Mission and Research Priorities of NCHS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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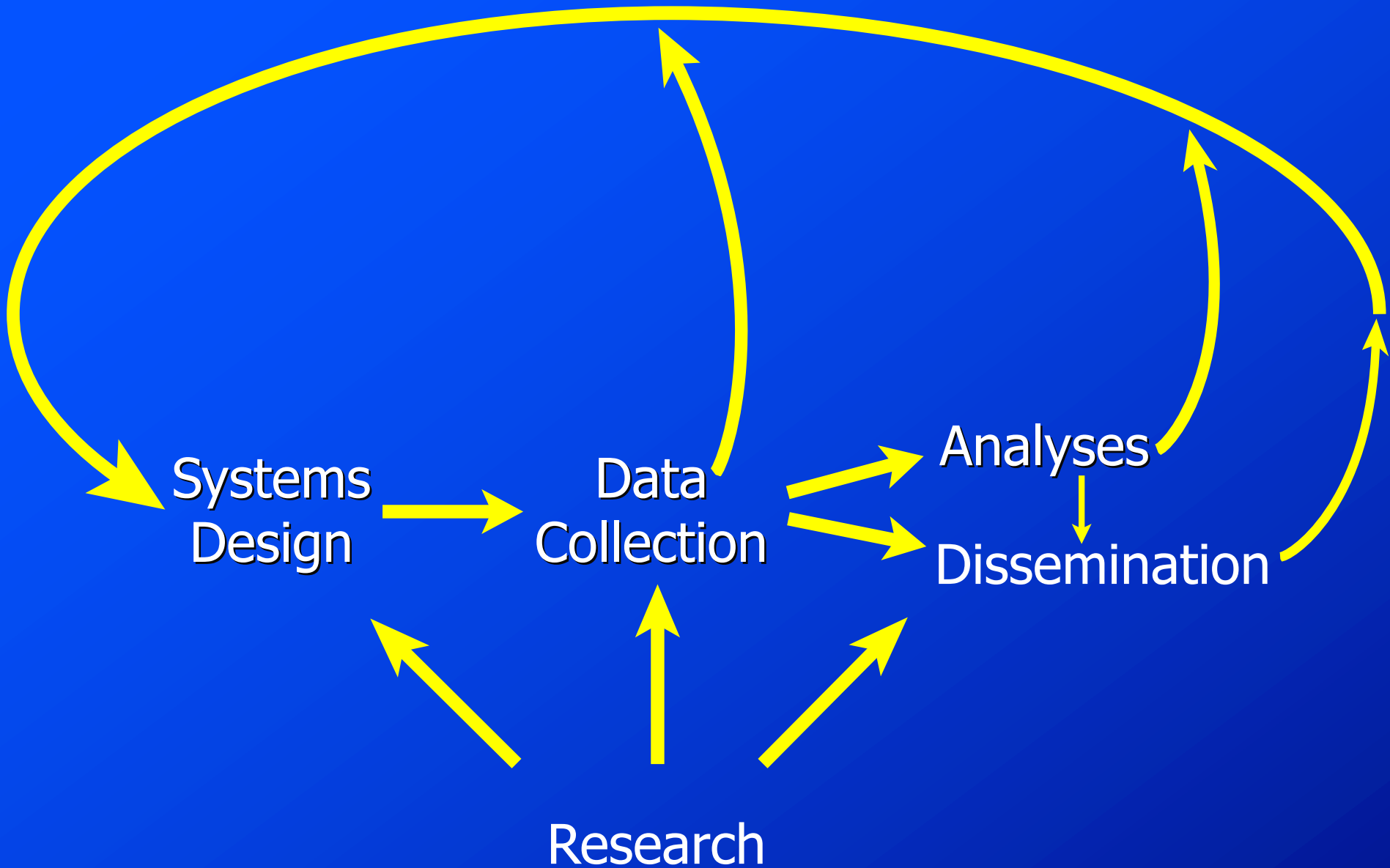National Center for Health Statistics

NCHS Mission

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions. These health statistics allow us to:

- **Document the health status of the U.S. population and selected subgroups**

- **Identify disparities in health status and use of health care by race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, region, and other population characteristics**

NCHS Mission (cont.)

- **Monitor trends in health status and health care delivery**

- **Identify health behaviors and associated risk factors**

- **Support biomedical and health services research**

- **Provide data to support public policies and programs**

- **Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of health policies and programs**

- **Current NCHS research agenda**

- **Examples of ongoing intramural projects**

- **Current extramural activity**

- **Plan for an NCHS extramural program office**

CDC Futures Initiative
Goals

- **Transform the CDC for the next level of leadership in the future**

- **To have a major impact on public health**

- **Ensure we have the best science and expertise available**

- **Become the standard for how good government should work**

Process for Getting There

- **Interactive, Participative**

- **Data Driven**

- **Customer Focused**

- **Strategic Direction First, Structure and Processes Follow**

Transformation Process

Strategic Direction

- Determine overall strategic direction
  - Vision
  - Target customers
  - Channels & partners
- Priority setting
  - Resource allocation /portfolio
  - Measurements
  - CDC differentiation
- Begin transformation

