



# The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network



ISSUE 20

SPRING 2010

## TNAC UPCOMING MEETING:

We are looking at May 26th for our next TNAC meeting. We hope to include Dr. Donald Thimsen from West Virginia Bureau for Public Health. He is in the process of developing a tracking portal for his state.

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## Progress on the Tracking Network Advisory Committee (TNAC) 2010 Work Plan

### National Tracking Network

**Progress:** Emily Stembridge has been busy promoting the National Tracking Network. She continues to distribute promotional and educational materials and to conduct trainings. Most recently, she trained the following audiences: the TNAC, the U of U's Women's Conference, and professors and students at various universities.

**Contact:** Emily Stembridge

### The Tracking Network on IBIS-PH

**Progress:** We are working with the Office of Public Health Assessment and Bob Nagel from the Automated Geographic Resource Center to create an interface in which users can query data for a geographic region using an intuitive mapping interface, similar to Google Maps. This will be an improvement on the current interface in which users must select geographic areas from a list, which can be complicated, considering very few of us know our census tract, off-hand.

**Contact:** Emily Stembridge (messaging) and Julia Shumway (technical aspects)

### Secure IBIS-PH Functionality

**Progress:** The Office of Public Health Assessment is currently testing role-based access capabilities for Secure IBIS-PH. Users will be assigned access to look at data for only a particular geographic area over which they have jurisdiction or research interest.

**Contact:** Julia Shumway

### Secure IBIS-PH Access

**Progress:** Several stakeholders have expressed interest in accessing Secure IBIS-PH. The Scientific Review Board has already processed 8 Secure IBIS-PH applications this year. Applicants have willingly provided additional input in response to data partner requests, and we anticipate the application and review process for Secure IBIS-PH to continue smoothly.

**Contact:** Julia Shumway

### Metadata on IBIS-PH

**Progress:** The Office of Public Health Assessment has been working hard on developing the metadata search tool and interface to make metadata (or, as it is termed on the site, "Frequently Asked Questions") more accessible to data users. This tool is nearing completion.

**Contact:** Julia Shumway

### Continued Data Transfers

**Progress:** Our next data transfer with CDC is scheduled for May 10-14. We will be submitting birth defects and drinking water at this time, along with updated metadata. John Beard is hard at work processing the data to meet CDC's requirements.

**Contact:** John Beard

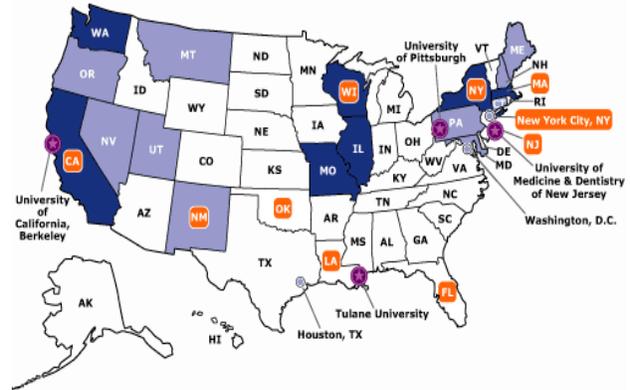
# National Portal Updates

The CDC Recently added six more states to the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. The new states are Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Vermont. That brings the Tracking Network members to 22 states, 1 city and 4 Academic Partners for Excellence. “We’re excited to be able to fund six additional states. This is an important step in moving toward our goal of a nationwide Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, Participation from more states helps strengthen this innovative tool that offers a more complete picture of our nation’s environmental health.”

Judith Qualters, Ph.D., CDC

## Funded Programs and Contacts

To access information on a specific project, click the enlarge map link below, or scroll down and pick the state, city, or Center name from the list provided.



### Legend

- Planning & Capacity Building Activities
- Infrastructure Enhancement & Data Linkage Demonstration Projects (with a planning & capacity building component)
- Academic Partners for Excellence
- Data Linkage Demonstration Projects

## National Portal Review

Recently, we were asked to review content on the of the National Tracking Portal. John Beard and Julia Shumway were willing to share what they learned from the review.

John said: “Completing the National Tracking Portal Review Survey showed me how useful the data can be for environmental public health surveillance and risk linkage. I particularly liked the mapping capability because seeing geographic trends can help public health professionals target their interventions to at-risk populations. I also thought the short explanations of environmental exposures and

health outcomes was useful and easy to understand. This is important since one of the target audiences for the Tracking Network is the general public.”

