

The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

Tracking networks achieve real-world, public health impact.

The Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network) is a dynamic Web-based surveillance network used by state and local health officials to identify and mitigate environmental hazards impacting health in their communities. They can direct limited resources to what's important to ensure more efficient and effective public health action.

What does the Tracking Network do?

The Tracking Network integrates health, environmental exposure, and hazard information from numerous national, state and city sources.

Tracking data drives public health action through:

- Informing policy, legislation and regulation
- Responding to community, agency or legislator concerns
- Identifying populations at risk or risk factors to better target interventions
- Addressing environmental health impact and city planning
- Issuing health alerts and advisories
- Making other public health programs more effective

The Tracking Network provides a foundation for public health programs supporting infrastructure, data needs, and staff to address numerous public health issues related to air and water threats, heat, chronic diseases, and carbon monoxide poisoning and other acute environmentally-related health effects.

CDC funds participation of 25 states and New York City in the Tracking Network. These sites build their own local tracking systems and contribute data to the Tracking Network. **These local tracking networks serve more than 190 million people, or 62%, of the U.S. population.**



Get the facts!

- The World Health Organization estimates that, overall, 13% of the disease burden in the United States is due to environmental factors.
- WHO also estimates that 5.6 million disability-adjusted life years and 398,000 deaths annually can be attributed to environmental factors in the U.S.

National Center for Environmental Health
Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation



Environmental Public Health Tracking Program	
Year	Funding Level
FY 2013	\$33,168,000
FY 2014	\$35,000,000
FY 2015	\$35,000,000

Funding at Work

Responding to community concerns in Utah

The Tracking Network has allowed grantees to resolve pressing health concerns much faster than before, which can save both lives and money. For example, prior to having an established tracking program, it used to take public health officials in Utah 6 months to a year to respond to public inquiries about suspected health issues in their communities, such as disease clusters. Before the Utah Tracking Network existed, a substantial amount of time had to be spent acquiring and formatting data for these types of investigations. The network provides a data warehouse to collect, organize and store data already prepared for epidemiologic investigations and advanced tools for analysis. Following the implementation of a tracking program in Utah, public health officials are now able to quickly locate critical information needed to save lives – in a matter of hours or days.

Identifying high risk areas for childhood lead poisoning in Maine

Programs or interventions only protect public health if they target the right people or risk factors, and the Tracking Network enables grantees to make sure their efforts are targeted correctly. In order to ensure that those most at risk of childhood lead poisoning were being targeted, the Maine Tracking Program produced town-level maps to identify high-risk areas. The maps helped staff see that 40% of all childhood lead poisonings occurred in just five areas. Within these five areas, more than 80% of lead poisoned children lived in rental housing. This allowed efforts to be targeted to vulnerable children in high-risk areas, including proactive testing and follow up in 500 rental units in high-risk neighborhoods. Subsequently, the tracking data indicate that lead poisoning rates in three out of five high-risk areas have dropped significantly.

Issuing health alerts in Vermont

The public's health is put at risk when they are not kept informed of health hazards, but providing up-to-date information can prove difficult. The Tracking Network can allow grantees to provide the information people need to protect themselves. The Vermont Tracking Program developed two new Web applications that enable scientists to review and verify reports of Lake Champlain blue-green algae conditions posted by citizen volunteers. Validated observations that alert swimmers and boaters of potentially hazardous situations are now provided to the public at more than 60 locations in near real-time.

For More Information

National Center for
Environmental Health
www.cdc.gov/nceh

Environmental Public Health
Tracking Program
www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking

CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) is committed to protecting people from environmental hazards. NCEH responds to disasters and toxic exposures, educates communities on how to stay safe and healthy, and collects and leverages environmental data to improve public health. NCEH maximizes the impact of every dollar by investing in illness prevention.