

New Hampshire Assessment Initiative

Background

Assessment is the systematic collection, assembly, analysis, and dissemination of information about the health of a community, and is one of the core functions of public health. To strengthen the nation's assessment capabilities, CDC began the **Assessment Initiative (AI)** in 1992 in partnership with various state health departments. The AI supported the development of innovative systems and methods that improve access to health data and the way data are used to inform and guide leaders involved in planning, developing, and evaluating policies and interventions to improve the health of communities. The AI supports two focus areas:

Community health assessment practices: States develop and implement tools, strategies, and approaches to improve assessment practices at local public health agencies.

Data dissemination systems: States implement interactive Web-based data query systems for user-friendly analysis and dissemination of public health data.

New Hampshire — Data Dissemination Systems

New Hampshire is one of the nine states currently receiving 5-year federal funding since 2007. NH AI project goals for data dissemination are as follows:

Goal 1: Augment the existing New Hampshire Web-based Reporting and Query System (NH HealthWRQS).

The project aims to augment NH HealthWRQS' existing community health data reporting system with three innovative new modules that allow public health professionals to access a wealth of public health statistics (risk factor, chronic disease prevalence, health assessment measures, etc.) specific to the communities they serve. These new modules include:

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) module

The BRFSS module allows for the calculation of estimates for risk factors based on standard or user-defined geographic areas. New Hampshire plans to analyze and make available the BRFSS indicator reports for additional geographic areas in preparation for launch of the BRFSS module on HealthWRQS.

Healthcare claims module

A new healthcare claims data module will estimate the prevalence of disease and measures of care, and provide measures of healthcare access. This module is based on data from the New Hampshire Comprehensive Healthcare Information System (NH CHIS), which collects health care claims data from commercial health plans and the State Medicaid program.

Performance measures module

New Hampshire plans to build a prototype of a public health program performance measures module. The new module will provide a snapshot of the state's public health programs performance, beginning with tobacco-related issues.

Goal 2: Promote the use of HealthWRQS by public health professionals.

New Hampshire received supplemental funding to conduct data-related training. Training sessions were advertised through the NH Public Health Association, the NH Endowment for Health, and the University of New Hampshire Master in Public Health program. Training efforts include webinars, in-person lectures, hands-on workshops, and a full-day course titled *Prove It! Let Data Tell the Story*.

Goal 3: Disseminate findings and knowledge transfer to other states.

A HealthWRQS website was developed to increase awareness and use of HealthWRQS. The site includes a data request function and a library of almost 1,000 standard indicator reports in PDF format on topic areas (birth, death, cancer, hospital data, etc.) for selected years by county.

New Hampshire has also shared its AI work with other states. For example, NH AI staff have presented the claims module at the 2010 National Association of Health Data Organization conference, recognizing that work in the claims may be of benefit to other states. State-based all-payer claims databases are emerging in many states and the utility of the data for public health purposes is an increasing area of development.

On the Horizon

The next step in the technical development of HealthWRQS is implementing a systems upgrade (from Cognos Series 7 to Cognos Series 8), which will include improvements such as ad hoc query functionality, report development tools, and guest user account access.

Staff anticipate expanding the HealthWRQS website to provide an entry point to the ad-hoc querying in HealthWRQS, adding more conditions and care indicators to the claims module, promoting HealthWRQS, and exploring options for sustainability.

Web Resources

The HealthWRQS website allows users to learn more and request access to the HealthWRQS data system, and obtain and request reports about the health of NH communities:

www.nhhealthwrqs.org

Presentation on the uses of NH's claims database:

<http://www.nahdo.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ovxTxCA6iNU%3d&tabid=173>

The *Prove It! Let Data Tell the Story* University of New Hampshire course material is designed for a variety of health data users who would like to learn more about how to locate, use, and interpret data: <http://www.nhhealthpolicyinstitute.unh.edu/pdf/proveit.pdf>