Julia said: “I learned what a rich supply of information is available on the National Tracking Network. As I explored each measure, I was amazed by how easily I could access related health and environmental information. The content was easy to understand because glossaries and links to related information were conveniently placed so that if ever I had a question, I could link to a page where I could find the answer.”



## Utah Tracking supports a Salt Lake City Children's Environmental Health/Environmental Justice Initiative



Recently, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made funds available to showcase a Children's Environmental Health - Environmental Justice initiative in the Glendale, Jordan Meadows, Polar Grove, Rose Park, State Fairpark and Westpointe neighborhoods on the west side of Salt Lake County. The long-term goal of this project is to achieve a more holistic, integrated approach to government coordination with communities to address and mitigate environmental impacts on children's health.

As part of the introductory process the US EPA asked the Utah Tracking Program to assess environmentally related child health concerns for

those communities. In collaboration with the Salt Lake Valley Health Department, the Utah Tracking Program looked at birth outcomes, causes of death, cancer, asthma, and injury data for children living in the study area for the most recent 5-years that data was available. The rate of children with elevated blood lead levels, low birth weight babies, and asthma were all higher than would be expected based on the county rate. Similarly the rates were elevated when compared to other ZIP code level areas that had similar demographics, suggesting that one or more of these health concerns might be appropriate for the EPA initiative.

## Asthma and UEPHTN

The Utah Tracking Program recently collaborated with the Utah Department of Health's Asthma Program to analyze the relationship between daily  $PM_{2.5}$  levels and the number of daily emergency department (ED) encounters due to asthma in Salt Lake County.

The analysis, which used data from 2004-2008, found no association between daily  $PM_{2.5}$  levels and asthma ED encounters, after adjusting for age, sex, and elevation of the zip code of residence for each case. There was likewise no association between the presence of an inversion and daily asthma ED encounters. The number of days into an inversion an asthmatic went to the ED was also not associated with daily asthma ED encounters.

Celeste Beck, an epidemiologist with the Asthma Program, will present the results via an oral presentation at the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia, in May 2010.



## New Faces in EPHT



### Eli Morey

A native of Littleton, Colorado, Eli received his bachelors degree in chemistry in 2007, with a minor in music and his MPH in 2009 from BYU. Last summer, Eli worked as a clinical research coordinator at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, studying the environmental factors of asthma. Last year he was awarded a grant from the UDOH to study the knowledge and attitudes of Utah adults regarding residential methamphetamine contamination. Eli joined the Health Hazards Assessment team in November as an Environmental Epidemiologist. He now conducts cancer cluster investigations and public health assessments for contaminated sites in Utah. Some of his favorite activities outside of work are singing, photography, wake surfing, and hanging out with his wife and 16-month-old son.



### John Beard

John Beard, born and raised in Provo, Utah, is an epidemiologist and joined the Utah Tracking Program in November as the Network Coordinator. He graduated with a BS in Statistics in 2008 and an MPH in April 2010 from BYU. John completed an internship with the Epidemiology Branch of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences where he analyzed the association between pesticide use and suicide among pesticide applicators and their spouses. When he's not working, John enjoys spending time with his wife and baby boy, taking walks, reading biographies, catching up on the latest sporting events, and playing board games. He particularly likes to play a collaborative game called "Pandemic" that has an epidemiologist as one of its possible roles.



### Emily Stembridge

Emily joined the Utah Tracking Program as the Health Educator in December of 2009. She provides training, marketing and outreach for the Utah Tracking Program and the program marketing and outreach group for the CDC. Emily completed an internship during the Fall of 2009 in the Environmental Epidemiology Program at the Utah Department of Health. Her project focus was on the current effects and anticipated effects of climate change in Utah. She received her BS in public health education from BYU in 2009. Emily enjoys traveling, cooking, French, dance, rock climbing, the ocean, long boarding and especially spending time with her husband and dog.



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## The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network)

is the ongoing collection, integration, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of data on environmental hazards, exposure to those hazards, and the health effects that may be related to the exposures. Our mission is to develop a state-wide, standards-based, Web-enabled tracking network information system in Utah to enable information and knowledge dissemination and improve public health in the realm of chronic disease related to environmental factors.

