic areas:**

- Data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting for various audiences
- Quality improvement

**Additional Qualifications:**

- Flexible, enthusiastic, self-motivated
- Ability to work well in a team setting
- Well-organized
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Committed to MDPH's mission of promoting and improving health for all, with a focus on eliminating racial disparities

**Timeframe:** Dec 2024-Dec 2025

**Supervision:**

The MCH Fellow will be supervised by:

- Susan Manning, MD, MPH, CDC Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Program Assignee, BFHN. [Susan.e.manning@mass.gov](mailto:Susan.e.manning@mass.gov)
- Mahsa Yazdy, PhD, MPH, Director, Division of Surveillance, Research and Promotion of Perinatal Health [Mahsa.Yazdy@mass.gov](mailto:Mahsa.Yazdy@mass.gov)

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## MCH Policy and Planning

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



### **Supervisor & Mentor:**

Maia Raynor, Maternal and Child Health Program and Policy Manager

**Location:** 250 Washington St., Boston MA 02108 / Remote

**Background:** The Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition provides programs and services ensuring the health of the Commonwealth's parents, infants, children and youth — including children and youth with special health needs and their families. Comprised of six divisions and over 200 staff, the Bureau administers the Women Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition program, the Early Intervention (EI) program that serves infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years old) who have developmental delays or are at risk of a developmental delay, a system of specialized services and supports for children and youth up to age 22 years old with special health needs, and initiatives to promote health in pregnancy and early childhood, such as home visiting and early childhood mental health. The Bureau also conducts surveillance and research to inform programming and policies affecting maternal and child health in the Commonwealth.

### **Fellowship Description:**

- MCH Partner mapping: Identify existing strategic relationships and collaborations across the Bureau and identify gaps and opportunities to strengthen and ensuring diverse partnerships.
- MCH Policy Briefs Drafting policy briefs on key bureau priorities, including landscape scans of innovations in other states and communities.
- Research tools and frameworks to embed racial equity in MCH policy.
- Support development of policy / topical briefs in advance of administration transition.
- MCH Legislation Support work to track key MCH legislation.
- Draft briefs on key legislation at the state and federal level.
- Support briefings with key stakeholders (internal and external to BFHN).
- Legislative Reports Develop a tracking system for legislative reports, including setting up a process and communication system with staff leading specific reports.
- Track, review, copyedit legislative reports.
- Support development of stakeholder engagement and communications
- Support project meetings with notetaking and project memos

### **Title V Needs Assessment**

There may be opportunities to participate in department wide activities and the daily life experiences of state public health employees including all staff meetings, recognition and awards program, career panel and more.

### **Key skill or topic areas:**

1. MCH policy research and writing skills
2. Project Management

**Additional Qualifications:**

- Flexible, enthusiastic, self-motivated
- Knowledge of academic and policy research, good writing skills, good communication skills, attention to detail
- Excellent people skills, conducting interviews and facilitating meetings.
- Committed to MDPH's mission of promoting and improving health for all, with a focus on eliminating racial disparities

**Timeframe: Dec 2024-Dec 2025**

**Supervision:** Maia Raynor, MCH Program & Policy Manager, [Maia.Raynor@mass.gov](mailto:Maia.Raynor@mass.gov)

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## Maternal and Child Health Data Briefs

### *Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



#### **Supervisor & Mentor:**

Sarah L. Stone, Director, Office of Data Translation (ODT), Division of Maternal and Child Health Research and Analysis (DMCHRA)

Xiaohui Geng, PRAMS Coordinator, ODT/DMCHRA

**Location:** 250 Washington Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston MA 02108

**Background:** The Division of Maternal and Child Health Research and Analysis (DMCHRA) optimizes the health of infants, children, mothers, and families in all Massachusetts communities by strengthening partnerships and translating data to action. DMCHRA provides statistical information for needs assessment, performance management, and decision support throughout the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition (BFHN) using data analytics, survey work, and evaluation studies. DMCHRA also advises federal grant applications, performance monitoring, clinical research, community mobilization to broaden public awareness, establishment of strategic initiatives to address concerning and emerging trends, as well as many daily functions of Bureau programs. In addition, DMCHRA collaborates with other DPH Bureaus and as well as institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March of Dimes, and local schools of public health, particularly Boston University.

