

Annual Report of Accomplishments and Outcomes, July 2014 – June 2015

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Maryland Occupational Health and Safety Surveillance Project

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Major Accomplishments

The Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Project (OHSSP) has matured in its third year as a fundamental surveillance project, and now faces the challenge of starting to implement changes in occupational health as a result of surveillance activities, despite some setbacks in access to data:

- Of the 22 requested occupational indicators, we were able to submit data associated all except Indicators 5 and 8 (the state just developed electronic filing of first reports of injury, but does not yet have electronic workers' compensation data otherwise available to DHMH), Indicator 13 (adult blood lead data is submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment, which houses the lead poisoning registry, but is not currently available to DHMH), and Indicator 20 (hospitalization for work-related low back disorders) which are not available. Otherwise, all indicators were submitted to NIOSH and are also available online at <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEHFP/EH/SitePages/Occupational-Health-Indicators.aspx>.
- One of the striking successes of the past year was more active engagement with the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) program. Two grant proposals, one for re-establishment of the FACE program, the other for an initiative related to prescription opioids, were generated by this collaboration. In addition, MOSH and DHMH met to discuss possible data sharing related to MOSH's acquisition of electronic first reports of injury. DHMH OHSSP and MOSH have begun discussions as to how epidemiology resources at DHMH might be useful to MOSH in interpreting the first report data.
- OHSSP successfully recruited a new CDC/CSTE applied epidemiology fellow in environmental and occupational health (Meghan Smith). The fellow will be working with other epidemiologic staff on a variety of projects related to occupational health. One of the areas will be to continue work (described below related to infectious diseases).
- DHMH OHSSP continued to work with the Maryland Cancer Control Program on cancer clusters and occupational risk factors for cancer. A working group on cancer clusters, authorized by the Maryland General Assembly, developed recommendations that included recommendations that were discussed relative to occupational cancer.
- A resident from the Johns Hopkins Preventive Medicine residency program analyzed case data from the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) for *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* infections. The specific question was whether the case records contained data on occupation, and whether the information could be useful for analytic/epidemiologic purposes. The finding was that while most of the cases had

occupational descriptor data, it was generally not easily coded, and not sufficiently descriptive to allow for risk characterization.

- During the Ebola Virus Disease response by Maryland, the OHSSP PI participated actively in discussions and consultations with health care institutions regarding occupational health and safety questions. At the height of the response, weekly phone calls were held with the hospital association and hospitals, with many questions related to personal protective equipment. There were also many questions about training and about maintenance and non-health care workers, to which OHSSP responded.

Outputs

Over the course of the past year and the past project period, the DHMH OHSSP has become a significant resource for occupational health within the State, both for data and for expertise in occupational health and safety questions. The increasing interaction with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health is testimony to the impact that OHSSP is making in the State.

Outcomes/Impacts for the Reporting Period

The principal outcomes and impacts for the project related to infectious diseases, including the analysis of NEDSS data on *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* infections, and the response to Ebola Virus Disease. In addition to this response, work continued to address a number of themes noted in last year's annual report, including:

1. Collaboration with the Maryland Cancer Registry (MCR) to facilitate any potential investigation of cancers that may be related to workplace exposures. Additionally, occupational cancers were specifically addressed in the revision of the Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan in terms of creating state policies that address various levels of risk, disparities, and the precautionary principle when addressing environmental and occupational factors in cancer.
2. Work-related asthma – Although Maryland was not successful in competing for a renewal of its CDC-funded Asthma Control Program, the OHSSP continued to emphasize work-related asthma as a priority. This includes distribution of work-related asthma information, and discussion with appropriate health care providers around issues of work-related asthma.
3. Work-related injuries – The OHSSP partnered with MOSH and the Maryland Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) to formulate two grant proposals focused on the possible role of prescription medication to occupational injuries.