

Summer 2005

Issue 6

Narrowing the gap between Health and the Environment

Utah EPHT Program Accomplishments

The Utah EPHT Program has made substantial progress towards the development of plans and components of a statewide standards-based, coordinated, and integrated EPHT network that allows linkage of health effects data with human exposure data and environmental hazard data.

EPHT staff completing an inventory of 212 data systems, conducting a comprehensive technical assessment of a subset of those systems. EPHT IT staff identified the most probable systems to be included in the development phase of a Utah EPHT Network: Utah Real Time Air Monitoring System (Ambient), Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS), Ambient Water Monitoring System (Storet), Utah Cancer Registry, Utah Birth Defect Network, Utah Vital Record Data System. EPHT IT staff began evaluating 3 methods to develop a gateway that would enable exchange of data in a network.

EPHT staff and Utah Policy Workgroup have developed a Scientific Review Board Policies and Procedures to assist the Utah EPHT program in maintaining high quality scientific endeavors and ensure that applicable rules and regulations are maintained (see page 2 for more details on the Utah Scientific Review Board.)

EPHT staff have developed a draft communication plan to guide the Utah EPHT Program in developing a clear, coordinated, and effective message to its varied target audiences. The goals of the Utah EPHT Program communication plan are to: increase awareness of the EPHT Program and foster partnerships by educating stakeholders and various audiences; inform key audiences about EPHT Program successes; demonstrate how the EPHT Program will benefit their organization or programs; and keep in regular contact with EPHT Program stakeholders and partners.

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Special points of interest:

- Utah's EPHT program accomplishments
- Utah Scientific Review Board

EPHT Program Scientific Review Board

To alleviate concerns of data holders about the release, disclosure and use of data, the EPHT has formed the EPHT Scientific Review Board. The Scientific Review Board is tasked with managing the collection, use, and disposition of data by users of the EPHT network in Utah. The Review Board coordinates these aspects of the EPHT network to protect both data contributors and data subject against indiscriminate use or disclosure. In addition to its primary role, the Review Board provides maintenance and up-keep of the data within its custody. Whenever possible, the Review Board promotes and assists in the expansion and enhancement of the data.

The Review Board will review all study plans and reports to ensure consistency of those plans and reports with public health objectives and goals and to ensure quality and soundness of the study designs and the reports

To alleviate data stewards concerns the EPHT Review Board was established.

For more information or a copy of the EPHT Review Board Policies and Procedures contact Kori Gunn at kgunn@utah.gov or 801-538-6191.

Training Assessment

EPHT staff conducted a training needs assessment for stakeholders and staff within the state. The training needs identified were grouped into four main categories:

- Enhancing Information Technology skills (e.g., web-based system development, database management and design, GIS, relevant software applications, etc.)
- Increasing efficiency and effectiveness of responses to community concerns (e.g., mold issues, cancer cluster investigations,

methamphetamine lab hazard assessments, etc.)

- Promoting professional development (e.g., continuing education in public health, policy making, modeling and statistics, geospatial epidemiology, risk assessment, etc.)
- Improving communication skills (e.g., risk communication training, community outreach strategies, health promotion and health education methods, etc.)



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Literature Review

Ambient Air Pollution: Health Hazards to Children

PEDIATRICS Vol. 114 No. 6 December 2004, pp. 1699-1707 (doi:10.1542/peds.2004-2166)



Ambient (outdoor) air pollution is now recognized as an important problem, both nationally and worldwide. Our scientific understanding of the spectrum of health effects of air pollution has increased, and numerous studies are finding important health effects from air pollution at levels once considered safe. Children and infants are among the most susceptible to many of the air pollutants. In addition to associations between air pollution and respiratory symptoms, asthma exacerbations, and asthma hospitalizations, recent studies have found links between air pollution and preterm birth, infant mortality, deficits in lung growth, and possibly, development of asthma. This policy statement summarizes the recent literature linking ambient air pollution to adverse health outcomes in children and includes a

perspective on the current regulatory process. The statement provides advice to pediatricians on how to integrate issues regarding air quality and health into patient education and children's environmental health advocacy and concludes with recommendations to the government on promotion of effective air-pollution policies to ensure protection of children's health.

Children and infants are among the most susceptible to many of the air pollutants

Human Biomonitoring to Optimize Fish Consumption Advice: Reducing Uncertainty When Evaluating Benefits and Risks **March 2005, Vol 95, No. 3 American Journal of Public Health 393-397**

National fish consumption advisories that are based solely on assessment of risk of exposure to contaminants without consideration of consumption benefits result in overly restrictive advice that discourages eating fish even in areas where such advice is unwarranted. In fact, generic fish advisories may have adverse public health consequences because of decreased fish consumption and substitution of foods that are less healthy.

contaminants, owing to technological advances in analytical chemistry. It is now possible to target fish consumption advice to specific at-risk populations by evaluating individual contaminant exposures and health risk factors. Because of the current epidemic of nutritionally linked disease, such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, general recommendations for limiting fish consumption are ill conceived and potentially dangerous.

Public health is on the threshold of a new era for determining actual exposures to environmental





If your program or department is conducting their own environmental tracking project please call Kori Gunn at 801-538-6191. We would like to hear what you are doing to help build the bridge between health and the environment. We would like to share your information with other EPHT stakeholders in the next Utah EPHT newsletter.



Did you know that in Excel you can do your own statistical analysis by pushing the function key under insert on the menu.

EPHT Newsletter Evaluation

Is the Utah EPHT Newsletter Useful?

- Yes
- No

Was the information relevant to the Utah EPHT program?

- Yes
- No

What information would you like in the next Utah EPHT newsletter?

- More information on pilot projects
- More information on what the national EPHT program
- Other (please specify)

Comments:

Name _____

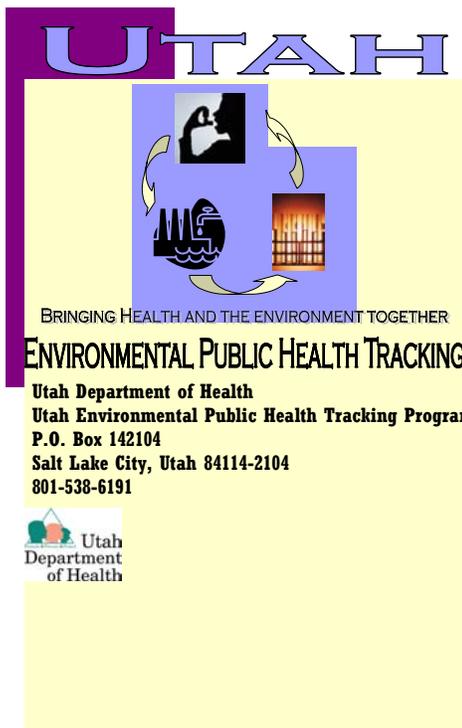
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Background on Utah's EPHT Program

The Utah Department of Health, Environmental Epidemiology Program received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2002 to begin a nationwide Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) program to increase capacity to respond to concerns at the state and local levels. The EPHT program collects, analyzes, interprets, and

uses data to determine health effects potentially related to exposure to environmental factors. The goal of the EPHT program is to provide information that can be used to plan, apply, and evaluate actions to prevent and control environmentally related diseases.

Upcoming activities and events

Utah EPHT Program Planning Consortium Meeting:

10:00-12:00P.M.

Cannon Health Building

288 North 1460 West, Room 114

- October 19, 2005



**Check out the Utah EPHT website
www.health.utah.gov/epht**