

**Consortium of Occupational State-based Surveillance (COSS) and  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Workgroup Meeting**

November 28-30, 2007

Minutes

**Participants:** See list attached.

**COSS Meeting**

**Evaluation of Occupational Health Indicators (OHI) (Tish Davis/Martha Stanbury)**

Tish provided a summary of state input on their experiences with the OHI indicators as recorded on the *Indicator Evaluation Tracking Tools* submitted to CSTE last spring. There were a number of challenges in summarizing the information on the *Tracking Tool*, including lack of standardization and variable submission of information across states. Overall there were a number of positive impacts, most notably development of new working relationships within states and increases in capacity to use available data for occupational health surveillance. {Presentations from the workgroup meeting have been made available on the new CSTE OH web-board at <http://www.cste.org/cgi-bin/discus/discus.pl>}.

The ongoing evaluation of OHIs is included in the CSTE Cooperative Agreement, so states should continue recording state experiences on *the Indicator Evaluation Tracking Tool* and submit these annually to CSTE.

**Action Items**

- Overall the general sense of the state participants at the meeting was that the OHI's should be continued and included as a requirement in the new funding announcement. States felt strongly, however, that if NIOSH continues to require the OHI's that they need to make a commitment to support the infrastructure necessary to maintain the indicator process.
- *Indicator Evaluation Tracking Tool* will be revised by Tish, Martha, and Barbara.
- States should continue to record their experiences on the *Tracking Tool* and submit to CSTE. (Schedule for submission still needs to be determined.)

**Update on and discussion of the next PAR (Terri Schnorr)**

All funding under the current PAR will end in 2010 and there will be a new funding announcement in May 2009. NIOSH staff is working on drafting the new funding announcement. They are considering the input provided previously by the states. Several issues under consideration are: innovative approaches that include shared funding, having new states mentored by more experienced states, breaking out funding for FACE, and for prevention/education activities. Resubmission criteria were discussed. NIOSH is also internally discussing the pros/cons of a PAR vs. RFA as well as the time period that states would be funded.

**Surveillance coordination activity (Terri Schnorr/John Sestito)**

Terri provided an overview of NIOSH proposal for a surveillance coordination activity to enhance the use of state-level surveillance at both the state and national levels. This center/activity would give more visibility to the work of the states. It would allow for better coordination of state-reported surveillance information; 2) improve information management for shared data and reports; and 3) enhance information dissemination. Potential benefits include: centralized surveillance bibliography, materials; an archive of work; access by many; and greater influence on research priorities. She proposed establishing three state/NIOSH workgroups with 2 state reps and 2 NIOSH staff per group to help move this concept forward. (See below.) A discussion followed regarding issues

with NIOSH posting states reports, and the need to explore new ways of info sharing in the interim including web board, wiki and Epi X. {Slides available on CSTE OH web-board}.

### **Action Items**

- Two state volunteers are needed to serve on each of the following groups that will develop ideas for improving information sharing and plans for implementation, operating principles, and a time table:
  - OH indicators
  - Data sharing
  - Website.
- Erin will look into a CSTE OH web-board to facilitate communication among states (done).
- Mandy will look into Wiki.
- States should explore signing up for Epi X through their state epidemiologists.

### **NIOSH Surveillance Program Update**

*(John Sestito/Terri Schnoor)*

John Sestito provided an update on NIOSH's ongoing surveillance activities including a list of new FY 07-08 internal NIOSH surveillance projects and letters of intent for FY 09 projects. He also presented surveillance projects distributed by NIOSH surveillance goals and by sector. In addition, he provided a list of surveillance goals and objectives developed to date by the NORA sector councils. John underscored a number of lessons learned including: the need for the public to identify with the problem and hence the need for creative ways to make data available to the public; continuing problems with underreporting in all systems, and need for increased NIOSH commitment to support integration and reduce fragmentation of OHS surveillance. A discussion followed regarding connecting with the public/media about surveillance. {Slides available on CSTE OH web-board}.

