

TRACKING MATTERS

WELCOME

Welcome to the first issue of Tracking Matters, a quarterly newsletter for CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. This newsletter will highlight how the program is working toward its mission to improve the understanding of how the environment affects people's health. In each issue you will find news about the program and recent additions to the Tracking Network, highlights about exciting work happening with our grantees, and stories of Tracking in Action that will show you how the network is being used to solve public health problems.

INNOVATIONS

Increasing the usefulness of our data display and application continues to be one of our top priorities. You can use the Tracking Network to see changes in environment and health data over time. Using our network, you can select a location and easily spot data trends with our new feature—the Timeline Map View. Instead of comparing only two geographic maps at a time, now you can view several years for a specific geography and see how the data change over time. A new video tutorial introduces first-time visitors and returning users to the ease of the Timeline Map View, along with the new ability to rebuild map thumbnails in the data display. These state-of-the-art tools make it easier to study environmental health data.

NEW FELLOWSHIP STATES

CDC and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) partner to offer a peer-to-peer fellowship program for health departments that are not funded by the Tracking Program. Program participants work with Tracking Program grantees to expand their knowledge and establish a foundation for meaningful environmental public health tracking in their own jurisdictions. In 2013, ASTHO and the Tracking Program welcomed five new participants into the fellowship program: Illinois, Tennessee, Texas, Wyoming, and the city of Dayton, Ohio. The program has recruited 23 cities, counties, and states since 2009.

TRACKING IN ACTION!

Missouri residents experience many days of extreme heat from May to September each year. Some people, especially the elderly, do not have or use air conditioning in their homes. To address this problem, the Missouri Tracking Program and the Division of Senior and Disability Services joined forces to develop an online map for residents to find cooling centers close to their homes. At-risk citizens can find cooling centers easily during extreme heat events and use them to remain comfortable without endangering their health or increasing their electric bills.

In This Issue:

- **Welcome**
- **Innovations**
- **Tracking In Action!**
- **Did You Know?**
- **By the Numbers**



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TRACKING IN ACTION (cont.)

Maine has one of the highest rates of asthma in the country – nearly one in 10 children and adults have asthma. Maine also often has elevated levels of ozone and particulate matter. Ozone and PM2.5 levels can be higher in the summer, which can be a health risk. Maine's Tracking Program linked outdoor ozone data with asthma-related emergency department data. Now scientists can estimate ozone-related asthma cases both in a community and statewide. Learning about this association has helped the Maine Tracking Program provide information to health care professionals. This helps doctors identify people who are at risk and share asthma attack prevention tips.

By creating a mobile web site, the Florida Tracking Program makes important environmental health data accessible to even more people and allows them to learn more about where the live.



DID YOU KNOW?

In recent years, the use of smart phones has grown exponentially. This has created an increase in demand for phones that act as mobile computing devices with more features, functionality, flexibility, and integration with online applications. Cutting-edge technology and tools are needed to attract a new generation of public health practitioners and reach the increasingly tech savvy public.

The CDC-funded Florida Environmental Public Health Tracking Program has a smart-phone friendly web site at <http://www.floridatracking.com/ephtmobile>. The Florida Tracking Program developed this mobile-friendly version of their network with features specifically designed for iPhones and Android phones. These features and functions include messaging (text) formatted to mobile device screen size and layout as well as a selection mechanism to present the list of available data to the user in a scrollable menu.

BY THE NUMBERS

Since its inception in July 2009, the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network has been viewed over 971,000 times? In that time, 87,000 data queries have been processed using the Tracking Network. Topping the list of most-queried data are particulate matter (PM2.5), childhood asthma prevalence, and heat mortality.

VISIT THE TRACKING NETWORK

www.cdc.gov/ephtracking