

Oregon Technical Advisory Group
16 Nov 06
Portland, Oregon
Meeting Summary

Attendance at end

The group introduced themselves.

Welcome

Rene-Marc Mangin, DEQ, and Gail Shibley, Oregon Public Health Division, welcomed the group.

Mangin recognized the role of DEQ staff in the planning phase of the Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) program and indicated that DEQ is looking forward to the implementation portion of the project.

Mel Kohn provided some remarks also. He informed the group that the Environmental and Epidemiology section has merged into the Office of Environmental Public Health with a goal to improve use of the Health Division resources. Kohn highlighted his personal interest and involvement in the EPHT project. This is an area of early development of resources for environmental public health – we need more access to data and more data to make good decisions, he said. The group is laying the groundwork for the growth of environmental public health.

Gail Shibley added that this is a great partnership between DEQ and Health Division working on environmental public health tracking issues. Data is the largest challenge for the program, and there are opportunities to expand the doorways and connections with other agencies around the state. There are many issues with data collection and use.

EPHT Background and Role of OTAG

Lori Barck outlined the background of the Oregon Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) program and the role of the Oregon Technical Advisory Group (OTAG). She used a slide presentation that is available on the EPHT website.

She highlighted that the Planning Consortium and Advisory Committee groups of the planning phase of the project are being replaced by this Oregon Technical Advisory Group (OTAG).

Barck reviewed the history of Environmental Public Health including:

- Pew Commission report of 2000 identified an environmental health gap of a lack of basic information that could document links between environmental hazards and chronic disease.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding for a nationwide data network of surveillance and monitoring data tracking for hazards exposures and health effects

Oregon has been funded as a network implementation state for the next five years (2006 – 2011). There are states and local grantees (17), academic centers, and national partners in addition to CDC. Oregon DHS and DEQ will be working with the DHS Office of Information Systems (OIS) to build a network in partnership with data partners - - people that own the data.

Actually building the data network is the primary task of this part of the project, remarked Barck. Significant grant funding will be dedicated to OIS to build the data network.

DEQ and Health Division have been partners in the EPHT program since its beginnings in Oregon.

For the Oregon EPHT Network, there needs to be nationally consistent data and measures, there must be geographical and temporal referencing, and both state and national data should be used. Some Oregon –only tools and information may be developed also. This is not just a jigsaw piece of the national program.

The required health and environmental data will include:

- Asthma and myocardial infarction hospitalizations
- Cancer registry data
- Birth defects (no Oregon registry)
- Vital statistics
- Blood lead levels
- Ozone
- Air Particulate matter less than 2.5 ug
- Drinking water contaminants (to be named)

Barck highlighted that there are national workgroups for determining the data content of the Network in each of the topics that must be tackled. The network is being created collaboratively by all the partners as it goes – members of the OTAG will be participating in these meetings and discussions.

For health data, data protection and confidentiality must be tackled. For environmental data, issues related to coverage, monitoring, and modeling must also be considered.

Additional potential data sources include:

- Community based health data collection
- Housing
- Transportation
- Pesticide applications
- Hazardous waste

- Greenspace

There are many hands involved in creating the network:

- EPHT state partners, including data owners, stakeholders, and users
- EPHT National workgroups and subgroups, including Standards & Network Development, Program Marketing and Outreach, and Content
- National meetings and workshops
- National partners, including NASA, US Geological Survey, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS), Environmental Protection Agency, and others

Barck continued that there is a vision for how the environmental public health network will work. Due to confidentiality concerns, the raw data will be available to public health offices, and reports and information will be available to the public.

The three main goals to be accomplished by the Oregon EPHT program include:

1. Convene OTAG
2. Build the network
3. Stay in touch with stakeholders – maybe by organizing workshops on specific topics.

OTAG is comprised of the technical experts and data partners. Issues include:

- Network content, measures, and standards
- Legal issues
- Data sharing
- Network development

OTAG will get information from the national workgroup and provide information to the national groups from the Oregon perspective.

Barck asked the group to consider efforts that EPHT might address and accomplish that would be of benefit to the data partners.

Two small working subgroups will be formed within OTAG; the large OTAG group will meet only two times per year. The subgroups may meet up to once per month – likely by phone.

She referenced several recent Oregonian articles related to air quality.

Kohn added that CDC is managing Congress' expectations regarding the outcome of the EPHT projects nationally.

Charter Revisions

The group reviewed a draft charter drafted by the EPHT program. Issues discussed by the group included:

- Is there a need to add support and promotion of the Network to the Purpose? Barck responded that this is a technical group.
- Should identification of data gaps be added to the purpose? Garland suggested that issue was included in the “content” portion of the purpose.
- How best to ensure new databases, such as improvements to the Family Net are built in a way that makes working with the EPHT database as functional as possible. Group decided to add a sentence.
- Under ‘mission’, should something be added about the overall mission related to environmental public health? The group agreed.
- Under background, why are some data sources so specific and some so vague? List is from CDC – clarify in final charter.
- Should the charter be revised to reflect changes in membership? After discussion, the group decided to leave the existing language.

The group made these changes:

- Under ‘purpose’, change Oregon Department of Human ~~Resources~~ to Services. Also add a sentence related to “Coordinate existing and new data systems to attempt to use data to its full functionality”
- Under ‘mission, add a sentence discussing the overall mission of environmental public health.
- Under ‘background’ add, “*The Oregon EPHT Network will contain standardized core data that are CDC core measures from November, 2006 including at a minimum...*”
- Under ‘Operating procedures’, add, “*Information will be posted to the EPHT web site.*” at the end of the first paragraph.
- For the working groups, add, “*The Group leaders will be in routine communication*”.
- The title of one working group was changed to “Systems, Logistics, Applications and Management (SLAM)”.

Role of Working Groups

Barck outlined the role of the working groups. Two working groups will be formed to work over the life of the project:

- Systems, Logistics, Applications and Management (SLAM), and
- Data Use and Network Content Working Groups (DUNC)

The groups will likely be meeting monthly.

She indicated that Rodney Garland and Curtis Cude will be group leaders. They are the facilitators for the groups, not the experts. They will be asking for co-facilitators to help them lead the groups (not to provide the staff work).

Needed Follow Up

The items that needed follow up included:

- Discussing the new Family Health Services data vendor contract with Frank Steinkellner to ensure compatibility
- Determining if the Pesticide User Reporting System might have useful information
- Sharing the project management forms from Office of Information Services with the group for review

Next Agenda

The group discussed that their next agenda should focus on “stealing from others,” that is, which existing data systems might Oregon be able to use for its program. Ideas included:

- Family Net
- Vista –PH
- Other available systems
- Missouri system
- CDC vendor

The group discussed the need to find existing data systems for the Oregon system, and not reinvent the wheel. Vista PH might be a fine match for Oregon, according to Garland. Shibley stressed that the contract with Office of Information Services needs to be clear that we are not building a new system – we want to build on existing systems. OIS needs to clearly understand that the project is asking for advice and guidance; the project is not asking OIS to create the network.

Attending

Gail Shibley

Rene’ -Marc Mangin

Curtis Cude

Rodney Garland

Anna Halpin

Lori Barck

Robert Vega

Jeff Lang

JA Magnuson

Mandy Green

Mel Kohn

John Dougherty

Pat Westling

Joyce Grant-Worley

Richard Leman

Mike Emerson

Michael Heumann

Gregg Lande

The meeting was facilitated by Janet Gillaspie, Environmental Strategies. LLC