

# poster ABSTRACT



## **TITLE**

EPHT Collaborative Efforts with County and Tribal Health Departments in Montana

## **THEME**

Disseminate Credible Information to Guide Policy, Practice and Other Actions to Improve the Nation's Health

## **KEYWORDS**

needs assessment, local infrastructure, environmental health

## **BACKGROUND**

Local support is critical for statewide public health efforts, and the distribution of scarce public health resources should take into consideration local perceptions of areas with greatest need.

## **OBJECTIVE(S)**

As part of the Montana Environmental Public Health Tracking Program's statewide needs assessment, county and tribal health departments conducted environmental health needs assessments in their communities to determine local perceptions on the areas of greatest environmental health concern.

## **METHOD(S)**

Nine counties and two tribal health departments conducted environmental health needs assessments in their communities in 2003–2004. Assessments involved examining data on local environmental health concerns and conducting surveys to assess perceptions of concerns among community members. The EPHT project provided training and technical assistance to local health departments to enable them to work with community members, assess available data, and conduct surveys.

## **RESULT(S)**

The results of the local environmental health needs assessments contributed to our ability to assess statewide priority environmental health issues. Locally the process increased awareness of environmental health issues; contributed to capacity building among local environmental health departments; reinforced the ten essential services of environmental health; and allowed local health departments to proactively assess community concerns.

## **DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Results of local environmental health needs assessments completed in 2003–2004 were compiled into a document distributed to the local jurisdictions who participated, to state agencies, and to legislators. These results were taken into account in the Montana Environmental Public Health Tracking's strategic planning session in 2005. Additional sites have received training and are conducting environmental needs assessments in 2004–2005.



## **AUTHOR(S)**

Christine Deveny, EPHT Community Outreach Contractor

Leah Dreyer, Montana EPHT Program Specialist

Marjean Magraw, M.P.H., Montana EPHT Coordinator

