

**State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Unit**

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Occupational Illness and Injury Surveillance in Connecticut; Major Outputs and Outcomes July, 2011-June, 2012

Analysis of Underreporting

Longitudinal analysis of occupational illness and injury under-reporting in Connecticut has continued over the past year. DPH worked over the past year to enter physician reports from 2009 through 2012 for analysis after staffing changes at CT DOL impacted timely reporting of illness and injury case reports. This significant backlog is now current and no longer delaying capture-recapture analysis. Data is now currently being analyzed; new capture-recapture analysis estimates for 2010 and 2011 will be available in Fall 2012. Capture-recapture analysis is a comparison of data from the Occupational Illness and Injury Surveillance System (OIIS) and the Connecticut Workers' Compensation Commission that is performed annually in order to estimate the amount of occupational disease underreporting that occurs in Connecticut.

Occupational Health Indicators

Our current funding has allowed Connecticut to complete analysis for all 20 *Occupational Health Indicators* for 2009. A summary data report of all compiled Connecticut indicators and profile demographic data was provided to NIOSH in June 2012. The Connecticut-specific occupational health indicators web report will be updated this year with 2008 and 2009 data. This report is disseminated to appropriate stakeholders, regional partners, and other interested parties as appropriate. The report is also posted to the Connecticut DPH website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth>. The web report includes summary data for each of the indicators along with information from the demographic profile, and also includes comparisons of Connecticut data to U.S. data. The Occupational Health Unit continues to provide indicator data to the CT DPH Injury Program and provided the latest summary data in April 2012. The CT DPH Occupational Health Unit and Environmental Public Health Tracking Unit partnered to develop a tool designed to post data from the OIIS to the Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal. This tool will allow for easy viewing and manipulation of data fields to share reported data with internal and external stakeholders throughout Connecticut. Currently, all dashboards are complete and data is being reviewed and error checked for deployment to production in August 2012.

Targeted Conditions

Although not specifically funded as a specific aim, work-related asthma and heavy metal poisoning surveillance activities continued during the current year. CT DPH received 214 mercury poisoning reports that were either ≥ 15 ug/L of whole blood or 35 ug/g creatinine in urine. Of those 214 reports received, 26 were at the Connecticut Department of Public Health's follow-up level which is ≥ 30 ug/L of whole blood or 35 ug/g creatinine in urine however, no cases were determined to be work-related. From July 1, 2011 to present, the CT DPH OIIS has received 13 work-related asthma reports. Reports of work-related asthma were lower in 2010 due to delays in processing physicians' reports; normal reporting flow has resumed and case counts now reflect numbers closer to past case counts.

Advisory Group

The goals for the Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Planning and Action Network (OSH-PLAN) have been accomplished through the collaborative efforts of partners from The University of Connecticut Division of Environmental and Occupational Medicine (DOEM), CT DPH, and other appointed members of the advisory group representing labor unions, workers' compensation insurers, private consultants, business groups, and legal representatives. The OSH-PLAN report's key objectives included priority occupational health conditions, existing and emerging occupational health hazards, problems with existing systems and approaches, and potential solutions to problems. The OSH-PLAN report was published in December 2011 to the CT DPH website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth>. OSH-PLAN represents a very successful collaboration and CT DPH has utilized the report findings to reestablish the Occupational Health Clinics meetings in Connecticut and to drive topic discussions. In the past, these meetings brought together occupational health providers and other stakeholders in Connecticut to discuss and present on current occupational health topics. One of the goals of these meetings include rotating the physical meeting site to the various funded occupational health clinics in CT. The Winter meeting was hosted at the UConn Health Center's Occupational Medicine clinic and the topic of discussion was "Integrating Health Promotion and Occupational Health and Safety: Perspectives for Occupational Medicine Clinics". The Spring meeting focused on Indoor Air Quality in the Work Environment and was geared toward health departments and occupational health clinics. The most recent summer meeting included a presentation on work-related asthma. The next meeting is scheduled for October 2012, with a tentative agenda in place.

Educational Activities

Currently the Occupational Health Unit continues to publish Health Alert publications on important occupational health topics on an as-needed basis. Recently, the Unit has redesigned its approach to developing outreach materials to be more streamlined and focused. These publications, called "Fast Facts" are data driven publications that are designed around various occupational health topics some of which are seasonally relevant. Fast Fact publications are produced and disseminated monthly. Some of the 2012 Fast Fact publications include topics such as heat safety in the workplace, workplace burns, fatal falls in construction, workplace eye injuries, Workers' Memorial Day awareness, and a publication on worksite wellness programs. These Fast Fact publications are distributed to stakeholders in Connecticut such as the Connecticut Construction Industries Association (CCIA), various technical schools and most recently at a young worker event at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Fast Fact publications slated for later in the year include fire safety in the workplace and non-fatal construction injuries.

Regional Collaboration

The 2012 Northeast Regional Surveillance meeting convened on May 7th and 8th. This annual meeting brings together all occupational health surveillance partners from throughout the Northeast States as well as federal partners from NIOSH to discuss various health topics of interest to our states. Connecticut presented information on the involvement of DPH in Workers' Memorial Day activities around the state and how social networking tools could be useful in promoting activities related to this event. CT also presented with other states on its new initiatives focused around residential construction falls. In addition, a presentation was given on the workplace wellness program that was implemented in Connecticut over the past year.