### **NIOSH Office of Extramural Programs administrative/business issues** *(Linda Frederick)*

OEP is currently working on its FY2006 Annual Report. This will include general information about the cooperative agreements under PAR 04-106 such as number of states currently being funded and the types of subprojects being carried out by the various states as well as highlights of several of the programs. This document will be posted on the OEP website. States ask Linda to send a notice through the COSS Listserv when this report becomes available.

Starting this fiscal year, states are required to submit Annual Performance Reports (APRs) in addition to non-competing renewal applications. These short APRs are intended to be shared with the public and will be placed on the NIOSH website. They are an opportunity to showcase what states are doing. They should include project activities, outputs and evidence of intermediate or end outcomes. (States should review their cooperative agreement award documents for a more extensive description of these required reports.) APR's are due 30 days **after** the budget period end date (i.e. The APR for the budget period ending June 30, 2008, is due by July 30th 2008). APR's should be prepared for each individual project (e.g. fundamental, asthma, etc). Linda Fredrick suggested that these be no longer than 2-3 pages long.

### **Occupational Health Indicators (continued)**

*(Tish Davis)*

Tish reported on the decision made in a November conference call to create a subgroup of the larger Working Group that will work on the indicators over the next several months. This subgroup will include staff of state programs actually generating the indicators as well as principal investigators. Tom Largo (Michigan) and Kathleen Grattan (Massachusetts) have agreed to work with Erin Simms in leading this group to generate the multi-state indicator document for 2004 and 2005 over the next several months. Monthly conference calls will be held. A timetable for updating the how-to guides, submitting and reviewing indicator data and finalizing the document was distributed (See minutes from November conference call and indicator time line attached.)

In CSTE's cooperative agreement, CSTE agreed to work with the COSS to develop a process for generating new indicators and removing old ones. A number of ideas for new indicators were raised at the meeting: These included:

- Work-related ED visits/ outpatient visits (Kitty G)
- Hospitalizations for work-related back pain/ rotator cuff injuries (Dave B)
- BRFSS: were you injured at work question (Phill H)
- Industry specific indicator (eg-construction, falls, and MV injury by industry) (Tish D) [Theresa replied that Health People 2010 lists mortality by industry]
- Hazard related indicator (eg- high production of chemicals, pesticides) (Barbara M)
- Violence in the workplace (assaults, retail, healthcare) (David V)
- Health and safety programs by industry (Mandy G)
- CO indicator (Martha S)
- Motor vehicle crashes (Terry B) ( KY indicator)
- EMS data (Pam A)
- Rate of workers comp claims (Dave B)
- Public sector indicator (Tom St. Louis)
- Older workers; immigrant workers (health disparities) (Mandy G)

Several states have already developed state-specific indicators; e.g number of work-related MV crashes (Kentucky); work-related injuries to teens (Massachusetts). These states were asked to develop specific how-to guides for these indicators and to share these with other states for consideration.

Several existing indicators were also suggested as candidates for removal:

- OSHA investigations
- Indicators 14-16

It was agreed that anyone interested in adding an indicator, prepare a one-two page "justification/ how-to document and disseminate this to others for consideration prior to the next Work Group meeting. States interested in deleting indicators should likewise develop and disseminate justification documents prior to the next meeting.

Several other indicator issues were discussed including the need for a standard method for time trend analyses, continuing technical issues with denominator data, quality assurance, and the need to update the justifications in the original OHI document. The possibility of a multi-year multi-state report was also discussed. It was suggested that a subgroup work with Erin to look at several of the indicators across states overtime to see if the data lends itself to a multi-state report and to address trend analysis methods. The group considered the idea of getting a 5-year report out by Workers' Memorial Day but this was considered unrealistic.

There was also discussion of what should be included as a case in the workers' compensation indicators: first reports and/or claims. The definitions vary from state to state; it was generally agreed that first reports filed by employers as well claims should be counted. States may use either reports/claims filed or awarded and need to note this in the technical note on state differences in compensation data that accompanies the compensation-based indicators.

