

Occupational Health Surveillance: Information for Action

Occupational Health Surveillance Program
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

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Today's Objectives

- Brief overview of occupational health surveillance activities in MA and new developments
- Integrating occupational health into mainstream public health – role of health care providers
- Changes in reporting regulations and impact of HIPAA

Public Health Surveillance

On-going, systematic

- collection, analysis, and interpretation of
- health data essential to the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health practice
- dissemination of these data to those who need to know for the purposes of prevention

Occupational Health Data

- Health endpoints : work-related injuries illnesses
- Hazards and biologic measures of exposure
- Interventions

Goals of Occupational Health Surveillance

- Document magnitude of problems, trends over time and locale
- Identify high risk industries, occupations, populations workplaces where intervention is needed
- Evaluate intervention efforts
- Identify new occupational health problems or old problems in new settings
- Increase awareness of problems and the need for prevention action

Types of Surveillance Systems

- Case-based surveillance
- Population-based surveillance

Occupational health conditions under surveillance in Massachusetts 2003

- Sharps injuries in hospital workers
- Work-related asthma
- Elevated blood lead levels in adults
- Fatal occupational injuries (CFOI and FACE)
- Work-related injuries to teens < 18 years
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Serious work-related burns

Population-based surveillance using existing data sets

- Hospital discharge data
- New statewide emergency department data
- BLS Annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (MSD study)
- Workers' compensation lost time claims data
- Cancer Registry (breast cancer study)
- Death certificates
- Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (computer use)

State Occupational Health Indicators

- Measures of occupational health status of the population – compare trends over time and among states
 - Occupational health conditions
 - Determinants of occupational health status
 - Economic impact

Resource: www.cste.org

OHSP Surveillance Research Activities

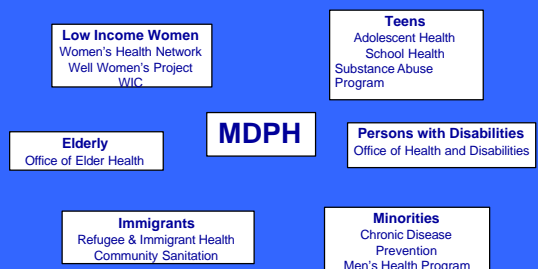
- Comparison of data sources for surveillance of CTS: SENSOR and BLS Annual Survey (3,654 vs 2,019)
- Feasibility of using emergency department data for occupational injury surveillance (NORA)
- Collecting data on low income minority workers through community health centers (NORA)

Integrating occupational health into mainstream public health

Opportunities to use public health infrastructure to address OH concerns

- Access to under- served populations
- Convergence: Points where health of public and health of workers intersect

Access to Populations



Convergence – Worker health and health of general public

- Shared hazards – e.g. latex, indoor air
- Conditions – workplace exposures one of multiple contributing factors
 - Asthma
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Violence

Role of Occupational Health Community

- Technical assistance
- Accountability – assuring occupational health included in comprehensive public health agenda e.g. statewide asthma prevention plan, cardiovascular health initiative

Mandatory Reporting of Occupational Conditions in Massachusetts by Health Care Providers (105 CMR 300,180)

Reportable Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses in MA

- WR Asthma
- Serious WR injuries to youth
- Acute chemical poisonings
 - CO & Pesticide
- Cadmium, mercury absorption
- WR-CTS
- Asbestosis
- Silicosis
- Chemical pneumonitis
- Disease clusters

Who must report?

Any health care providers : doctors, registered nurses, social workers, interns, residents

Who do we report to?

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Surveillance Program

How do we report?

- Mail or fax a MDPH case report form
“Confidential report of Occupational Disease/ Injury”
FAX: 617-624- 5696
- Call the MDPH Occupational Health Surveillance Program (617-988-3341)

What information do we report?

- Your name, address, phone
- Patients name, address, phone, race, gender, date of birth and occupation
- Name, location and type of business where exposure or injury reportedly occurred
- Date of diagnosis
- Confirmed or suspected diagnosis
- Suspected hazard or exposure, if known
- Any reason why MDPH staff should not contact the patient

Is it a violation of HIPAA to report information about cases to MDPH

NO. Reporting does not violate HIPAA because state regulations require reporting.

HIPAA expressly authorizes health care providers to disclose protected information without written authorization of the individual to a public health authority authorized by law to collect or receive such information.

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