Within DMCHRA, two of our projects include: 1) The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a population based-surveillance system designated to identify and monitor selected maternal experiences and behaviors that occur before, during, and after pregnancy as well as the child's early infancy experience. PRAMS data collection began in June 2007. 2) The Massachusetts Parenthood and Fatherhood Experiences survey is population based-surveillance system designated to identify and monitor selected new fathers' and second parents' experiences and behaviors that occur around the time of their child's birth as well as the child's early infancy experience. The Parenthood and Fatherhood Experiences survey began as a pilot project in 2024.

**Fellowship Description:** The student will work with our DMCHRA staff to create fact sheets and data briefs using PRAMS data and the Parenthood and Fatherhood Experiences data on topics including effects of racism on health, maternal and paternal mental health, social determinants of health and infant outcomes, COVID vaccinations, and barriers to healthcare. Other possible topics for fact sheets include but are not limited to prenatal substance use (e.g., smoking, e-smoking, alcohol, marijuana), interpersonal violence, factors associated with preterm birth, breastfeeding and hospital support, Family Medical Leave (maternity leave), and home visiting services. Fact sheets and data briefs will be posted on our division's website at Mass.gov and shared with our clinical and community partners. The student will gain an understanding of many factors that contribute to maternal, paternal, and child health (MCH) during pregnancy and postpartum, and of how to analyze population-based survey data.

Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Review literature based on topic of fact sheet/data brief to understand the health landscape
- Review existing analyses
- Conduct analyses in SAS that can accommodate complex weighting of the survey sampling
- Summarize and interpret the findings of analyses
- Draft fact sheets/data briefs
- Support development of dissemination plans for deliverables

**Key skill or topic areas:**

- SAS analysis, survey data analysis
- health data communications, data visualization

**Additional Qualifications:**

- Intermediate SAS skills required
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Flexible, self-motivated
- Well-organized
- Ability to work well in a team setting
- Some knowledge of data visualization helpful
- Some knowledge of Maternal and Child Health helpful.

**Timeframe:** December 2024-December 2025

**Supervision:**

The MCH Fellow will be supervised by:

- Sarah L. Stone, Director, Office of Data Translation (ODT), Division of Maternal and Child Health Research and Analysis (DMCHRA) [sarah.l.stone@mass.gov](mailto:sarah.l.stone@mass.gov)
- Xiaohui Geng, PRAMS Coordinator, ODT/DMCHRA, [Xiaohui.Geng@mass.gov](mailto:Xiaohui.Geng@mass.gov)

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## Early Intervention Landscape Analyses

### *Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



**Supervisor & Mentor:** Emily White, Director, Early Intervention Division

**Location:** Mondays at 250 Washington Street Boston, MA 02108  
(preferred); virtual (considered)

#### **Background:**

The Early Intervention Division (EI) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition, oversees the Commonwealth's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C program (IDEA Part C) to provide services to infants and toddlers ages birth to three through a network of contracted service provider agencies. Early intervention services are designed for Massachusetts families with children under the age of three who are not reaching age-appropriate milestones, diagnosed with certain conditions, or have medical or social histories which may put them at risk for a developmental delay. These services are meant to help support families and caregivers and to enhance the development and learning of infants and toddlers.

The EI Division is comprised of five units that coordinate the administration and oversight of the statewide system as the Commonwealth's Lead Agency for Part C services, including General Supervision and monitoring, fiscal oversight, data collection and analysis, targeted technical assistance and training, child find and public awareness systems, and family and community engagement.

