Position Title: Graduate Research Assistant

Project: Evidence synthesis for congenital syphilis prevention modeling

Location: Remote, with occasional virtual or in-person meetings

Duration: 10-20 hours a week, for up to 4 months

Principal Investigator: Professor Nicolas Menzies, Department of Global Health and Population.

Project Lead: Dr Minttu Rönn, Research Scientist, Department of Global Health and Population.

About the project: Congenital syphilis remains a major and preventable public health challenge in the United States, with disproportionate burden among populations facing barriers to timely prenatal care, syphilis testing, and treatment. Preventing congenital syphilis may therefore require strategies that reach pregnant people outside traditional prenatal care settings, including emergency departments, mobile and outreach programs, correctional settings, harm-reduction and substance-use services, and other low-barrier points of care.

This project will synthesize evidence on the reach, implementation, and effectiveness of these strategies, including syphilis screening, diagnosis, treatment, and linkage to care. The primary goal of the evidence synthesis is to inform a mathematical model evaluating the population-level and equity impacts of alternative congenital syphilis prevention strategies. Depending on the strength and breadth of the evidence identified, the work may also support a standalone scoping review manuscript. The project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Prevention Policy Modeling Lab consortium and is being conducted in collaboration with CDC's Division of STD Prevention.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct and document searches of peer-reviewed and grey literature.
- Screen studies for eligibility and extract relevant quantitative and qualitative data.
- Verify key estimates, including numerators, denominators, outcome definitions, and model-relevant assumptions.
- Maintain structured evidence tables and support synthesis of findings for modeling and publication.

Qualifications:

Required:

- Graduate-level training in epidemiology, infectious diseases, public health, or a related field.
- Strong attention to detail and ability to work carefully with quantitative information.

- Excellent organizational, written, and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and manage multiple tasks.

Preferred:

- Prior experience with literature reviews, systematic or scoping reviews, and data extraction.
- Experience using academic databases and developing or implementing literature search strategies.
- Experience working with grey literature, public-health guidance, or program evaluations.
- Previous work in infectious diseases, sexually transmitted infections, maternal or reproductive health, or related areas.
- Experience with reference-management software, Excel, and/or statistical software such as R.

What to expect:

- Training and practical experience in evidence synthesis, grey-literature searching, and translation of evidence into mathematical model parameters.
- Experience contributing to a CDC-funded, policy-relevant research project at the intersection of infectious disease epidemiology, maternal health, and mathematical modeling.
- Collaboration with researchers at Harvard, the Prevention Policy Modeling Lab, and CDC's Division of STD Prevention.
- Opportunity to contribute to manuscripts and other research products, with authorship based on contribution.
- Skill-building in literature searching, critical appraisal, quantitative data extraction, evidence synthesis, and model parameterization.
- Hourly remuneration according to Harvard guidelines.

Start date and application:

- Expected start: by mid-January 2027
- Submit to Minttu Rönn (mronn@hsph.harvard.edu) and Nick Menzies (nmenzies@hsph.harvard.edu): CV, cover letter outlining your prior experience and interest to this role, and two professional references
- Application: Rolling basis until filled

Hourly rate: $23.00/hr