### **Action items**

- Tom Largo and Svetla will coordinate a subgroup (Becky Hoen, John M) to explore approaches to a multi-year, multi-state analysis of several of the indicators. They will prepare a five-yr indicators

report on 2-3 indicators for the April meeting. (Subsequent to the meeting Svetla indicated she was changing jobs and Kathleen Grattan took her place on this effort).

- Individuals who wish to be a part of the OHI sub-workgroup and have not already contacted Erin Simms (esimms@cste.org), please do so.
- States with state specific indicators should prepare brief how-to guides and forward these to Erin for distribution to the group.
- States interested in adding or deleting indicators should prepare short justification documents prior to the next meeting and forward them to Erin for distribution.

### **Plan for multi-state analysis of BRFSS data on WC**

*(Dave Bonauto)*

Dave provided a brief overview of the plan for the multi-state analysis. The BRFSS analysis small workgroup members are Dave, Tom Largo (MI), and Mandy Green (OR). Data will not be available until next June for most states and a more formal discussion of the analysis plan will take place next spring. The draft analysis plan is modeled from the previous work by the asthma states BRFSS module on work-related asthma. Presently, the analysis sticks to the main topics of the module and does not include analyses associated with the CDC core questions. Dave presented an outline of the work that will be conducted before the spring meeting to get the analysis plan in shape. Feedback from the CSTE occupational health workgroup will be necessary. There is a plan to promote this as an MMWR article. Each state can propose additional analyses on their own. A conference call will be held to get input from the BRFSS state partners on the draft analysis plan in a couple of months. Since some of the analyses will be dependent on sample size (age, gender, race), each state was asked to submit the estimated sample size for their survey. A final draft version of the analysis plan will occur at the spring meeting.

### **Action item:**

- States participating in the project send Dave Bonauto your state's sample size estimate. If possible, break this down into racial ethnic groups.

### **State input to NORA strategic plans: updates from state NORA Sector Council participants**

NORA Council participants gave a short update on the services, wholesale/retail trade, manufacturing, and construction workgroups.

### **Other COSS business**

*(David Valiante)*

Meeting attendees discussed ways to enhance collaborations with NIOSH intramural staff and communications with technical advisors. States expressed interest in the knowing more about internal NIOSH NORA funded projects that might provide opportunities for NIOSH-state collaboration. The possibility of a regular state column in the NIOSH e-news was raised. The column would highlight one state's occupational health program per month as well as provide web links. The possibility of periodic NIOSH-state conference calls was also discussed. It was suggested that the periodic CSTE national conference calls might help serve this purpose.

States also expressed continuing need for greater coordination with the HHE program. The National Academy of Sciences is currently reviewing the HHE program. There is an opportunity for stakeholder input to this review.

Terry Bunn is the new COSS chairperson. The COSS needs to identify a chairperson elect. It was suggested that it would be good if this would be a person from one of the newer states (NM, TX,OK,OR).

States again expressed interest in developing a standard approach for trend analysis of indicator data. Several people (see below) agreed to work with Erin to explore approaches to multi-year, multi-state analysis of several of the indicators.

## **Action Items**

- NIOSH will send the list of new NIOSH surveillance projects for the Spring to the COSS Listserve.
- Tish and Ken will contact Max Lum in the NIOSH Director's office regarding space in their monthly e-newsletter for "state-based surveillance to prevention activities."
- States should provide input to the National Academy review of the HHE program.
- Jae Douglas-OR will share prepared media/press release that is used by their office

## **Update on CSTE Cooperative Agreement activities**

*(Erin Simms)*

*Indicators.* The 2002 OHI data has been posted on the CSTE website. Tom and Kathleen are going through the QC process with 2003 data which should be posted soon. States were asked to resend their 2004 data to Erin. National indicator leads should also send the national data for 2004 to Erin. The Cross Indicator Group Activity has not been active, but if anyone is interested in forming a workgroup with participants from chronic disease, injury, and environmental health regarding indicator standardization, Erin will help set this up.

