

BHDDH SPOTLIGHT

MACY DALY



Macy Daly is one of the people at BHDDH who provides answers when colleagues ask questions. But before she responds to sometimes difficult questions such as “how much money do we need” or “how can we better serve patients,” she usually has a few questions of her own.

Like other members of the data team at BHDDH, Daly is armed with a list for those who come in search of information and insight.

“The first thing we always ask everybody,” she says, “is what is your underlying question.”

Knowing the real question is critical, Daly says, because it helps the data team to find information that will help. As she puts it, someone might ask how much funding is needed for a specific program, but what they really need is data on past demand and costs that can be used to estimate future costs.

Other questions that the data team will ask include how the information should be presented, what time frame is needed, and who the information is for.

There’s also the ever-important “how soon do you need it” question.

When the response is needed within five days or sooner, the data team considers the request to be urgent.

“We do try to turn around pretty quickly,” said Daly, the Chief Health Program Evaluator for what’s formally known as BHDDH’s Research, Data Evaluation, and Compliance Unit. “It’s all about shifting priorities with the requests.”

Daly’s supervisor, Jamieson Goulet, said she impresses with her willingness to take on challenging requests. One current project has her combing through paper-based records on past forensic patients at Eleanor Slater Hospital. The goal is to build a user-friendly database that will help staff to identify interventions that can help people before they need hospitalization, and help staff identify options when patients are ready for discharge.

“It’s really about knowing the history of these patients,” Goulet said. “To find out what’s happening, we need data, we need to know what the history is, and we cannot get that today. So she’s talking to multiple people and gathering information from multiple sources.”

Daly, who has a master’s degree in public affairs, came to BHDDH in 2018, after working as a policy analyst at the Rhode Island Policy Innovation Lab. Since arriving at BHDDH, she says she has gained a deeper appreciation for the field of public health.

“Sometimes you get caught up in the numbers and the data, but at the end of the day, knowing that we’re informing programs that I really believe in, and doing work for a department that is really innovative and trying to change things from the ground up, has been super rewarding,” she said. “I’ve really developed a love for this field and this work. I feel very lucky to have found this position in particular.”

In addition to Daly’s work ethic, Goulet said she is also good at keeping things light. Sometimes, he said, she arranges end-of-the-day online trivia games for her data team colleagues.

“She can be serious and take on things when she needs to,” Goulet said. “But she’s also the fun one.”