Structure & Processes

- Determine appropriate structure to support strategy
- Rethink key processes to ensure support of strategy
- Continue culture change/ transformation process

Implementation

- Focus on key implementation levels
- Focus on measurement
- Solidify culture Change/transformation process

Public Health Research

- **"Bench to the trench"**

- **Foundation for disease and injury prevention and health promotion**

Some Assumptions and Principles

- **Research is essential for CDC to achieve its mission**

- **CDC's research should be driven primarily by population health and program needs, not primarily by scientific curiosity**

- **Most of the CDC budget is for program, not research. The line between public health practice and research is fuzzy …**

CDC Research: Assumptions and Principles

- **Much of past and current research is intramural, or CDC-driven cooperative agreements (notable exceptions, e.g., NIOSH)**

- **Research dollars tend to track categorical program dollars**

- **Application and review processes have been inconsistent across programs**

- **Policy of external peer review adopted 2002**

Charge, as adapted by the Workgroup

To present strategic directions for CDC's public health research, considering (what, how, why)

- Research issues and needs that are priorities for CDC's customers and consistent with DHHS priorities...

- Needs to adapt CDC's current practices in conducting & supporting public health research

- Assurance...of application in practice & policy

External Input will be Sought

- **Define CDC agency agenda**

- **Deal with extramural funding if available in '04**

NCHS Research Agenda

- **Developed in 1999-2000 as part of a CDC wide initiative**

- **Needs to be updated in light of: CDC research agenda setting initiative "Shaping a Health Statistics Vision for the 21st Century"**

- **Focuses on methodological research, not all research done as NCHS**

Purpose of the Research Agenda

- **The research agenda provides a framework for developing methodological research projects that will support NCHS efforts (as well as efforts of other partners) to address high priority data needs.**

- **Major methodological issues were identified through a variety of meetings and workshops with collaborators both within and outside of the Federal government.**

Core Research Agenda Topics

1) **Expanding the use of longitudinal designs**

2) **Expanding linkages among data systems**

3) **Expanding information on the health care delivery system**

4) **Improving timeliness, availability, and quality of data**

5) **Developing summary measures of health and health indices**

Core Research Agenda Topics

6) **Developing improved methods for obtaining information on sub-populations defined by geography, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status**

7) **Disclosure review methods and providing access to data that cannot be released for public use due to confidentiality concerns**

Examples of Intramural Projects

Data Collection

- **Effects of incentives on response rates**
- **Development of a simulation of the MEC layouts to enhance design options**
- **Use of digital photographs to evaluate skin diseases**
- **Use of the internet for data collection**
- **Cognitive laboratory – disability questions, income questions, smoking questions**
- **Data linkage**
- **Effect of cell phone use on RDD surveys**

Examples of Intramural Projects

Data Collection

- **Impact of varying detection levels in lab analysis**
- **DNA collection**

Examples of Intramural Projects

Data Quality/Use

- **Effect of change to 1997 race/ethnicity categories on the calculation of rates – bridging methods**

- **Effect of blood pressure cuff size in BP measurements**

- **Patterns of income non-response and income imputations**

- **Accuracy of mortality data for persons of Hispanic Origin**

Examples of Intramural Projects (cont.)

Data Quality/Use

- **Disclosure review methods**
- **Recall bias in reporting of injuries**
- **Defining long term care**
- **Small area estimation**
- **ICD 9-10 transition**

Examples of Intramural Projects (cont.)

Areas of substantive research: aging, chronic disease (eg. CVD, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, mental health), health insurance, injury, functioning/disability, transition points between sources of care, quality of care, SES differentials, perinatal health

Extramural Research

Centers of Excellence in Health Statistics

Goal - to support research to:

- **Enhance the capability of the statistical sciences**

- **Meet the rapidly changing needs of health surveillance, public health research, in particular, prevention research**

Components

Infrastructure: **Provide an organizational setting to promote research on methods for health statistics.**

Research: **Through multi-disciplinary research, explore new approaches to enhance the capability of the statistical system to meet the rapidly changing needs of health surveillance, public health research, and prevention research.**

Recruitment and Outreach

Results of Solicitation

Twenty one (21) applications were received and reviewed by a Special Emphasis Panel. Three awards were made in September 1999 for a period of three years:

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill CEHS

Michigan CEHS

Minnesota CEHS

Results of Solicitation (cont.)

- **A second solicitation was announced in 2002 for one-year funding: three awards were made to the same institutions.**

- **In 2003, an administrative supplement for one year to allow for the completions of projects was awarded.**

- **Total cost: $5.3 million**

- **There is no budget for this program in the proposed FY 2004 budget.**

NCHS' Current Plan for Extramural Research

- **All CDC CIOs are developing plans for the implementations of an extramural research program**

- **NCHS has developed and submitted its plan**

- **The plan calls for a central role of the BSC in concept development and for 2nd level review**