

Annual Report

Nebraska Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program (Fundamental-Plus)

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

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Project Overview

The goal of the Nebraska Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program (NEOSH) is to reduce the incidence of occupational injury and illness and improve worker health and safety in Nebraska. The aims of the project are to collect, analyze, and interpret occupational health and safety data; conduct surveillance and investigations of occupational poisonings; build partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders; disseminate findings to stakeholders; and maintain an advisory committee.

Major Accomplishments, Outputs, and Outcomes

Collection of Occupational Health Indicator Data

NEOSH maintains an occupational health surveillance system and compiles Occupational Health Indicator data. We collected 22 indicators representing 144 separate data measures for 2013, and indicators were submitted on-time to NIOSH. Indicator data were presented to program stakeholders at Nebraska's annual occupational health surveillance advisory committee meeting.

Potential outcome: Submitting occupational health indicator data to NIOSH and sharing findings with partners improves national surveillance systems and increases stakeholder knowledge about the status and trends of worker health and safety in Nebraska and in the U.S.

Improving Workers' Compensation Claims Data Quality

NEOSH uses workers' compensation claims data provided by the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court (NWCC). We identified a limitation related to data quality of reported industry. After we worked with the NWCC to notify and isolate the cause of the issue, the NWCC changed their data management processes to increase the quality and accuracy of the industry variable.

Intermediate Outcome: Workers' compensation claims data are routinely used by NEOSH and other state agencies. Our identification of a data limitation resulted in a systematic change that increases data quality and improves the occupational health surveillance system.

Identifying New Data Sources and Methods for Occupational Health Surveillance

NEOSH identified two new data sources for occupational health surveillance. We obtained and analyzed Nebraska's Outpatient Surgical Procedure data and found 2,013 work-related outpatient surgical procedures were performed at hospitals in Nebraska in 2014. We also gained access to Nebraska Trauma Registry data and developed a case definition for identifying work-related agricultural traumatic injuries. In another project, we developed a new case definition for musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) using injury cause and nature codes found in workers' compensation claims. We used this case definition to analyze workers' compensation data to assess MSDs among health care workers.

Potential outcome: Identifying new methods to track worker health and safety helps describe the magnitude and impacts of occupational injuries. Using data from workers' compensation, outpatient surgical procedures database, and the Nebraska Trauma Registry enhances surveillance practices which can lead to an improved occupational health surveillance system.

Enhancing Surveillance of Occupational Poisonings and Exposures

NEOSH submitted pesticide illness cases for 2013 to the NIOSH SENSOR-Pesticides Program. Program staff also participated in the 2016 Winter SENSOR-Pesticides meeting to learn best practices for pesticide illness surveillance. We also worked with the Nebraska Hospital Association to develop the capacity to use hospital discharges for occupational poisoning surveillance.

Intermediate outcome: Nebraska's participation in SENSOR-Pesticides improves this multi-state surveillance system. Acquiring new data sources and improving practices for tracking occupational poisoning improves occupational health surveillance methods in Nebraska.

Responding to Adult Elevated Blood Lead Levels

NEOSH received 415 laboratory results for elevated blood lead levels (BLLs) ≥ 5 mcg/dL among adults. Staff conducted 89 public health investigations and worked with attending health care providers to share medical management guidelines when needed. Additionally, 228 individuals with elevated BLLs were provided prevention information on how to reduce lead exposure via mail or phone.

Potential outcome: Most lead exposures among adults are work-related. Investigating adult elevated BLLs and sharing prevention recommendations to clinicians and affected workers results in an increased awareness of workplace risks and prevention information.

Collaborating with NIOSH to Improve Occupational Health in the Field

NEOSH participated in a NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation in an Omaha pesticide product manufacturing establishment and assisted with employee health interviews. NEOSH also partnered with Chia-Ping Su, a NIOSH Cincinnati-based EIS Officer, to conduct a surveillance system evaluation of Nebraska's cryptosporidiosis surveillance system. NEOSH helped coordinate on-site activities and prepared an enteric investigation dataset which was used to evaluate the system and assess enteric disease occupational risk factors in Nebraska.

