

**Wisconsin Fundamental Occupational Health (OH) and Safety Surveillance Program  
Annual Report of Major Accomplishments and Outcomes: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

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## **SPECIFIC AIMS**

The Wisconsin OH Program remains engaged in advancing surveillance, epidemiology, intervention practice and capacity building. Aims of this program have not changed from the previous year and include:

1. Continued surveillance of occupational illness, injury and death
2. Expanding occupational health surveillance in Wisconsin
3. Informing Wisconsin residents about occupational illness, injury and death
4. Acting as a workplace safety and health resource

## **MAJOR OUTPUTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **Occupational Health Surveillance**

- Calculated and reported Wisconsin's 2012 occupational health indicators (OHI) data for all 22 indicators to NIOSH for publication by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE).
- Developed an OHI trend report for 2003-2012 (in draft form), with expected publication in fall 2015.
- Included NIOSH's Industry and Occupation (I/O) questions on the 2015 Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. 2013 BRFSS I/O data analysis presented at 2015 CSTE Conference.
- Submitted Wisconsin's 2013 adult blood lead data to NIOSH's Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance (ABLES) Program. Conducted follow-back activities for elevated blood lead above 25 µg/dL during 2014-2015 and provided case information to the Wisconsin Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offices.
- Investigation of carbon monoxide poisoning at an indoor ice hockey event in December 2014, using Poison Control Center (PCC) reports to identify exposures. The Bureau was able to rapidly identify health hazards that may not be captured in routine surveillance systems and conduct follow-back interviews.
- Examined occupational pesticide poisonings in the state, in response to an inquiry from *Clean Sweep and Worker Protection* program within the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Agency. All case reports of acute work-related pesticide poisonings from 2009-2014 were abstracted and analyzed to identify those associated with the agricultural industry.
- Summarized agricultural injuries from workers' compensation (WC) claims specific to poultry, pork and dairy subsectors and shared aggregate data with the National Farm Medicine Center, a partner in addressing agricultural safety, to inform their program priorities.

### **Expanding Surveillance and Partnerships**

- Occupational Surveillance Advisory Group (OSAG) met quarterly during 2014-2015. Meetings included presentations on data from OSHA fatality logs, the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII), the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), Wisconsin PCC data and Wisconsin WC claims.
- The OH program has worked to revise its MOU with DWD-WC to include access to a more complete set of data elements, which would allow identification of trends and emerging issues in work-related injuries. The OH program anticipates access to these data by fall 2015.
- Formal agreements were put into place with the Child Death Review (CDR) program, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the data steward for the Wisconsin Ambulance Run Data System (WARDS). We are also working with OSHA to formalize data sharing of OSHA 170 narratives.
- Carryover funding was partially utilized for mini-grants to fund two \$5,000 follow-up community occupational health projects to the mini-grants issued in 2013-2014. The funded projects, Northcentral

Technical College and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, had clear occupational health components focused on agricultural safety.

- The OH program continues collaborative efforts with the environmental public health tracking (EPHT) program to incorporate adult blood lead data into existing portals.
- The OH program developed and implemented a youth education program for Madison area high school students. The outreach included a brief and interactive PowerPoint with an overview of injury statistics, job hazards, labor laws, and steps to take if hurt on the job. Discussions included personal protective equipment, blood borne pathogens and other issues that workers in the health field may encounter.

### Reports, Publications and Communications

- NIOSH E-News submission in June 2015 described a new brochure developed and published by the program, *A Young Workers Guide to Working Safely in Wisconsin*, as part of youth outreach and education in area high schools (available on the program’s website).
- Article included in the summer 2015 issue of the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association newsletter described the importance of collecting and accurately reporting occupational fatality data on the death certificate.
- *Occupational Health Needs Assessment for Northern Wisconsin (2015)*. The OH program mentored an MPH student on his field practicum in the Occupational Health Nursing program through University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to produce a qualitative and quantitative occupational health needs assessment in the six-county area of northern Wisconsin impacted by a proposed mine along the Gogebic Iron Range. This report was shared within DPH and with local/tribal public health in northern Wisconsin.
- The OH Program webpage has been updated to make information more accessible, with 199 active sessions and 849 page views in past 6 months.
- Staff used Twitter through Wisconsin Department of Health Services to inform residents about the Construction Falls Campaign.

