

**Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Occupational Health and Safety Surveillance Project (OHSSP)
Annual Report of Major Outputs and Outcomes
July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

Fundamental Surveillance

Principal Investigator: Richard A. Beauchamp, MD

Environmental and Injury Epidemiology and Toxicology Unit
Tel: (512)776-6434
richard.beauchamp@dshs.state.tx.us

Coordinator:

Jose Velez, MCSE

Environmental and Injury Epidemiology and Toxicology Unit
Tel: (512)776-6216
jose.velez@dshs.state.tx.us

Group Manager:

Heidi Bojes, PhD

Environmental and Injury Epidemiology and Toxicology Unit
Tel: (512)776-6704
heidi.bojes@dshs.state.tx.us

Program Overview and Overall Aims

The state-based occupational health and safety surveillance system is intended to provide information essential to protecting workers by determining underlying causes of injuries and illnesses in the workplace, investigating workplace practices, directing intervention strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of those strategies.

The overall aims of the Texas Fundamental program are to:

- Annually compile and report data for 22 occupational health indicators (OHIs).
- Identify patterns and trends for the OHIs.
- Develop and utilize alternative data sources to identify potential occupational illnesses and injuries.
- Train and educate health professionals and workers to enhance awareness and prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses.
- Review, evaluate, and improve processes for the surveillance of occupational health and safety data in Texas.

Major Accomplishments & Outcomes

Potential Outcomes:

- Compiled and reported 2012 OHI data for 22 indicators to CSTE/NIOSH in June 2015. Hospital discharge data and mortality data needed to calculate specific 2012 indicators were successfully obtained to meet our goal.
- Examined annual age-adjusted rates of asbestosis and silicosis in Texas Health Status Report for year 2004 – 2011 using hospital discharge data and mortality data.

- Updated Silicosis Occupational Incidence report for 2004 – 2011; uploaded to Asbestosis and Silicosis DSHS program webpages.
- Carried out occupational pesticide and disinfectant exposure follow up, interviews, and medical record reviews on 281 reported cases, resulting in the following classification: Definite 16.72%; Probable 8.54%; Possible 42.35%; Suspicious 1.42%; Unlikely 2.14%; Insufficient Information 23.84%; Exposed/Asymptomatic 4.27%; and Unrelated 0.72%.
- Reviewed and evaluated surveillance system process through regular staff meetings with the occupational safety and health surveillance team.
- Cleaned and deduplicated silicosis and asbestosis surveillance databases; created improved data entry process.
- Identified the first US case of silicosis from occupational exposure to silica dust from working with engineered stone counter-tops. These results were published in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (February 13, 2015 / 64(05); 129-130). DSHS worked with NIOSH and conducted a health hazard evaluation (HHE) at the workplace. The HHE included conducting interviews with employees and collecting area and personal air samples. Results of the HHE are pending.
- Conducted air sampling at a hospital to determine possible mercury vapor exposures for nursing staff from belongings brought from the home of three children admitted for mercury toxicity. A summary of our investigation and results were shared with the nursing staff and posted on our website.
(<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/epitox/reports/Hospital-Mercury-Exposure-Concerns-LHC.pdf>).

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Provided information and held educational sessions on the OHIs and occupational pesticide exposure surveillance across Texas to a variety of stakeholders / audiences (e.g., presentations, health fairs, mail-outs).
- Participated in Western States meeting in Golden, Colorado, September 2014; Occupational Health (OH) Surveillance Partners and Council of State Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) OH meeting in, Boston, Massachusetts, June 2015; and SENSOR-Pesticides 2015 Winterfest Workshop, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 2015.
- Maintained subscription with the OSHA/NIOSH/ NORA-Construction Sector Fall Prevention Campaign providing access to the campaign webpage's wealth of training and preventative resources from both Texas occupational health websites in English and Spanish.
- Provided educational material and held educational sessions on OSHA Fall Prevention Campaign across Texas to a variety of stakeholders / audiences (e.g., presentations, health fairs, mail outs).
- Updated content for program's Occupational Health Surveillance English/Spanish webpages.

