

**Review of Progress Implementation Report for
NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation Program**

Submitted by Board of Scientific Counselors

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BSC Working Group Members

**David Bonauto
Kitty Gelberg
Clarion Johnson
James Ramsay**

Recommendations In Progress:

Recommendation #2: Improve the mechanisms by which requests for HHEs are sought and prioritized to include a broader array of requests from a wider variety of requestors.

Progress: 1 2 3 4 4.5 5

Brief Justification: The program is doing an excellent job, but there's always room for improvement. This work is primarily opportunistic based upon emerging issues. The program has effectively positioned itself with partners to be called upon when appropriate situations arise. They are reaching out to the Spanish language community, CPWR, have nice partnerships, and are continuing to move toward improvement. They have clearly identified challenges, understand that some are getting worse which is outside of their control (such as the decrease in unionization).

Impact: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: This work is valuable due to the need for evaluating a new hazard or an old hazard in a new setting. Their work sets the stage for research and a policy perspective. Short-term assessment of the impact of this type of work is very difficult.

There is an inconsistent frequency of requests, which is understandable – the work needs to continue, but will probably never be complete. NIOSH researchers have started leveraging groups external to NIOSH which allows broader dissemination of findings, thus continuing to raise awareness. Their willingness to direct inquiries to existing information is beneficial and provides a cost-effective and accessible tool for promoting occupational health and safety.

Recommendation #3: Ensure that recommendations in HHEs are relevant, feasible, effective, and clearly explained.

Progress: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: This is a very complicated recommendation that has some elements that bleed over into recommendation #5.

There are established procedures for internal quality assurance such as: calling employers shortly after the release of an HHE is a good idea, well done evidenced based recommendations that are imperative and integral. Expanding development and use of case studies is useful and should be pursued. Feedback being received is positive showing the utility and practicality of the recommendations. Using external reviewers is positive with good response to the recommendations. The program may want to revise who the reviewers are to include NIOSH Divisions where the recommendations may be relevant to ensure accuracy and feasibility.

Impact: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: The program has not developed case studies yet, but they are progressing with scientific papers using follow back information. They report 94% implementation of recommendations from 2009-13 among those responding to the survey. It would be useful to learn if the recommendations have broader impact which is difficult. The use of a closing conference is also beneficial.

Recommendation #5: Develop a proactive, comprehensive information-transfer strategy for HHE Program outputs with better approaches to reaching wider audiences, including traditionally underserved populations.

Progress: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: There is an on-going thought process behind this work, using new and unique resources. They have been very proactive using trade publications, videos, Facebook, annual reports, and NIOSH alerts, and are translating highlights into Spanish. They should continue to explore posting on other NIOSH web pages and using external associations and professional societies in order to reach broader audiences.

Impact: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: The program is establishing an R2P strategy for HHE moving from the strategic to the tactical that is continually improving. Measuring impact here is really difficult to do. It is difficult to measure the impact of posting information to a website or whether and to what degree actions/behaviors are modified based on acquired information. They are conducting a good evaluation and improvement of their website by using questions that appear in their Help Mailbox. Should potentially evaluate the effectiveness of videos prior to embarking on potentially expensive activities. Program should consider economically justifying the programs and building the capacity to demonstrate economic impact into the evaluation scheme.

Recommendation #6: Develop more extensive formal linkages and mechanisms with other parts of NIOSH, CDC, and HHS to enhance the capacity for involvement in policy-relevant impacts.

Progress: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: In order to avoid silos between agencies, an ongoing and continuous outreach is required. This is difficult due to changes in point of contact, leadership, and funding changes. There is little to no information on collaborating with ATSDR, despite this being a closely related program.

They are doing great work with state level epidemic intelligence officers (especially in WI and VT). The program should continue training the EIS officers and should consider adding to the training that they should also reach out to other HHS agencies. There is also good work with the NORA partners.

Although beyond this recommendation, the program should consider expanding outreach to those outside of the traditional public health service community such as Defense, Homeland Security, EPA (shown to be effective), and USDA. Working with the Office of Minority Health may also assist with both this recommendation and recommendation #2.

Impact: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: This is difficult to evaluate. The program may want to survey NORA partners regarding the utility and use of the reports and to qualitatively indicate the degree to which NIOSH reports have modified, or otherwise altered strategy or methodology (perhaps using a thermometer or Likert scale). The survey may assist in both reminding partners of the program, and also expand the use of reports to more non-traditional settings.

Recommendation #7: Initiate formal periodic assessment of new and emerging hazards.

Progress: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: This recommendation reflects not only the core mission of the HHE program, but its distinctive competence as well. They are doing what they are supposed to do – finding new hazards, encouraging reporting of existing hazards, creating actionable information sheets that help mitigate hazards at the workplace. If NIOSH did not do this work, then it would not get done and quite expectedly illness and injury rates would increase.

Impact: 1 2 3 4 5

Brief Justification: As in the previous recommendation, there needs to be continuing and ongoing efforts at outreach. There has been exemplary work on topics such as diacetyl. The program should not just focus on sentinel – or very specific issues, but should also consider addressing issues that are more common that can help practitioners such as occupational stress and musculoskeletal injuries, in addition to esoteric chemicals like diacetyl. It was admirable that the program deleted some activities due to resource issues to focus on emerging issues.