Substance Use & Injury Connection

This newsletter provides quarterly updates on activities across CSTE programs, our members, and our partners focused on substance use and injury surveillance and epidemiology. Features include highlights of CSTE Subcommittee activities and member accomplishments related to substance use and injury topics. If you have suggestions for content or updates to include, please submit them to Mia Israel at misrael@cste.org. To access the Substance Use & Injury Connection archives, visit https://www.cste.org/page/substanceuseinjury.

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CSTE Updates

This section includes updates and opportunities relevant to substance use and injury epidemiology across CSTE programs.

CSTE Annual Conference: June 13-17, 2021

The CSTE Annual Conference connects more than 1,700 public health epidemiologists from across
the country and will include workshops, plenary sessions with leaders in the field of public health, oral breakout sessions, roundtable discussions, and poster presentations. Please see below for highlights that may be of interest to newsletter readers.

- **Sunday Workshops** (Sunday, June 13 from 11:00 am-4:00 pm EDT)
  - Environmental Health: Utilizing a Transdisciplinary Approach to Address Environmental Hazards
  - Injury Surveillance: Moving Data to Action
  - Maternal and Child Health Symposium: Improving MCH Population Health Data and Addressing Emerging Surveillance Challenges
  - Occupational Health Surveillance: Surveillance Skills, Stretches, and Strategies
  - Substance Use and Mental Health: Visualizing Connections
  - Surveillance / Informatics: Interoperability - Building Bridges to the Future

- **Plenary Sessions**
  - Racism, Equity, and Social Justice (Monday, June 14 from 11:45 am-12:45 pm EDT)
    - Featuring speakers *Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH, FACP*, Governing Council Speaker, APHA Executive Board and *Torian Easterling, MD, MPH*, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
  - Resiliency and Politics and Public Health (Tuesday, June 15 from 11:45 am-12:45 pm EDT)
    - Featuring speakers *Graham Mooney*, Johns Hopkins University and *Rachel Levine, MC*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - Bridging the Public's Health - COVID-19 and Beyond (Wednesday, June 16 from 11:45 am-12:45 pm EDT)
    - Featuring speakers *Paul Offit*, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and *Rochelle Walensky*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Daily Networking Sessions and Position Statement Office Hours
- And many Breakout Sessions and Roundtables throughout the week!

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**CSTE NSSP Community of Practice Announcements**

- The topic for the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) Community of Practice May call was “*Mental Health Awareness Month.*” The call included presentations on the CDC Mental Health Syndromes Suite and HHS Regional Heat-related
Illness Dashboard and the recording is publicly available on the NSSP CoP Knowledge Repository.

- **CSTE is excited to announce that the new online home for the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) Community of Practice (CoP) is now live!** There, you can find information and resources about the Community, ways to get involved, monthly call schedules, and much more. Check it out [here](https://nsspcommunityofpractice.org), and bookmark [nsspcommunityofpractice.org](https://nsspcommunityofpractice.org) for future visits.

- **The session recordings and slides from the 2020 Syndromic Surveillance Symposium are now publicly available!** The [2020 Syndromic Surveillance Final Event Packet](https://nsspcommunityofpractice.org) includes both 1) an agenda annotated with links to session recordings + slides and 2) track-specific content annotated with recordings + slides. You can also find these resources on the NSSP CoP Knowledge Repository’s [2020 Syndromic Surveillance Symposium](https://nsspcommunityofpractice.org).

- You can learn more about the NSSP CoP or any other NSSP CoP-related groups on the NSSP Community of Practice Website, participate in topic-specific discussions via the NSSP Community of Practice Slack Workspace, and/or join the NSSP CoP via [this form](https://nsspcommunityofpractice.org).

- Email [syndromic@cste.org](mailto:syndromic@cste.org) or [hmccall@cste.org](mailto:hmccall@cste.org) with questions.

### CSTE Substance Use and Mental Health Publication Now Available

As public health emergencies are unpredictable, the development and validation of behavioral health questions provides a unique opportunity for community level rapid field surveillance. In 2018, CSTE worked with lead consultant David Abramson of New York University to develop a behavioral health module for use in community level assessments for post-disaster impacts on behavioral health. Recently released in *Journal of Community Health, Rapid Behavioral Health Assessment Post-disaster: Developing and Validating a Brief, Structured Module*, explores the development of the module validation process. CSTE will release the final toolkit and modules later this fall and encourage practitioners to explore including mental health and substance use related questions when assessing the impacts of emergencies, disasters, and pandemics.
The following groups may be of interest to our CSTE Substance Use and Injury members with ongoing activities related to substance use and injury topics. To join one of the CSTE Subcommittees, make sure you are logged into your CSTE member account, click the link to the Subcommittee page, and click "Join Group" under the group name. To join one of the workgroups, contact CSTE staff to be added to the email list and receive meeting information.

