



Environmental Health Data Partnerships Collaborative

Data Partnerships to Improve Health Project

Background:

Increased adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) and health information exchanges (HIEs) as a result of federal initiatives such as the Affordable Care Act, HITECH Act, and Meaningful Use (MU) have underscored the need to develop better strategies for using data in health agencies, as well as develop and support an informatics workforce that can understand and meet these increased needs. According to a 2011 ASTHO survey, state environmental health (EH) programs need more effective integration of environmental health and health data (73%), increased skills or knowledge for HIE activities (86%) and a stronger workforce (86%). Many efforts are currently underway nationally to explore the feasibility and potential integration of environmental health elements into EHRs. Such examples include:

- Piloting projects which examine the use of EHR within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network),
- Examining innovative approaches for utilizing EHR to improve public health surveillance,
- Incorporating work environment information in EHRs to support clinical decisions, a task currently being undertaken by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and
- Data capture initiatives at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to identify environmental health data that can be captured in EHRs for community health assessments.

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) supports national efforts on EHRs and health information exchanges (HIEs), and has launched *Data Partnerships to Improve Health*, in recognition of the value of engaging national partners and state health agencies in meaningful use and standard reporting of environmental health data. The project aims to further EH involvement in EHRs, MU, and other national initiatives which impact the integration, implementation, and capacity around environmental health data exchange efforts. It addresses electronic health data, health data systems, and surveillance systems as they relate to environmental health.

Environmental Health Data Partnerships Collaborative

Purpose and Function:

The Environmental Health Data Partnerships Collaborative (aka Collaborative) is being convened by ASTHO as part of *Data Partnerships to Improve Health* to guide and advise ASTHO's efforts in building state and territorial health agency capacity to address public health informatics and data systems issues and exploring opportunities for the integration of environmental health information with electronic health records. The Collaborative will be multi-disciplinary in both its membership and function, and comprised of professionals from a range of specialties dedicated to improving public health, healthcare delivery, and related health informatics and data system needs at the state and territorial level.

Composition:

The Collaborative includes representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) IDEA Lab, National Association of Health Data Organizations (NAHDO), the Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), and other key members of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) Public Health Data Standards Consortium (PHDSC, The Consortium).

Organization	Contact person	Email	Title/Expertise
Core Advisory Group SEHD IT, Surveillance and Data WG			
Collaborating Partners			

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Roles and Responsibilities:

The Collaborative is primarily advisory convened to advise ASTHO and provide expertise on key aspects of the *Data Partnerships to Improve Health* project and be a sounding board for project deliverables.

Collaborative members will:

- Provide expertise on EHRs, public health informatics and data systems issues;
- Review and provide feedback on project materials/reports;
- Attend all meetings possible and prepare appropriately;

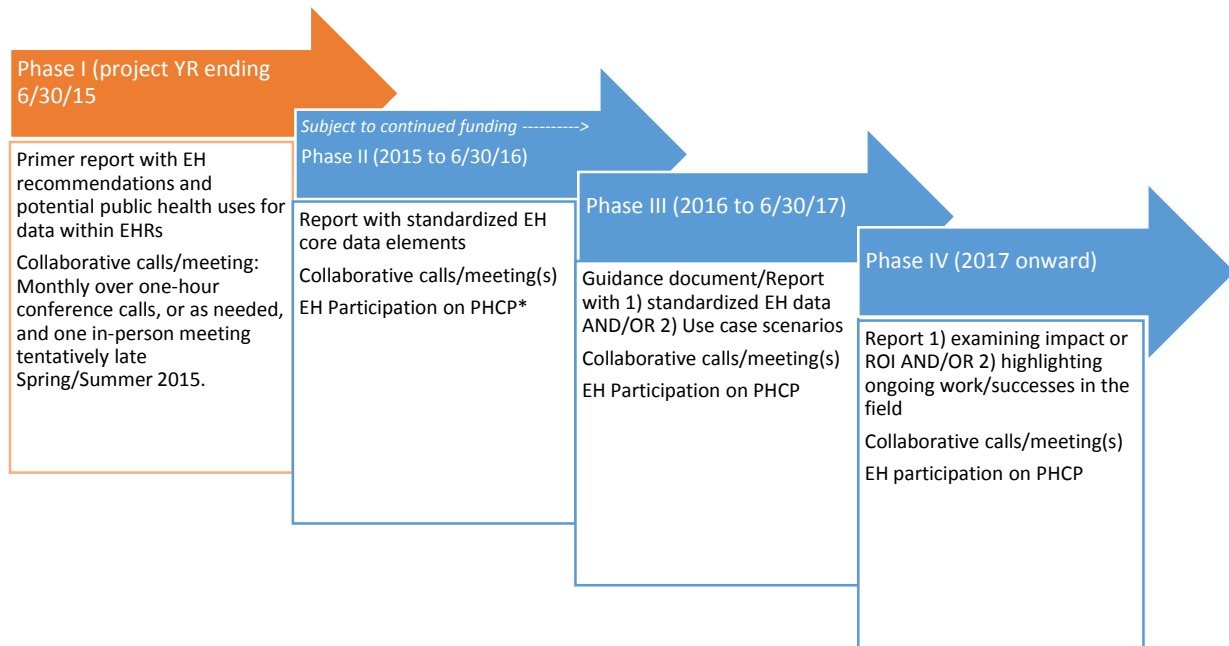
In areas requiring decision-making, such as the identification of essential EH domains that may be included in EHRs, members will work towards a consensus on proposed actions/recommendations.

Work Products:

Data Partnerships to Improve Health aims to demonstrate the benefits of including environmental health information, to include tracking data in national health information systems, and enhance data partnerships and communication between health agencies and their respective data stewards.

It is envisioned to be a multi-year, collaborative project that spans over multiple cycles and builds on product deliverables at each phase to achieve these long-term goals.

Timeline: Phases and Outputs



Current Year

Phase I (project year ending 06/30/2015) - Primer Report that makes the case for inclusion of environmental and occupational health data in EHRs and also identifies potential public health uses for data fields that already exist within EHRs; Collaborative calls/meeting(s); Enhanced Online Data stewards package.

Future Project Cycles *subject to continued funding*

Phase II (2015 to 06/30/2016) – Report EH core data elements in standardized format, if available; Collaborative calls/meeting(s); EH participation on the Public Health Community Platform (PHCP)*, a CDC-funded, ASTHO-led initiative to develop a cloud for common information exchange and the development of innovative and interoperable systems for the public health community.

Phase III (2016 to 06/30/2017) – Report/guidance document with standardized EH data for EHRs OR Use case scenarios; Collaborative meeting(s); EH participation in PHCP

Phase IV (2017 onward) – Report examining the impact or ROI for incorporating EH info into EHRs or collection of ongoing work/success stories in the field; Collaborative calls/meeting(s); EH participation on PHCP

Please Note: As tasks become more defined, outputs may be developed earlier in a previous phase or flow into the next.

Time Commitment:

Depending upon availability of funds, it is anticipated that the Collaborative will convene at least one in-person meeting(s) in each phase. Conference calls will be held on a monthly basis or as needed. Meetings will be held on dates/times chosen by the Collaborative via an online scheduling tool.