### Workgroups

Discussion at national meetings contributes to communication strategies and activities, developing partnerships and collaboration among states. The OH program staff contributed to the following workgroups: NIOSH Surveillance Steering Group (Program Manager served as co-CSTE representative); CSTE OH Subcommittee; CSTE Occupational Health Indicator (OHI) Workgroup; NIOSH BRFSS I/O Workgroup.

### Conferences and Presentations

Date	Event/Description
8/18/2014	Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Grantees Meeting (Discussions to include OHIs on portals)
8/25/2014	International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) Conference (occupational exposure issues)
10/7/2014	<i>Asbestos Occupational Disease</i> lecture, University of Wisconsin (PHS502)
10/23/2014	Collegium Ramazzini Meeting (asbestos issues)
10/29/2014	NIOSH NORA Manufacturing Sector Council Meeting
11/11/2014	<i>Asthma</i> (including work-related asthma) lecture, University of Wisconsin (PHS502)
12/10/2014	NIOSH Partners Meeting/CSTE OH Subcommittee Meeting
12/19/2014	Iowa Heartland Center ERC Advisory Board Meeting
2/17/2015	Hazardous Waste Worker Training Collaborative Advisory Board Meeting
2/27/2015	Making the Connection WHEN Env/Occ Conference
3/9/2015	NIOSH NORA Construction Council Meeting/Presentation
3/26/2015	<i>Biomonitoring: Applications in Env/Occ Health</i> lecture, University of Wisconsin (PHS471)
4/19/2015	CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference
4/25/2015	Wisconsin State Medical Society Annual Meeting – Occupational Committee
4/29/2015	NIOSH NORA Manufacturing Council Meeting/Presentation

5/18/2015	EPHT Grantees Meeting – OH Indicators discussions
5/19/2015	Wisconsin Public Health Association Annual Conference - <i>Partnerships to Improve Community Occupational Health (poster presentation)</i>
6/11/2015	ASTHO Joint Policy Committees – Occupational and Emerging Vector Borne Diseases
6/15/2015	CSTE Annual Meeting/ NIOSH Partners Meeting/CSTE OH Subcommittee Meeting - <i>Partnerships to Improve Community Occupational Health (presentation)</i> - <i>Association between Self-Reported Health Status and Employment by Industry and Occupation in the 2013 Wisconsin BRFSS (presentation)</i>

## OUTCOMES

### Potential outcomes

Most items described above include dissemination of findings that would contribute to reduced workplace risks.

- Collaboration and engagement of Wisconsin’s OH program with the NIOSH Surveillance Steering Group through monthly representation, involvement and reporting on behalf of the CSTE put partnering into practice and increased coordination among agencies.
- Increased partner awareness of the OH program through presentations, meetings and collaboration.
- Increased public knowledge of occupational illness, injury and death in Wisconsin’s workplaces through the OH program’s website.
- Analysis of the 2013 BRFSS I/O data allowed the identification of industries and occupations in Wisconsin at higher risk of fair or poor health. Service industries and occupations (most notably among Building/Grounds Maintenance workers and Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations and Office/Administrative Support occupations) consistently reported higher prevalence of adverse health indicators. Inclusion of employment questions on the WI BRFSS provides the opportunity to study the potential impact of work on a person’s health, highlight areas of disease disparity and improve targeting of specific industries and occupations for workplace prevention and wellness programs.

### Intermediate outcomes

- Increased knowledge of youth worker injuries through outreach to local area high school students. Evaluation results from the first program presented to 40 students on January 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 indicated an overall 33% increase in knowledge from pre- to post-class. On June 4<sup>th</sup> 2015, OH Program staff along with staff from BLS presented a second program on health and safety in the workplace to 28 students. Through collaboration with WI BLS, the outreach will be sustainable beyond the current funding year.
- National Farm Medicine Center, a partner in addressing agricultural safety, utilized our analysis of WI workers’ compensation claims for agricultural injuries to inform their program’s priorities.
- OSHA regularly monitors businesses exposing workers to lead, using reports of elevated blood lead levels provided by the WI OH Program (ABLES).

### End (long-term) outcomes

Work conducted by the OH Program has contributed to an increased capacity among local/tribal health departments and community partners to collectively address work-related concerns. Current indicator data show stable or decreasing rates of most occupational injuries and illnesses in Wisconsin. The program will continue to monitor trends in OH indicator data and work with partners to identify interventions to prevent future work-related injuries and illnesses in Wisconsin.