Johns Hopkins Center for Excellence in Community Environmental Health Practice

An Academic-Practice Partnership

Profile of Maryland Environmental Public Health Practice

Beth Resnick
Environmental Public Health Tracking Meeting
Atlanta April 2005
Project Goal

To assess the capacities and needs of Maryland environmental public health practice, the Center focused its efforts at the local level, where EPH professionals interact with the community on a daily basis and provide the foundation for Maryland’s environmental public health protection efforts.
Methods

In 2003-2004, the Center performed site visits to all 24 Maryland local EPH divisions, which provided an overview of responsibilities, strengths, and needs, not only for traditional EPH program areas, but also for emerging issues including preparedness and development.

A discussion guide/assessment tool was created to accompany the site visits in order to collect additional quantitative information about existing EPH infrastructure capacities, agency needs, training, workforce development, and technical and legal support as well as existing and future challenges to local EPH practice.
Results

By spring of 2004, the Center had conducted site visits to all 24 local EPH divisions and received completed discussion guides from 22 of 24 divisions, a 92 percent response rate.
Maryland Counties

Source: University of Maryland (http://www.inform.umd.edu/UMS+State/MD_Resources/counties/)
The Many Faces of Maryland
Maryland Environmental Public Health Strengths

- Strong local county health department structure throughout the state
- Effective collaboration/cooperation among county health departments
- Communication systems in place (e-mail, satellite downlinks, internet)
- Systems available to work together at state and local levels (EH Local Liaison Committee, Roundtable)
- Dedicated workforce that is responsive to community needs
Growth and Development

- Political pressures
- Timeliness
- Fees
- Population increases
Emergency Preparedness

- Defined roles/responsibilities
- Additional training
- Increased coordination with other agencies
Key Findings and Recommendations

Infrastructure

Finding:
There is a clear lack of leadership, direction, and vision for EPH in Maryland due to a fragmented organizational structure stretching across multiple state and local agencies.

Recommendation:
Establish in statute one lead authority for EPH charged with uniting public health agency and community leaders to ensure accountability and consistency for environmental public health actions.
Key Findings and Recommendations

**Funding**

*Finding:*
EPH services are vulnerable during times of budget shortfalls or unexpected emergencies as no dedicated funding for core EPH services exists

*Recommendation:*
Create dedicated funding at the state and local levels for core EPH services (e.g. wells, septic systems, food inspections) that are adjusted on a regular basis to meet fluctuating demands and costs
For some MD counties, collection of fees for EPH services generates the majority of the division’s budget.
Key Findings and Recommendations

Workforce

**Finding:**
The ability to recruit and retain an environmental public health workforce able to anticipate, respond to, and prevent EPH threats is limited due to a neglected workforce with inadequate compensation and limited career advancement opportunities.

**Recommendation:**
Overhaul EPH job classifications to ensure adequate compensation and career paths for EPH professionals.
Educational Requirements and Salaries of Entry-Level Maryland Governmental Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Minimum Salary</th>
<th>Maximum Salary</th>
<th>Educational Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Sanitarian I</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker I</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Nurse I</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Officer I</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Dispatcher</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritionist</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Analyst I</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 = No Educational Requirements
1 = High School or GED
2 = Bachelor’s Degree
3 = Bachelor’s Degree with Certification or Licensure
4 = Graduate Degree
Educational Requirements and Salaries of Supervisory Maryland Governmental Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>Minimum Salary</th>
<th>Maximum Salary</th>
<th>Educational Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Sanitarian Supervisor</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Supervisor</td>
<td>$37,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Nurse Supervisor I</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Practitioner Supervisor</td>
<td>$47,000</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
0 = No Educational Requirements
1 = High School or GED
2 = Bachelor’s Degree
3 = Bachelor’s Degree with Certification or Licensure
4 = Graduate Degree
EPH staff departures can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as higher salaries offered in other positions.
Key Findings and Recommendations

Training

Finding:
The ability to address contemporary EPH challenges is limited as training opportunities are lacking and often inadequately address the specific needs of practitioners to meet these challenges.

Recommendation:
Provide education and training tailored to meet the needs of EPH practitioners by building and strengthening partnerships with academic institutions and other organizations.
Training

• Legal
• Risk communication/assessment
• Preparedness
• Media-specific
  – E.g. Indoor air, soil
• Epidemiology
• Technology
Key Findings and Recommendations

Technology

Finding:
The lack of a coordinated statewide approach and inadequate training and technical support hinder EPH technological advances.

Recommendation:
Develop statewide technology protocols and procedures that include adequate technical support and training.
Technology

- Electronic forms
- Internet-based data storage and access
- GIS
- DHMH network
  - Email and satellite downlink systems
- Sustainability
- Compatibility
- IT workforce
Key Findings and Recommendations

Communication and Collaboration

Finding:
EPH efforts are often hampered by the lack of coordination and communication amongst EPH agencies and communities.

Recommendation:
Provide support to engage community members and state and local public health agencies in the development, implementation, and evaluation of EPH programs and policies.
Key Findings and Recommendations

Responsibility and Authority

Finding:
Limited legal assistance and varied forms of county government inhibit the development of a consistent statewide approach to the development and enforcement of EPH laws and regulatory provisions.

Recommendation:
Develop statewide protocols and procedures for the development and enforcement of EPH laws and regulatory provisions.
The majority of EPH Directors indicated that information technology and database expertise were ranked first among their needs.
Next Steps

Working with Health Officers and Environmental Health Directors to bring together representatives from the Governor’s Office and Maryland Departments of Health and Environment together to address the recommendations
Lessons Learned

• Collaboration is critical to success
• Collaboration takes time
• Collaboration offers additional opportunities
What’s The Bottom Line for Tracking??

Challenges:

• Relevance/usefulness to Local Level
• Raise Visibility of Tracking
• Training – Technology
• Local linkage (trust) of Federal/State Agencies
Opportunities:

• Health & Environment Linked at Local Level
• Benefits of Communication and Support will be widespread
• Portals to communities
Thank You

For more information and copies of the report:

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