



## News Release

For Immediate Release:  
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John Contreras  
(801) 538-6191

### **CDC and Health Department Launch Environmental Health Tool**

*Environmental Public Health Tracking Network will protect our citizen's health.*

(Salt Lake City, UT) In keeping with the Utah Department of Health's (UDOH) mission to protect the health of Utahns from environmental hazards, the UDOH has joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in launching the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network). The Tracking Network is a first-of-its-kind environmental health tool, designed to close the gap in what we know about the environment's impact on health.

A dynamic web-based system, the Tracking Network tracks key environmental hazards and health problems across Utah and the nation. It will improve understanding and lead to public health actions that can prevent chronic illnesses such as asthma and cancer.

“In the face of emerging issues such as air quality and rising rates of asthma in children, protecting our state's health from the environment is a top priority,” said John Contreras, Utah Department of Health. “The Tracking Network is a major step forward. It will help us identify threats to our state's health posed by the environment and improve how we deal with those threats.”

For the first time, state residents will have access to critical environmental health information that will help them make informed decisions and take action to protect themselves and their families. Using this tool, people can learn about air quality, water quality, asthma, cancer, birth defects, and more.

The Tracking Network will dramatically reduce the time it takes local and state health officials to respond to community concerns regarding environmental health hazards or potential disease trends. “The Tracking Network allows me to address citizen's concerns regarding potential

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## **Page 2 of 2- CDC and Health Department Launch Environmental Health Tool**

health threats in just a few hours,” said Contreras. “Before the Tracking Network, this could have taken over a year to address.”

Utah is one of the 16 states to receive funding from the CDC to improve what we know about the environment’s effect on health by building state Tracking Networks and conducting pilot projects linking environmental hazards and health effects.

Chronic disease accounts for 70 percent of deaths in the United States, but some of the reported connections between chronic diseases and the environment remain unclear. With Utah’s participation, CDC’s environmental public health tracking efforts are closing this gap. Timely, integrated environmental and health data at the federal, state and local levels via the national and state tracking networks will provide a basis for early notification of pending environmental events.

For more information or to access this web-based environmental health tool visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ephtracking> or [ibis.health.utah.gov](http://ibis.health.utah.gov)

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*