Potential Outcome: Collaboration between NEOSH and NIOSH strengthens occupational health capacity. The enteric disease surveillance evaluation identified occupational risks and recommendations for improving data collection practices in Nebraska.

Assessing Wellness, Health, and Safety Policies in Nebraska Workplaces

NEOSH Program staff analyzed data from the 2013 Nebraska Worksite Wellness Survey to compare industry sector differences of health, safety, and wellness policies. Results were disseminated to more than 100 public health stakeholders through our electronic newsletter and at two occupational health conferences. NEOSH was also directly involved in the planning, design, and implementation of the 2016 Nebraska Worksite Wellness Survey, and we added additional safety questions to the survey.

Intermediate Outcome: The capacity and technical consultation provided by NEOSH improved the worksite wellness survey and it demonstrates that NEOSH is an integral program within NDHHS for enhancing worksite health data collection. This effort results in an increased integration of occupational health into broader public health activities.

Increasing Use of Occupational Health Surveillance Data Among Stakeholders

The NIOSH program received and responded to four external data requests, which were used by OSHA and during Workers' Memorial Day activities. Occupational health data were added to Nebraska's Healthy People 2020 baseline report and health performance dashboard. Data were also incorporated into Nebraska's Health Status Assessment and State Health Improvement Planning activities.

Intermediate Outcome: Occupational health and safety data are now incorporated with other health data to help prioritize efforts to improve public health in Nebraska. NIOSH surveillance data enhanced NDHHS program planning and evaluation activities and resulted in an increased integration of occupational health and safety into broader public health activities.

Bringing Stakeholders Together to Improve Occupational Health and Safety in Nebraska

In FY16 NIOSH held its 5th annual Occupational Health Surveillance Advisory Committee Meeting. This meeting was attended by 15 stakeholders representing local public health, the state labor department, safety councils, workers' compensation court, insurers, worker advocacy organizations, and the poison center. NIOSH presented findings, and attendees identified three major surveillance priorities for FY2017.

Potential Outcome: The Nebraska Occupational Health Surveillance Advisory Committee represents a unique collation of occupational health stakeholders that addresses state-level occupational health issues in Nebraska. Presentations and discussions results in the identification of new priorities informed by surveillance and increases awareness of information on occupational injuries, illnesses, and overall worker health and safety.

Presentations		
Date	Title	Event
9/20/2015	Nebraska's Transportation and Warehousing Industry: Are Employers Geared toward Worker Health, Safety, and Wellness?	2015 WestON Annual Meeting, Denver, CO
2/17/2016	Pesticides: Health Effects, Exposures, and Use (Lecture)	UNMC MPH Course
6/20/2016	Evaluation of Trauma Registry Data for Tracking Agriculture-Related Injuries in Nebraska, 2014: A Novel Approach	2016 CSTE Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK
6/20/2016	Evaluation of Nebraska's Outpatient Surgical Procedure Database for Occupational Health Surveillance	2016 CSTE Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK
6/20/2016	Assessment of Safety, Health, and Wellness Policies and Practices in Nebraska's Transportation and Warehousing Sector: Results of a Worksite Wellness Survey	2016 CSTE Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK
6/21/2016	Surveillance of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in Health Care Workers: Analysis of Workers Compensation Claims, Nebraska, 2011-2013	2016 CSTE Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK

Publications and Reports		
Date	Type	Title
Aug 2015	Data Report	Baseline Report for Nebraska's Healthy People 2020 Objectives (Occupational Health and Safety Section)
Feb 2016	Data Report	Industry Sector Differences in Safety Policies Among Nebraska Workers
Jun 2016	Data Report	Worker Fatalities in Nebraska, 2014
Jun 2016	Data Report	2016 Occupational Health Indicators Annual Report