



Director's Corner

Kathryn Porter, M.D., M.S.



Caption: Dr. Porter

Greetings from the Division of Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (DHANES) at the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland. We have had a very busy summer. Staff were simultaneously planning the NHANES 2017-18, strategizing interventions to improve NHANES response rates, finding acceptable cloud technologies to upload large datasets, and working on the final stages of data release for a number of important microdata files.

In the midst of this, our Division is scheduled to move back to our renovated space at 3311 Toledo Road in the near future. One consistent characteristic of the DHANES staff is an ability to get the work done despite difficult circumstances. I am optimistic that we'll continue all the tasks at hand with minimal delays; however, your understanding is appreciated if there is a slight disruption in our responsiveness.

Our Operations Branch recently filed a report with the NCHS Research Ethics Review Board to request continuation of the NHANES protocol. The report highlighted the fact that over 1,000 journal articles using NHANES data were published in the peer-reviewed literature between July 2015 and June 2016. This is an amazing statistic and highlights the relevance of the data we produce.

The number of publications will go up even more once researchers are made aware of the novel microdata products released in the past year. I am pleased to share links for the NHANES Los Angeles County 1999-2006 Demographic file [here](#), and the NHANES Los Angeles County 2007-2014 Demographic file [here](#). In addition, we have also created sample weights and files for California which were released earlier this year. For more

information, please see the documentation for the NHANES California 1999-2006 Demographic file [here](#), and the NHANES California 2007-2014 Demographic file [here](#). We thank our Westat statisticians who took advantage of NHANES sample design features unique to Los Angeles County and California to create weights for these novel datasets. Researchers can use these limited access files in conjunction with the comprehensive information in NHANES interview, examination and laboratory files to produce state and local level health estimates for California. Instruction on accessing these data files can be found at the NCHS Research Data Center Web site [here](#).

I'd like to close with a serious challenge that we and other Federal household surveys are facing – declining response rates. We have had to work harder to screen households, gain respondent cooperation, and complete interviews and examinations. Our cumulative 2016 response rate to date is 53%, and we are working on many fronts to improve this. We've provided field interviewers with a one-minute NHANES endorsement video by Dr. Tom Frieden for use at the doorstep. We conducted targeted training at midyear retraining of field staff on obtaining cooperation from eligible individuals. We experimented with digital media advertisements in one recent stand location. This is just the beginning. We have a lot more work to do, and have identified staff within the Division to work solely on this very important effort. Our Division and NCHS Leadership are committed to doing all we can to support NHANES field representatives who are doing the hard work of knocking on doors and getting eligible individuals to say, "Yes".



Warm Welcomes & Fond Farewells

DHANES Personnel Changes

The Analysis Branch welcomed Dr. Craig Hales in May 2016. Craig brings medical and statistical expertise to the Division.

Dr. Duong (Tony) Nguyen completed his assignment in the Analysis Branch as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer and transitioned to the Operations Branch as the Senior Medical Officer in June.

Ray DeVirgiliis joined the Analysis Branch in July as a student intern. He is analyzing NHANES data for his culminating experience as an MPH student at the George Washington University.

DHANES welcomed two Epidemic Intelligence Officers in August. Dr. Marissa Zwald joined the Analysis Branch and Dr. Amy Seitz joined the Office of the Director.

Eric Tolliver joined the Planning Branch as an Associate Service Fellow in August, 2016. Eric joins the lab team with a wealth of experience, including almost 10 years in the field as a NHANES lab medical technologist in our Mobile Examination Centers (MECs).

Dr. Tala Fakhouri started a part-time detail to the

Office of the Director to lead the Division's efforts on NHANES nonresponse in August.

George Zipf, Operations Branch Chief started long term training in late August. He will be enrolled in JPSM's Certificate Program in Survey Statistics at the University of Maryland until the end of May 2017. Dr. Tony Nguyen will serve as Acting OB Chief during his absence.

Tim Tilert returned to the Informatics Branch in September after working at CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention in Atlanta for a brief period.

Jocilyn Bergin accepted a job with the US Department of Commerce. Her last day in the Planning Branch was in late March.

Dr. Katherine Flegal retired in August. Katherine had a stellar career at NCHS and in DHANES in particular. Over 143,000 articles and books referenced Katherine's research.

Dr. David Lacher finished his time as a reemployed annuitant in September. We are grateful for his contributions to NHANES over the years and wish him well in his retirement.

NHANES Data Use Highlight

New Nutrition Label

On May 20, 2016 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the new Nutrition Facts Label. One key change was an update of the serving size to reflect what people currently eat. NHANES data were used to determine the updated serving sizes. This would not have been possible without our close collaboration with

USDA, Agricultural Research Service, and the dedication and hard work of our interviewers and coders. The announcement for the new label may be found at the following FDA link:

<http://blogs.fda.gov/fdavoices/index.php/2016/05/unveiling-the-new-nutrition-facts-label/>



NHANES Out & About Zika Deployments

Asher Rosinger was deployed to Puerto Rico from March 3-24, to assist the Puerto Rico Department of Health with the development and piloting of the Zika Active Pregnancy Surveillance System (ZAPSS).

On June 1, Asher Rosinger re-deployed to Puerto Rico with the Birth Defects Task Force to serve as on-ground team lead/site coordinator with the Zika Active Pregnancy Surveillance System for 45 days. Asher presented an update to Dr. Frieden on behalf of the Birth

Defects Task Force at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) meeting on June 10.

From May 31 to July 1, Kasey Diebold was deployed to the EOC in Atlanta to work as an Event-based Surveillance Epidemiologist for the Zika response in the American territories. Kasey was selected to serve in the CDC Global Rapid Response Team (RRT) in March, and this is her first assignment activated through the Global RRT.

Tales from the Field...Did You Know

Using the 2015 US population, the NHANES survey costs about 12 cents per year per US resident to conduct. Now isn't that a bargain?



Mobile Examination Center (MEC)

Caption: NHANES Mobile Examination Center (MEC)

NHANES Publications

NHANES staff have authored/co-authored several publications in 2016. Check them out on our website:

[NHANES - Whats New](#)