

# breakout ABSTRACT



## TITLE

Academic-Practice Partnerships: a Multi-Disciplinary Approach

## THEME

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

## KEYWORDS

technical assistance, methods transfer, capacity building

## BACKGROUND

The Johns Hopkins University Center for Excellence in EPHT funded four faculty fellowships to provide expertise in disciplines that are key to tracking. Fellows' research interests include spatial statistics, environmental epidemiology, cancer surveillance, and design and evaluation of developmental outcome measures. Faculty fellows are engaged with state partners to develop, refine, analyze, and display environmental public health tracking information.

## OBJECTIVE(S)

We will report on successful technical assistance and methods transfer efforts and describe ongoing methodological research.

## METHOD(S)

A competitive fellowship program was developed to secure specific expertise to enhance state and local partners' tracking activities. Availability for technical assistance and methods transfer was a condition of the awards.

## RESULT(S)

To date, technical assistance and methods transfer have taken the forms of consultations and training plans. For example, fellows have consulted with state partners on the appropriate interpretation of low birth weight as a developmental outcome; the application of time-series analysis to link air pollution and respiratory outcome data at zip code level within a state; and on the application of spatial statistics and geographic information systems for the analysis and display of tracking and linked data. Interest in appropriate spatial analysis and display are common to all tracking participants and will be built into a training module. New methods including 1) a joint epidemiological and statistical approach to definition, investigation, and analysis of apparent local cancer excesses and 2) a methodology to assess exposure-response relationships to identify whether thresholds exist for the effects of environmental hazards are under development and will be shared with the tracking network.

## DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION(S)

We propose this multi-disciplinary approach as a model for academic-practice partnership for the growing tracking network. Essential to the implementation of this model are engagement with all partners in the tracking network and



regular communication to identify technical assistance needs. This multi-disciplinary approach to academic-practice partnerships is key to the success of the EPHT network and must be sustained through continued support for training and research activities.

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