Issue 15

Environmental Public Health Tracking

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"When the Pew Commission report came out, everyone—the press, the public, congress—couldn't believe that a tracking program didn't already exist."

-Shelley Hearne, Dr. P.H., Founding Executive Director, Trust for America's Health

EPHT Facilitated Discussion in Park City

Thank you to those who participated in the Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Facilitated Discussion in Park City with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO), Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and our local partners. We appreciate your efforts and consider the meeting a success. Notes about the discussion will be sent out in July.

This discussion started out with guest speaker Anne Venner from the CDC who focused on the national perspective of EPHT including the vision, mission, goals and key functions of the program.

Sam LeFevre from the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) spoke on the background, goals and progress of the Tracking Network to date as well as the partnerships EPHT has made. A demonstration of the IBIS Secure Portal was also presented.

In the afternoon, a facilitated group discussion was lead by Tom Dunlop of Dunlop Environmental Consulting. This discussion was open to the group for questions and answers. The group discussed what EPHT means at a local level and the benefits of having an EPHT Network.

Some foreseeable benefits of the EPHTN that were discussed include:

- It will address public concerns in a timely manner
- It will share the public health responsibility
- It will create new public health partnerships
- It will provide standardized data

Some health outcome areas the group decided would be good for the EPHTN to address in the future include:

- Autism
- Diabetes
- Juvenile Arthritis
- Birth Outcomes
- Renal Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis

This discussion was the ninth of its kind to be conducted among EPHT states. They are a good way to get feedback from Local Health Departments and Data Sharing Partners on the utility and value of the EPHT network as well as opportunity to resolve any questions or concerns. Thanks again to those who participated.

Welcome John Contreras

Please help us in welcoming John Contreras, the new EPHT manager for Utah. John has been with the Utah Department of Health for approximately 11 years working in environmental and communicable epidemiology. John's primary responsibilities in the Environmental Epidemiology Program are to oversee the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, Lead Project, Mold Information, and the Methamphetamine Initiative Project. John is a graduate of Arizona State University where he obtained a Master of Public Administration, and a graduate of the University of Utah where he obtained a Master of Science in Public Health and a Doctorate in Public Health. Welcome John!

Initial Transmission of Utah EPHT Data to CDC

Utah is a participatory state in the CDC Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (EPHTN). Upon reaching production phase, states such as Utah will periodically submit local data to the national CDC EPHTN data repository. On May 16, an initial submission was accomplished to test the system. Data submitted by Utah consisted of hospital discharges for asthma, myocardial infarction and carbon monoxide poisoning, birth defects, and drinking water as XML datasets; that is, data was submitted in XML, an increasingly common format for data exchange. Utah EPHTN staff members participate in various data interest groups, called Content Work Groups. These work groups developed National Consistent Data Measures (NCDM's) for these and other datasets. These measures were output from SAS (an analytical statistics package) computer programs in XML format. The various work groups developed these SAS procedures to run against state datasets in order to get the NCDMs. Utah modified and ran these SAS programs to get its measures.

Getting the measures ready involved another step, requiring the development of so-called staging tables first. To get these staging tables, complex queries in Structured Query Language (SQL) were run, with results saved in XML for input into subsequent SAS processing.

Once NCDM datasets in XML were developed, they were submitted to CDC using a specialized CDC data transmission software, called the Public Health Information Network – Messaging System, or PHIN-MS. The Utah instance of the PHIN-MS worked properly. This complicated test was a success and more data exchanges are expected.

New Public IBIS-PH Indicators

New Environmental Public Health Tracking IBIS-PH Indicators are currently being developed! These include:

- Carbon Monoxide Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits
- Bladder Cancer
- Brain and CNS Cancer in Adults and Children
- Breast Cancer Incidence
- Leukemias in Adults and Children
- Lung Cancer Incidence
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Thyroid Cancer

Also, the Lead in Children indicator has been updated to include graphical views on:

- Pre 1950's Housing Units by County
- Children Living in Poverty by County
- Utahn's Age 18 and Older

These new indicators will give new insights into the health of our state. Thank you to those who assisted in their creation.

Environmental Public Health Tracking Network Categorized Index

- Air Quality
- Asthma: Adult Prevalence
- Asthma Hospitalizations
- Asthma Related Emergency Department Visits
- Birth Defects: Congenital Heart Defects
- Birth Defects: Down Syndrome
- Birth Defects: Infant Mortality
- Birth Defects: Neural Tube Defects
- Birth Defects: Orofacial Clefts
- Birth Defects: Overall
- Birth Rates
- Bladder Cancer
- Blood Lead in Adults
- Blood Lead in Children
- Brain and CNS Cancer
- Breast Cancer Deaths
- Breast Cancer Incidence
- Cancer Deaths
- Carbon Monoxide: Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits
- Environmental Hazard Sites
- Fetal Mortality
- General Fertility Rate
- Infant Mortality
- Leukemias
- Low Birth Weight
- Lung Cancer Deaths
- Lung Cancer Incidence
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Thyroid Cancer

EPHT Categorical Profile in Public IBIS-PH

Now there is a way to easily access all the EPHT related indicators in public IBIS-PH. Simply go to the IBIS home page, scroll over the "indicator reports" tab, click the "categorized indicator report profile report index" and select "environmental public health tracking." Once you're there, you can easily view all the EPHT related indicators as well as view what indicators are currently being developed.

Environmental Public Health Tracking

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UTAH EPHTN

Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

We're on the Web!

www.health.utah.gov/ephtp

TAG/SRB Meeting

A Technical Advisory Group and Scientific Review Board joint meeting has been scheduled for Monday July 21st at 2:00 at the Cannon Health Building in room 125. If you are involved in the TAG or SRB, your attendance is greatly appreciated. We will be discussing the possible application of IRB approval to share data with the CDC, data re-release protocols, as well as how CDC will be using data received by the states.

Contact Alison Cox at amcox@utah.gov if you have an article or news you would like to be included in the next EPHT newsletter.