CSTE Subcommittee Highlight

CSTE Health Equity (formerly Health Disparities) Subcommittee and Outgoing Co-Chairs

This month CSTE spotlights the retiring co-chairs of the Health Disparities Subcommittee, Duc Vugia, MD, MPH (CA) and James Hadler, MD, MPH (CT). The CSTE Health Disparities Subcommittee was initiated about a decade ago with Duc and Jim as the original co-chairs. Under their leadership, the subcommittee promoted using the data analysis methodology of the Harvard Public Health Disparities Geocoding Project which involves geocoding cases under public health surveillance and linking them to census tract data, particularly poverty level, to identify health disparities associated with socioeconomic status and clarify some racial/ethnic disparities. Some local and state health departments have used this methodology successfully to analyze public health data on infectious diseases, mortality, birth weight, or chronic diseases, and have identified a number of health disparities associated with increasing poverty levels that cut across all racial/ethnic groups. A long-term goal of the subcommittee is to get a better national picture on health disparities or health equity, with participation from local, state, tribal, and federal partners. The subcommittee is now being renamed as the CSTE Health Equity Subcommittee, and Alfreda Holloway-Beth, PhD MS (Cook County Department of Health) and Chiao-Wen Lan, PhD MPH (Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center) are the new subcommittee co-chairs. You can access the Health Equity Subcommittee webpage here. To include resources from your state on the webpage, please contact Kyra Parks at kparks@cste.org.

Since 1995, Duc Vugia has been Chief of the Infectious Diseases Branch at the California Department of Public Health where he worked with local, state, and federal partners to address foodborne, waterborne, vector-borne, zoonotic, and emerging infectious diseases. He has also been a Co-Director of the California Emerging Infections Program from 1995 to 2020 and was a Member-at-Large of the CSTE Executive Board during 2008-2011.
Dr. Jim Hadler has been a consulting medical epidemiologist to the Connecticut Emerging Infections Program at the Yale School of Public Health for the past 13 years, 12 years of which he also was a consultant in Commissioner’s Office of the New York City Department of Health. Prior to these positions, he was the Connecticut State Epidemiologist for many years. He has been a member of CSTE since 1984, and was a Member-at-Large of the CSTE Executive Board during 1993-96.

The following CSTE Subcommittees and Workgroups have ongoing projects and/or discussion topics related to substance use and injury:

- **Alcohol Epidemiology**
  - Call Schedule: Currently every other month, 1st Thursday of the month at 1:00pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Mia Israel, misrael@cste.org

- **Disaster Epidemiology**
  - CSTE Contact: Andrew Adams, aadams@cste.org

- **Health Disparities**
  - Call Schedule: Every other month, 4th Thursday of the month at 2:00pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Kyra Parks, kparks@cste.org

- **Injury Epidemiology and Surveillance**
  - **Injury Surveillance Workgroup**
    - Call schedule: 1st Wednesday of the month at 2:00pm ET
    - CSTE Contact: Mia Israel, misrael@cste.org

- **Cannabis**
  - Call Schedule: Every other month, 4th Thursday of the month at 1:00pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Mia Israel, misrael@cste.org

- **Maternal and Child Health**
  - CSTE Contact: Valerie Goodson, vgoodson@cste.org

- **Occupational Health Surveillance**
  - CSTE Contact: Cailyn Lingwall, clingwall@cste.org

- **Overdose**
  - Call Schedule: 2nd Thursday of every other month at 1:00 pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Cailyn Lingwall, clingwall@cste.org

- **Prescription Drug Monitoring Program**
  - Call Schedule: Every other month, 4th Thursday of the month at 1:00pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Danielle Boyd, dboyd@cste.org

- **Substance Use & Mental Health**
  - Call Schedule: Calls scheduled quarterly
  - CSTE Contact: Megan Toe, mtoe@cste.org

- **Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators**
  - Call Schedule: 3rd Monday of every other month at 1:00pm ET
  - CSTE Contact: Megan Toe, mtoe@cste.org

- **Tribal Epidemiology**
  - Call Schedule: Calls scheduled quarterly
  - **Tribal Data Workgroup:** Calls scheduled monthly
This month CSTE spotlights the most recent Cross Cutting Steering Committee Chair, **Stephanie Ayers-Millsap, MPH (Jefferson County, AL)**. Stephanie joined the CSTE Executive Board as Member at Large (Chair of Cross-Cutting I Steering Committee) in August 2020. Stephanie is a Program Manager for the Prevention and Epidemiology Program of Jefferson County Department of Health in Birmingham, Alabama. She has worked in Public Health Applied Epidemiology for over 30 years, primarily in infectious diseases. Her primary duties include managing investigations and outbreaks of various reportable disease and conditions, including emerging infectious diseases, vaccine preventable diseases, and outbreaks in addition to facilitating surveillance activities with various community partners for county level investigations. Stephanie currently manages COVID-19 Investigations and monitors COVID-19 data for the health department. She remains engaged in
community outreach activities to promote public health disease prevention and mitigation strategies and participates in various Emergency Preparedness Trainings and FEMA Courses. Previously, Stephanie has worked in the Tuberculosis Program and managed those cases. She received her master’s degree in Public Health from the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB).