*SCG participation.* Barbara Materna continues to serve as the state representative to the Surveillance Coordinating Group (SCG) and provides email updates from the SCG calls to the states.

*CSTE OH Website.* Data from 2000-2002 are currently posted on the CSTE website ([www.cste.org](http://www.cste.org)). 2003 data will be posted soon. The website also includes a "State Contacts" link, which provides a list state occupational health websites.

*Educational conference call.* CSTE needs to hold another educational conference call this year with the aim of providing information to new as well as experienced states. Several ideas were suggested: a review of NIOSH intramural surveillance activities; discussion of specific worker/industry surveys (trucker, miner, healthcare surveys); or the BLS- American Community Survey.

*OH Consultancy.* The NIOSH Cooperative Agreement with CSTE includes a consultancy system that was established as a means of providing technical assistance regarding surveillance to the states. Consultants respond to inquiries, return correspondence, assist with CSTE with policy development, and attend meetings and special events. In the past year, Tish has had several occupational health consultancy requests.

## **Action Items**

- States and national indicator leads should resubmit 2004 indicator data to Erin
- States should browse CSTE Occupational Health website. If you would like to update your state's web links or include anything else, please email Erin.
- Tom St. Louis will take the lead on selecting the topic and arranging the educational conference call.

## **Nationally notifiable conditions**

*(Martha Stanbury/Peggy Filios)*

Peggy provided an overview of the advancement of electronic health records (EHR), implications for surveillance, and described Public Health Use Case. She recommended that state OH staff get in touch with their PHIN/NEDSS contacts within their state health departments to discuss OH data needs etc. Martha presented the charge from CSTE to consider what should be a nationally notifiable disease, in light of CSTE's position statements on this issue, and concerns related to occupational diseases and injuries.

## **Action items:**

- A small group (John V, Bob H., Tish D, Henry A., Peggy F. and Mike H.) agreed to work on the issues around nationally notifiable non-infectious diseases with Martha.
- A small group (Peggy F, Marie S, Kathy L) agreed to work on a CSTE position statement regarding EMRs for next year.

### **Strategic Planning Exercise**

*(Ken Rosenman)*

Ken led a small group strategic planning exercise to update the profiles in the “Role of the States” document. Attendees separated into groups to discuss the MSDS, acute pesticide-related injuries, work-related asthma, and non-fatal OH injuries profiles. Summaries were provided back to the group.

#### **Action Items**

- Ken will develop a new template for the profiles.
- Dave B (MSD), Tom St. Louis (asthma), and Brienne DB (pesticide) will create a new profile using this new template and input from the small group. Note takers for each of the small groups should give their write-ups to the lead editor for their topic)
- Tish ( with help from Barbara and Martha) will consider what it would take to edit the introduction, vision and cross-cutting issues section of the document and bring this back to the group in April.

### **Position statements for CSTE next year**

*(Bob Harrison)*

#### **Action Items**

- Electronic health records-( see above)
- Nationally notifiable conditions-(Martha, Bob, Andy + strategic planning workgroups)
- Epi Capacity-at least one epi in occupational health in every state-(Martha, Bob Harrison)
- NEMSIS-(Tish, John V., Kathy L.)

### **Planning for spring workgroup meeting and other ongoing work**

*(Tish Davis/Ken Rosenman)*

Two options for the Spring Work Group meeting were discussed: 1) meet with BLS in Washington DC with a focus on new sources of denominator data; 2)meet in Cincinnati in conjunction with the NIOSH Occupational Health Disparities group to address surveillance of occupational injuries and illnesses among vulnerable worker populations. Both options were of interest. The occupational health disparities meeting has to be held before July, 2008. States voted to meet this Spring in Cincinnati but to consider a future meeting in DC with BLS. **(The date for the spring meeting in Cincinnati has subsequently been set for April 22-24, 2008).**