Iowa Public Health Tracking

Public Health Tracking

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is working to add content and measures using outpatient discharge data to the Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal. The Iowa Hospital Association Statewide Outpatient Database contains data on all emergency room, ambulatory surgeries, and observation visits from Iowa hospitals and surgery centers. With more than 4 million records each year; this is the largest dataset to be integrated into the Iowa Public Health Tracking system.

A wealth of measures related to multiple health outcomes can be derived from the outpatient discharge data, and the initial measures being added to the Portal include: Asthma, Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, and Heat Related Illness.

These initial measures are part of the Nationally Consistent Data Measures developed through the CDC Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, and will be available on the portal this summer.

Beyond the new measures being built on the portal, the work to integrate this dataset will facilitate access by other IDPH programs and partners to develop measures for other health outcomes and use data to drive public health program assessment, evaluation, policy, and action.

Environmental Public Health Tracking

The Environmental Public Health Tracking program, in collaboration with Information Management and Public Health Tracking, has submitted a proposal to CDC for the Maintenance and Enhancement of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. The grant opportunity will allow the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to maintain and expand the Iowa Public Health Tracking Network to obtain integrated health and environmental data and use it to provide information in support of actions that improve the health of communities. The program also aims to build state and local capacity in the area of environmental health surveillance, and contribute to the National Tracking Network.

This funding opportunity will support the availability of additional data and tools for analysis and linkage that will allow researchers, public health authorities, health care practitioners, and the public to have a better understanding of the possible associations between the environment and adverse health effects.

Community of Practice

The Data and Informatics Community of Practice (COP) has been meeting twice a month with one meeting focusing on the advisory role of the committee and the other on knowledge sharing. The group is a voluntary collaboration of IDPH employees from various bureaus and programs with a wide range of experience and skill sets. Thus far the COP has worked on defining it's role and responsibilities by developing a charter and working closely with the Executive Team.

In the past couple months, COP members have also shared their knowledge on using different methods to help process and analyze data. One participant shared an Excel template she created to help break down data barriers with vendors and help them better understand their data. Another member also gave a presentation on the CDC software Link Plus and its ability to de-duplicate and link files. Presentations were also given on creating reports such as the Vital Statistics Report and the Flu Weekly Report.

COP meetings are held over lunch on the second and fourth Thursday of every month switching between knowledge and advisory, respectively. All IDPH employees are welcome to join.

Research and Ethics Review Committee

The Research and Ethics Review Committee (RERC) processed five new Research Agreement applications in April. Requests varied for a multitude of datasets such as birth, death, and Iowa Registry for Congenital and Inherited Disorders .

The RERC also received a new electronic information management system. This will allow for the storage and maintenance of Research Agreement and Data Sharing Agreement information on a SharePoint site. Agreements can be easily filtered and sorted improving functionality. The site has also created a long term electronic storage solution for archived agreements.

Trainings

Public Health Tracking Portal Orientation and User Guide
 mms://video2.state.ia.us/idph/2013/ipht/ipht_portal_orientation_webinar_20131104.wmv

Data Discovery and Data Use Toolkit
https://pht.idph.state.ia.us/training/Pages/default.aspx

Environmental Public Health Tracking 101
http://www.neha.org/tracking.html#CEAccess

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