#### **Fellowship Description:**

The Early Intervention Division seeks a Fellow to conduct landscape analyses of policies under consideration. Key topics include provider qualifications and retention, funding for supervision activities, and data collection requirements and training. This Fellow is expected to conduct 5-6 landscape analyses by reviewing available research, policy in other Part C states, and developing a presentation to describe the possible benefits, risks, stakeholder groups, recommendations, and implementation steps. The MCH Fellow will be supervised by the EI Division's Director with additional support from the Division's Strategic Leadership Team (Clinical Quality Manager, Finance Manager, Research & Analysis Manager, Family & Community Engagement Manager, and Operations Manager).

Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting six Landscape Analyses to review available research, policy in other states, possible benefits and risks
- Develop recommendations for implementation for each topic

#### **Key skill or topic areas:**

- IDEA Part C Policy
- Braiding state, Federal, and commercial insurance funding

**Additional Qualifications:**

- Independent
- Self-motivated
- Committed to centering effective early intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families

**Timeframe:** Dec 2024-Dec 2025

**Supervision:**

Emily White, Director, Early Intervention Division, [Emily.A.White@mass.gov](mailto:Emily.A.White@mass.gov)

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## Development of a Client Management System for the Division of Children & Youth with Special Health Needs to Improve Program and Family Outcomes

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health*



### **Supervisors & Mentors:**

Megan Young, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs

Elizabeth Bostic, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs

**Location:** 250 Washington St., Boston MA 02108 (Fellowship primarily remote)

**Background:** The Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs (DCYSHN) within the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition (BFHN) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), works with families, providers, and others to support children and youth with special health needs ages birth to 22 and their families. This includes children and youth with chronic medical, physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions.

The Division is comprised of 9 programs, each with its own unique data collection system ranging from Excel to Access to more sophisticated SQL databases to track client information and program data. The Division (and Bureau) is developing a client management system, with robust reporting capabilities, that will streamline the intake process for families and standardize and align data collection across all programs in order to comprehensively assess reach, impact, and gaps in service provision. This in turn will lead to broader outreach across the Commonwealth and improved outcomes for children and their families.

### **Fellowship Description**

The DCYSHN seeks a Fellow to assist in conducting JAD (Joint Application Development) sessions with programs in preparation of the development their individual program database and integration into the broader division-wide client management system. Programs include the Community Support Line, Care Coordination, CCATER center, MASSTART, Medical Review Team, and Family TIES. Two additional Bureau programs will also be part of this initiative, including the Birth Defects Monitoring System and the Growth and Nutrition program. Four programs to date have launched their new databases under this initiative. A fifth will launch their new database later this year.

Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Meeting with each program to conduct a JAD session which will include:
  - Mapping out current program data and reporting needs
  - Creating workflows for the client management system
  - Utilizing a quality improvement approach when updating data collection tools to ensure variables align with DPH data standards, meet client and program needs, can assess trends over time, and measure outcomes
  - Determining feasibility of moving historical data into new system

- Engaging families to assess if updates to data collection tools appropriately balance program and family needs without placing an undue burden on families
- Supporting development and testing of client management system both in Oracle APEX and REDCap

There may be opportunities to participate in department wide activities and the daily life experiences of state public health employees including all staff meetings, recognition and awards program, career panel and more.

**Key Skills/Qualifications**

- Flexible, enthusiastic, self-motivated
- Committed to supporting MDPH’s mission of promoting and improving health for all, with a focus on children and youth with special health needs
- Experience or interest in program evaluation and/or database development preferred, especially with RedCap

**Timeframe:** December 2024 – December 2025

**Supervision and Mentoring:** The MCH Fellow will be supervised by the DCYSHN’s senior epidemiologist and assistant director.

- Megan Young, Senior Epidemiologist, [megan.e.young@mass.gov](mailto:megan.e.young@mass.gov)
- Elizabeth Bostic, DCYSHN Assistant Director, [elizabeth.e.bostic@mass.gov](mailto:elizabeth.e.bostic@mass.gov)

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