

Update on the Connecticut & National Environmental Public Health Tracking Networks

The CT Department of Public Health's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program continues to make progress expanding public access to environmental and health data through [Connecticut's Tracking Network](#). On the national level, the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) Tracking Network](#) also continues to add additional data packages.

For years, the hard questions about the ties between environmental factors and health impacts meant sorting through studies of inconsistent and incomparable data. It meant overburdened public health departments spending months trying to find answers so citizens could understand the health outcomes they were experiencing in their communities. And, too often, it meant public policy decisions made in the absence of meaningful data, especially when it came to the impact of the environment on chronic disease. The Tracking Network seeks to address these problems by allowing users to get data on various environmental and health topics. The Networks break down the data by demographic factors including age, gender and county.

COMING SOON - New Data Available on Connecticut's Tracking Network

The CT EPHT program will have new data packages on the Network. These include:

- Occupational Health Data: The data will show counts and rates by ICD-9 group
- Reportable Disease Data: Network users will be able to access state data on 3 environmental/ occupational related diseases – carbon monoxide, mercury, and adult blood-lead reports as well as selected infectious diseases
- Immunization Data: Users will be able to access immunization coverage rates

Other data already available on Connecticut's Network include:

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|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| ➤ Air quality | ➤ Water Quality |
| ➤ Childhood Lead Poisoning | ➤ Asthma |
| ➤ Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack) | ➤ Birth Defects |
| ➤ Carbon Monoxide Poisoning | ➤ Cancer |
| ➤ Reproductive Health Outcomes | |

Connecticut has a tracking success story! To read about it, [click here](#).

National Tracking Network Advances

The National Tracking Network has added several new data modules to the site:

- [Health Behaviors](#) module: When examining chronic diseases and their potential connection to the environment, it is important to consider other health risk factors that could play a role in their development. Four personal behaviors that can impact chronic diseases are: a lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco use, and excessive alcohol consumption.
- [Community Design](#) module: Parks are an important part of a community. These data can be used to understand how improving access to healthy community places, such as parks, may increase physical activity among community members.

- [Climate Change](#) module: These data will allow you to look at temperature, heat index, and number of days to define extremely hot days and extreme heat events.
- [Children's Environmental Health](#) module: This module brings together data and information already on the Tracking Network related to children's health. Specific topics in this module include [asthma](#), some childhood [cancers](#), [lead poisoning](#), some [developmental disabilities](#), and [socioeconomic conditions](#).

Training Opportunities

Tracks: Nurses and the Tracking Network (podcast): Listen as Amy Garcia, Chief Nursing Officer for the American Nurses Association and Kitty Mahoney, President of the Massachusetts Association of Public Health Nurses and Chief Public Health Nurse for the town of Framingham, MA talk about how nurses working in a variety of settings can use the Tracking Network to make their jobs easier. For more information, [click here](#).

“Tracking 101”: This is a free, web-based continuing education training program, and includes opportunities for free *Continuing Education credits*. This course provides an overview of the major components of Environmental Public Health Tracking. For more information, [click here](#).

CT Tracking Network Training: The DPH EPHT Program is developing a training module to assist public health professionals, health providers and others. Look for it in summer 2013.

For more information, visit the web portal site (<http://dphepht.ct.gov>) and/or contact the EPHT program at 860-509-7740.