

# A New Resource for Public Health Workforce Researchers and Policymakers

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## Research Objective:

To initiate and coordinate strategic efforts to improve the public health workforce.

## Study Design:

Creation of the Center of Excellence in Public Health Workforce Research and Policy (COEWRP) to provide a resource and forum for interdisciplinary researchers examining relationships between the workforce and public health outcomes, incentives, costs, and service accessibility and delivery.

## Population Studied:

U.S. Public Health Workforce

## Background:

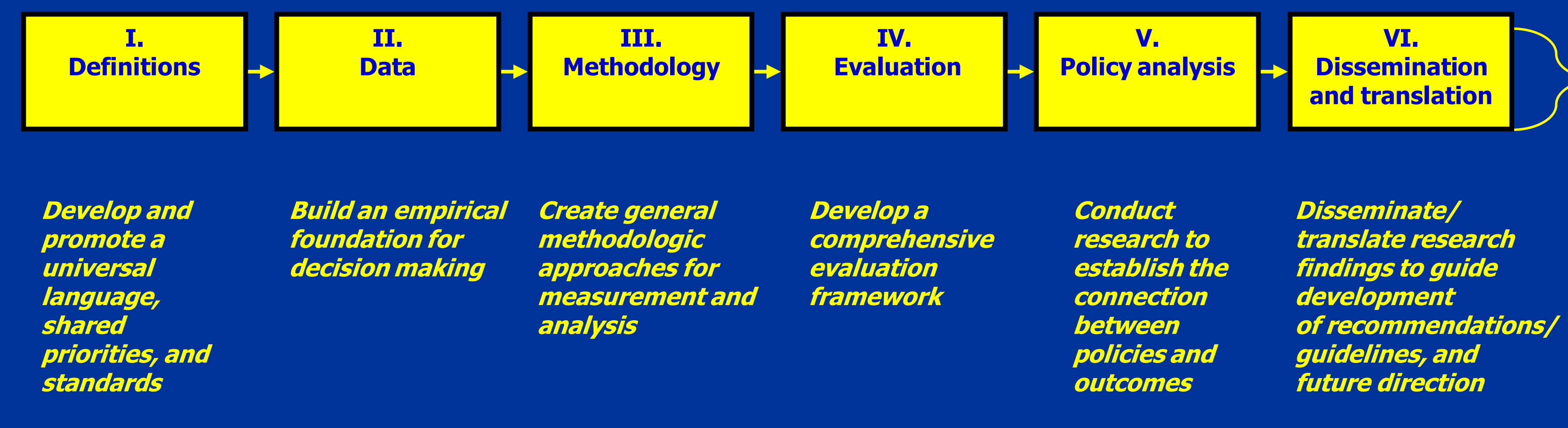
- By 2020, the nation will be facing a shortfall of 250,000 public health workers
- The public health workforce is diminishing even as the U.S. population increases. In 2000, the total workforce was estimated at 448,000, or 50,000 less than in 1980.
- Almost 110,000 workers – nearly one-quarter of the current workforce – will be eligible to retire by 2012.
- Shortages of public health physicians, public health nurses, epidemiologists, health care educators, and administrators are anticipated.
- Over the next 12 years, schools of public health will need to train three times the current number of graduates to meet projected needs.

Source: Association of Schools of Public Health, *Confronting the Public Health Workforce Crisis: An ASPH Policy Paper*, December 2008

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## Public Health Workforce Research: Strategic Development

**GOAL:** To provide public health decision makers with the scientific research necessary to support *coordinated, systematic, empirically driven, evidence-based* public health workforce and career development planning, program, and policy efforts that ensure a competent, diverse, sustainable, and prepared public health workforce necessary to improve health outcomes.



**Outcome:** Evidence-based recommendations for programs and policymakers on workforce investments.

Source : Crawford, C.G. , *Public Health Workforce Research and Future Directions*, 2009.

## UK COEWRP Current Activities:

- Establish a national advisory committee
- Establish a web presence on UK College of Public Health site
- Convene an expert panel on public health workforce research at annual UK Keeneland Conference: <http://www.publichealthsystems.org/phssr/EventsConferences/KeenelandConference>
- Post information about relevant databases on NLM website: [http://wwwcf.nlm.nih.gov/hsrr\\_search/index.cfm](http://wwwcf.nlm.nih.gov/hsrr_search/index.cfm)
- Provide technical assistance to public health workforce researchers
- Coordinate efforts with data harmonization workgroup and UK Center for Public Health Systems and Services Research
- Assess TRAIN data elements as a resource for future research
- Leverage activities with HRSA, PHF, others
- Facilitate CDC's participation & leadership in efforts to improve & encourage new public health workforce policy

## Scope of Work:

To achieve ESPHS #8 (Assure a competent public and personal health care workforce), new directions in workforce analysis are required. COEWRP provides coordination and posting of existing and new data, as well as a venue for sharing research efforts.

## Eight Suggested Research Themes:

- Workforce size and composition
- Workforce diversity
- Workforce effectiveness and health impact
- Recruitment, retention, separation, and retirement
- Worker pay, promotion, performance, and job satisfaction
- Demand for the public health workforce
- Education, training, and credentialing the public health workforce
- Public health workforce policy

Source: Crawford, C. G., *Public Health Workforce Research and Future Directions*, 2009.

## Conclusions:

There is a need for strategic coordination of interdisciplinary research efforts regarding the public health workforce, including issues of monitoring, diversity, effectiveness and health impact, analysis of labor market forces, and education, training, and credentialing.

## Implications:

Research outcomes fostered by the Center can provide a basis for relevant enhancements and changes in public health policy related to the nation's public health workforce and the delivery of the ten essential public health services.

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