

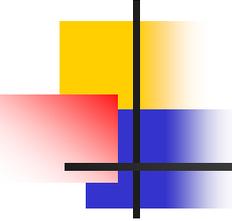
New York City

Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Bureau of Environmental Disease Prevention

Environmental Public Health Tracking Network in New York City

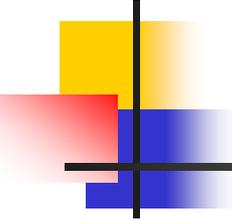
Jessica Leighton, Ph.D.

May 13, 2003



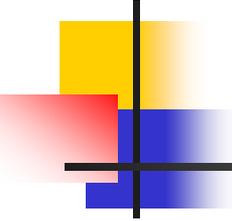
Presentation Objectives

- Describe current barriers to EPHT
- Present 9/11 WTC response as example
- Introduce NYC's EPHT Program:
Environmental Connections



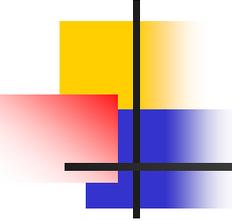
What is Environmental Public Health Tracking?

“The ongoing collection, analysis, integration, interpretation and dissemination of environmental hazard, exposure and health effects data”



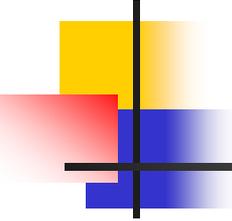
Barriers to an EPHT Network

- Data often unavailable/inconsistent quality
- Difficult to coordinate between multiple agencies at local, state & federal level
- Lack of standards



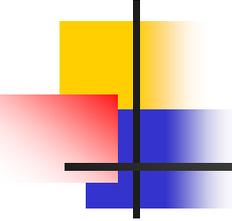
Barriers to an EPHT Network

- Ability to provide timely information
- Inadequate scientific evidence of relationships to justify resources
- Focus has been on standardizing of infectious disease data and on **bioterrorism**



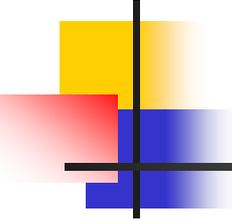
Potential Environmental Exposures: WTC Response

- Acute environmental exposures
- Fires/smoke for 3 months
- Potential exposure due to recovery efforts (barges, trucks transporting debris)
- Potential sources of exposure: Air, water, dust, soil monitoring required



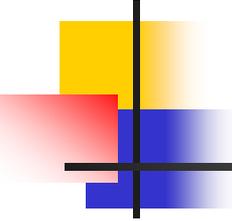
Health Concerns Post 9/11

- Acute breathing problems from the initial dust and debris cloud
- Irritant/other effects from the continued smoke and dust (eye, nose, throat irritation, nausea, headache, etc.)
- Concern about long term effects from potential exposures
- Long-term respiratory effects



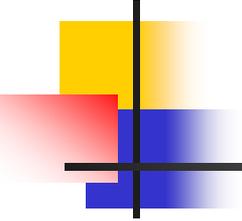
WTC Disaster Highlighted the Need for:

- Sustained EPHT
- Interagency collaboration
- Standards for:
 - sample collection
 - laboratory analysis
 - data submission/transfer
 - data analysis
 - background levels and health-based standards for data interpretation
 - Data presentation/display



WTC Disaster Highlighted the Need for:

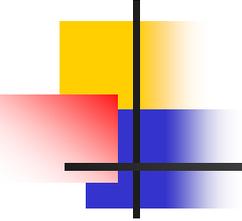
- Methodologies for collection of exposure and health outcome data for residents and workers
- Methods for combining of hazard/exposure/outcome data
- Improved capacity and understanding of environmental health
- Technologies for rapid communication



WTC Response Risk Communication

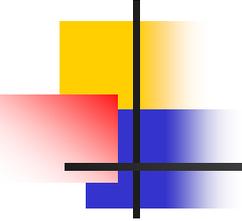
Unique challenges for diverse audiences:
media, policy-makers, community,
medical

- Fact sheets
- Press Releases
- Community Presentations
- Medical Provider Alerts



How we are improving EPHT in NYC

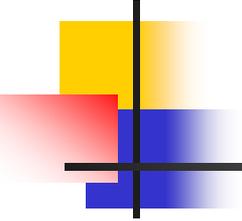
- Disaster Response:
 - BT/CT/RT Preparedness Activity
 - Long-Term Capacity:
 - Environmental Public Health Tracking
- Our Program = *Environmental Connections*



NYC Environmental Connections Long-term Goals

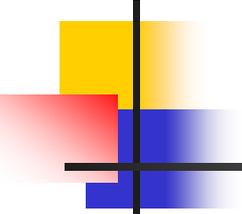
Maintain a EPHT network that can:

- Monitor and disseminate information about environmental hazards and diseases
- Generate hypotheses on possible linkages between environmental hazards and disease
- Communicate information about potential hazards and health associations.
- Develop, implement and evaluate environmental public health programs and policies



NYC Environmental Connections Short-term Goals

Develop components of an
infrastructure to support EPHT



Environmental Connections: NYC's EPHT Program

- Partner with NYC DEP & NYS DOH
- Collaborate with other agencies & stakeholders
- Evaluate data systems
- Develop staff capacity
- Enhance environmental & health data systems
- Develop environmental health indicators
- Improve environmental risk communication
- Increase compatibility with national systems