

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Epidemiology Associate**

**Class Code: 051049**

**Pay Grade: GJ**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Carries out epidemiologic investigations to prevent and control specific communicable and chronic diseases, injuries, and other health conditions. Duties involve the monitoring of health status and its correlates, identifying trends or outbreaks of diseases or other adverse health events, and providing data and information about programs to promote and protect public health.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

The Epidemiology Associate is responsible for assisting with a range of investigative and analytical epidemiologic activities related to the surveillance, detection, and prevention of diseases and injuries. Works as a team or project member, and may be responsible for a specific infection, trauma, or chronic condition under guidance.

The Epidemiologist I is responsible for carrying out a broad and complex range of investigative and analytical epidemiologic activities related to the surveillance, detection, and prevention of diseases and injuries. Incumbent works independently or as an experienced team or project member, providing epidemiologic expertise for specific programs or more complex individual epidemiologic analyses.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Participates in the development and design of epidemiologic investigations (e.g. disease investigation, study, or screening program) by using established methods and practices to identify and evaluate a wide range of health conditions within an assigned program area, and to recognize public health problems pertinent to the population.
  - a. Lists known relevant data and information sources within and outside the public health system.
  - b. Assists with synthesizing data into information about the health outcome in a population.
  - c. Applies relevant laws to data collection management, dissemination, and use of data and information.
  - d. Relates study findings to current scientific knowledge.
  - e. Conducts investigation as directed.
  - f. Assists with development of recommendations for action or intervention.
  - g. Collects surveillance and other data for use in tracking program objectives and outcomes.
  - h. Assists in providing epidemiologic input into assessment of the public health system to aid state or tribal public health planning.
2. Performs analyses of data by using statistical techniques commonly used in epidemiologic evaluations to assist in analyzing observed health phenomena.
  - a. Maintains databases for analysis of health problems and assesses the potential public health impact.

- b. Maintains original data and conducts data entry while ensuring accuracy and reliability.
  - c. Adheres to national standards for coding and variables as directed.
  - d. Computes frequencies and descriptive statistics.
  - e. Performs analysis of crude rates.
  - f. Uses identified informatics tools in support of epidemiologic practice as directed.
  - g. Identifies standard categories used to define special populations.
3. Identifies surveillance data needs, recognizes potential uses of data and implements new or revises existing surveillance systems, reports key findings from the surveillance system, and supports evaluation of surveillance systems.
  - a. Uses surveillance systems to collect disease or health outcome data.
  - b. Communicates epidemiologic work to agency staff through written reports and oral presentations.
  - c. Coordinates with other agencies to assist in planning and reporting requirements on specific area.
  - d. Responds to public queries about epidemiologic data.
  - e. Classifies potential cases according to whether they meet the case definition.
  - f. Assists in monitoring data quality.
  - g. Maintains good working relationships and communications with reporting entities.
  - h. Delivers instructions and advice to community public health agencies on public disease control and injury prevention to enhance knowledge of disease/injury prevention and control.
4. Assists with development of goals, objectives, and budgets for grants.
  - a. Supports and promotes the organizations vision in all programs and activities.
  - b. Practices professional development to enhance knowledge and transfer of learning.
  - c. Assists in grant writing.
5. Performs other work as assigned.

#### **D. Reporting Relationships:**

Reports to a program administrator or division director and works collaboratively with other staff. May direct or oversee the work of field staff in relation to the assigned area.

#### **E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenges include time management during peak seasons; prioritizing disease conditions in the changing world of the recommendations and guidance from the CDC; and coordinating with all project areas to write responses on performance measures and end of year summaries for assigned grant writing portions.

Problems resolved include ensuring data is of high quality standards; and staying current with program guidelines, policies, regulations, and public health measures.

#### **F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include daily management and prioritization of projects and tasks and setting timelines; whether or not cases meet case definition; and recommending control of communicable diseases using policy and procedure guides and manuals.

Decisions referred include any cases or outbreaks that are expected to draw media/legal attention or cases that may lead to an outbreak investigation.

#### **G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with the other epidemiologist staff and contractors; infection control nurses; weekly contact with state contacts when cases impact human/animal health, reports to Centers for Disease Control weekly on surveillance of specific program area; and monthly contact with the State Epidemiologist.

#### **H. Working Conditions:**

Typical office environment. Occasional travel in-state and out-of-state to attend meetings.

#### **I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- Practices and principles of epidemiology;
- Assisting with epidemiologic assessments and analysis;
- Statistical tools and software;
- Epidemiological study methodologies and protocols;
- Regulations and policies involving reportable diseases and infections;
- State and local public and individual health problems and programs.

Ability to:

- Assist with investigations of epidemic infections, chronic diseases, and traumatic conditions;
- Communicate evidence based practice and data driven decision making;
- Analyze complex health data;
- Prepare studies and reports;
- Organize data from surveillance, investigations or other sources;
- Use basic epidemiologic communication skills;
- Participate in development of community partnerships to support epidemiologic investigations;
- Assist in developing recommended evidence-based interventions and control measures in response to epidemiologic findings;
- Assist in evaluation of programs;
- Prepare reports and presentations that communicate necessary information to agency staff.

#### **J. Qualifications:**

Education and Experience:

- A master's degree in public health (MPH) or a master's of science degree in public health (MSPH) with a focus on epidemiology or analysis and assessment;  
or
- Bachelor's or other non-epidemiology professional degree or certification (e.g., RN, MD/DO, DDS/DMD, DVM, PhD, RS) without formal academic epidemiology training and with greater or equal to two years' experience performing epidemiology work under the guidance of a higher level epidemiologist.