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**Partner Announcements**

This section includes announcements relevant to our substance use and injury members from CSTE partners. Contact Mia Israel at misrael@cste.org if you would like to submit an announcement.

**AJPH and CDC Editorial Series on Youth Violence Prevention**

CDC’s Division of Violence Prevention released an editorial series with the American Journal of Public Health, highlighting the National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (YVPCs). CDC YVPC community-level prevention strategies impact neighborhood, school, and workplace characteristics that increase or buffer against violence risk. The YVPCs work with multiple community stakeholders and partners and substantively engage youth in their selected communities to achieve sustainable community-level youth violence reductions.

**Stimulant Deaths on the Rise, Compounded by Rise in Synthetic Opioids**

The National Institute for Health Care Management released a series of infographics that explores the trends of stimulant-associated deaths and highlights the co-involvement of opioids and stimulants in overdose deaths.

**CDC Release Guidance on COVID-19 and People Who Use Drugs or Have Substance Use Disorder**

Having a substance use disorder can make you more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. People who use drugs may also have underlying medical conditions that put them at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and they may have concerns and questions related to their risk. Additionally, recent data and reports show that fatal drug overdoses in the United States have been increasing before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available.
CDC Launches a Drug Overdose Website in Spanish

This new website includes:

- The basics of the opioid overdose epidemic, including frequently asked questions and commonly used terms.
- Helpful materials and resources to raise awareness and help prevent opioid-related overdoses
- Patient information, such as fact sheets, posters, infographics and conversation starters.

New CDC Campaign Helps Older Adults Age Without Injury

During the month of May, Older Americans Month, CDC launched a new campaign to bring awareness to how older adults (age 65 and older) and their caregivers can prevent common injuries. A new report examining the leading causes of unintentional injuries in older adults shows how timely this campaign is.

The Still Going Strong campaign is raising awareness about the leading causes of unintentional injuries and deaths in older adults. The empowering message, “Still Going Strong,” encourages older adults to continue participating in their favorite hobbies and activities, while taking steps to prevent common injuries. This campaign focuses on preventing injuries that disproportionally impact older adults—falls, motor vehicle crashes, and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Older adults are more active and mobile than ever, but an injury from a fall or motor vehicle crash can decrease their independence. It’s important for older adults and their caregivers to understand common injuries that can happen as they age and what they can do to prevent these injuries. Everyone has a role in older adult injury prevention—older adults, caregivers, loved ones, and healthcare providers. For more information, read the new CDC MMWR on Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations for Injures Among Older Adults.

Accepting Submissions: Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law

American University’s Journal of Gender, Social Policy & the Law is currently accepting paper submissions for upcoming issues. Examples of topics include disability law, health law, racial justice, gender-based legal issues, and LGBTQIA+ issues. Access the journal and email your submission.

Public Health Law Academy Certificate

CDC and ChangeLab Solutions created the Public Health Law Academy to bridge the learning gap
between formal public health and legal training and practice. The Academy now offers a certificate track for its free on-demand trainings. To earn the certificate, you must complete seven trainings in core competencies that all public health practitioners need. Get started here.

Funding: Research on Health Disparities of Native American Men and Boys
The Men’s Health Network is accepting nominations until May 28 for the Eric D. Bothwell Award in American Indian and Alaska Native Men’s Health. This award was created to foster the field of American Indian and Alaska Native men’s health and promote scholarship on health disparities. Learn more here.

Law and Policy Pathways to Addressing Rising Youth Suicide Rates
This resource by the Network for Public Health Law examines the law and policy pathways that can be used to reduce youth suicide rates. Suggestions related to decision-making processes and resource allocation are provided. View the resource here.

CDC and Biden-Harris Administration Invest in Life-Saving Community Violence Intervention Strategies
The Biden-Harris Administration is prioritizing preventing community violence. Community violence is a significant and costly public health issue that has substantial burden on families, communities, and society as a whole. In the United States, 19,141 lives were lost to homicide and there were 1.2 million emergency department visits for assault in 2019. Data suggest that rates of the most severe forms of violence are increasing in many areas.

CDC’s Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors shows communities and states how to sharpen their focus on prevention activities and prioritize strategies with the greatest potential to prevent violence in their community. CDC has the public health expertise and vision needed to create safer communities. Over the next five years, approximately $40 million will be awarded to CDC recipients. These investments are important steps to take now to prevent community violence.

This section contains resources that might be valuable to substance use and injury epidemiologists.


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