- Held exhibit distributing educational material to increase awareness of Texas farmworker pesticide exposure underreporting at the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) Midwest Stream Farmworker Health Forum in San Antonio, Texas.
- Distributed information about asbestosis and silicosis reporting requirements to all Texas occupational health physicians and pulmonologists.
- Conducted a presentation about silicosis and asbestosis reporting requirements in Texas at the Annual Texas College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Meeting and Symposium in Austin, TX on May 1, 2015.

Significant Outputs

Publications:

Friedman, GK, *et al.* Silicosis in a Countertop Fabricator — Texas, 2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2015; 64:129-30 (05); 129-130.

Forrester MB. Poisoning injuries associated with water and wastewater treatment facilities. *J Occup Environ Med* 2014; 56:e1.

Forrester MB, Baker SD. Venomous snake bites at work reported to poison centers. *Clinical Toxicology* (2014), **52**, 682–818

Presentations:

Date	Presentation Title/Subject	Audience	Location
07-08-14	OSHA Fall Prevention Campaign	Public health professionals from various agencies	Austin, TX
08-12-14 01-11-15	Asbestosis Awareness and Prevention	Public health professionals from various agencies	Austin, TX
09-23-14 11-14-14	Silicosis Awareness and Prevention	Public health professionals from various agencies	Austin, TX
11-04-14	Texas Farmworker Pesticide Exposure Underreporting	Public health professionals from various agencies	Austin, TX
01-20-15 02-18-15	Silicosis – Awareness and Prevention	Workers from various industries - Ventanilla de Salud	Austin, TX
03-16-15 04-20-15	Asbestosis - Awareness and Prevention	Workers from various industries - Ventanilla de Salud	Austin, TX
04-06-15	As part of the NIOSH HHE, we spoke with workers to assess knowledge about silicosis causes and prevention.	58 employees (English/Spanish speaking) of Stone Systems of Houston	Houston, TX
05-01-15	Gave asbestos & silicosis reporting update to physicians	Texas College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine	Austin, TX

Health Fairs and Internet Presence:

State English/Spanish occupational health webpages permanently linked to both OSHA Fall Prevention Campaign English/Spanish websites since 07-22-13.

07-11-14: Updated occupational health program's postings to NIOSH RSS state-based Clearinghouse.

08-15-14: Provided diverse occupational health educational material to Colonias community at Donna /Alamo, Texas health fair.

11-19-14: Continued to increase awareness of farmworker pesticide exposure underreporting to a diverse audience of farmworker advocates, community health workers, and other farmworker organization representatives at National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) Midwest Stream Farmworker Health Forum in San Antonio, Texas.

01-20-15; Submitted a NIOSH e-news article entitled Texas Mercury Vapor Exposure Concerns at a Central Texas Hospital.

05-13-15: Submitted a NIOSH e-news article entitled Case of Silicosis in a Countertop Fabricator Identified in Texas, 2014

05-19-15: Provided educational materials on OHIs, Fall Prevention Campaign, Silicosis, Asbestosis educational exhibit at Texas Department of Insurance Safety Summit.

06-30-15: Provided educational materials on OHIs, Fall Prevention Campaign, Silicosis, Asbestosis educational exhibit at City of Austin Safety Health Fair.

Partnerships:

- Partnered with Ventanilla de Salud (Window on Health) at Mexican Consulate (Austin, Texas) providing training and education on prevention concerning health issues with a focus on occupational health.
- Continued Partnership with the OSHA/NIOSH/ NORA-Construction Sector Fall Prevention Campaign
- Continued collaboration with National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH - Buda, Texas) to help address and improve underreporting of pesticide exposure to farmworkers.
- Continued collaboration with OSHA regional office (Austin, Texas) in educating the public on occupational health conditions with a focus on fall prevention in the construction industry.
- Continued established collaboration with Texas Department of Agriculture in the mutual referral of occupational pesticide exposure cases, strengthening partnership between the two agencies.