Host site: Virgin Islands Department of Health Epidemiology Division

Assignment Location: Christiansted, Virgin Islands

Primary Mentor: John Orr, BS
Secondary Mentor: Esther Ellis, PhD

Agency Description:
The Virgin Islands Department of Health (DOH) serves as the Lead agency for Public Health, Medical and Health Regulatory Services for the United States Virgin Islands. The Epidemiology Division, led by Territorial Epidemiologist, focuses on infectious diseases and networking with critical healthcare infrastructure partners for timely notifiable illness reporting. The DOH's mission "To Reduce Health Risks, Increase Access to Quality Healthcare and Enforce Health Standards" drives every task undertaken by the division and is highlighted with the COVID-19 Pandemic Response. The division strives to model all best practices for staff safety and well being and also encourages seeking varied opportunities to grow in professional and personal capabilities.

Assignment Description:
Under direction of Primary and Secondary Mentor, the Fellow will be connected with the current Data Science Team sponsored by CSTE's DSTT opportunity. Additionally the Fellow will be provided the opportunity to support other data science projects currently undertaken by the DOH. One project includes ongoing review of Health Disparity in the lens of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS). The opportunity to collaborate with other divisions in need of data support will be encouraged. Fellow will be assigned to the Epidemiology Division.

Preferred Background & Skills:
The ideal fellow will have experience with data science, passion for health disparities. Knowledge of infectious diseases surveillance will be helpful. A bilingual speaker of Spanish or Haitian Creole is desired.

What can the fellow expect to gain from 2 years at this host site?
Experience in a rural health system will be a huge learning aspect. Due to the geographic distribution of the Virgin Islands and difficulty in recruiting certain Health Professions, we do have a number of Health Disparities that the department is continually working on addressing. Of course the first step is understanding the problem through data. Health Disparities data analysis will be a key activity of this fellowship.

**Potential Projects include:**

*Host sites have listed up to 5 projects*

**Project 1: Health Disparities in the Lens of COVID-19 in the United States Virgin Islands**

Identify any gaps in the COVID-19 response based on Testing data. If marginalized communities are disproportionately affected DOH would use this data to divert resources to the needs of Vulnerable Communities.

Increased ability to identify vulnerable groups in a timely manner.

**Project 2: Developing a Public Facing Dashboard for USVI HIV Surveillance data**

In an effort to increase accessibility to VIDOH Data this project intends to launch a dashboard of pertinent HIV Data.

One goal is to increase awareness of the USVI’s HIV burden and provide the public an additional tool to aid in their decision making.

**Project 3: Launching public facing dashboards for COVID-19 and beyond**

Building on the anticipated success of the HIV Dashboard, the Fellow would now have the opportunity to lead the established Data Science Team in the creation of additional dashboards. STD/ COVID-19/ and others.

Improve transparency of the VIDOH with the hope of increased public trust and perception of the VIDOH as a Trusted source of Health Information.

**Project 4: Public Health Clinic usage**

The VIDOH has multiple public health clinics that are geared towards certain populations groups. (MCH, Low SES, ETC). However no effort to analyze the health outcomes and most common diagnoses has occurred. This analysis could help the DOH determine what ailments are disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups.

Data can be utilized in a campaign to address these concerns and help launch preventative awareness campaigns to reduce the burden on public health clinics.
Additional information about the placement:

The Virgin Islands is made up of 4 main Islands and 2 Health Districts. Saint Croix District and Saint Thomas, Saint John, Water Island District. The Fellow would potentially be assigned to the Saint Croix District.