

According to the results of the program evaluation, the EPHT Fellowship is viewed positively and helps unfunded states and territories build their capacity to conduct environmental health public tracking. The program fosters professional development, provides a unique learning experience, and facilitates peer networking. When asked what dataset participating states would like to see implemented in their portals, 100% of respondents said that they would like to have all types of datasets (air quality, drinking water, vital statistics and birth outcomes, birth defects, cancer, carbon monoxide, hospitalizations, lead, and asthma) integrated into their portals.

The positive feedback received from participants demonstrates the value of the program for unfunded states and territories. ASTHO thanks its first round of fellows for taking the time to complete the program evaluation and looks forward to promoting the benefits of the State-to-State Peer Fellowship Program.

### **Background:**

In the summer of 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the National Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Network, a Web-based surveillance system to advance environmental epidemiological capacity and provide data and trends that relate to hazards and health effects. This network is a multi-disciplinary collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies that involves the ongoing analysis and dissemination of environmental hazards and exposure data. When fully implemented, the tracking network is expected to enable public health and environmental protection agencies to rapidly detect emerging public health threats; implement and evaluate the efficacy of control strategies; and ensure an informed and participating public.

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) has partnered with CDC's network since 2002 and has played a crucial role in guiding its development. Currently, CDC funds at least 22 states and one city to conduct environmental public health tracking activities. To bridge the gap between funded and unfunded tracking states and territories, ASTHO launched its Environmental Public Health Tracking: State-to-State Peer Fellowship Program in 2009. Through its 2009 Fellowship Program, ASTHO awarded three unfunded states stipends to gain first-hand tracking experience from peers in funded states and develop a small project that would advance environmental public health tracking. ASTHO continues to offer fellowships on a yearly basis.

In order to ensure that the EPHT Fellowship has a positive educational outcome, ASTHO conducted an online evaluation of its 2009 participants. All of the respondents agreed that the EPHT program met their educational expectations and would recommend the program to other prospective fellows. The fellowship helped past fellows build peer networks and establish long-lasting relationships with those experienced in implementing EPHT programs. One respondent said that the fellowship experience played a valuable role in their state's successful application for CDC's 2009 EPHT grant.

The online evaluation consisted of nine questions that gauged the respondents' impression of the general structure, delivery, and benefit of the program. The evaluation was distributed to the 2009 Fellows via a Web-based survey and received a 100% response. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements regarding the EPHT Fellowship using a five-level Likert scale. Response options were: Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree. Likert items were assigned a numerical value of 1 through 5, respectively. For example, the item "Strongly Disagree" had a value of 1 and "Strongly Agree" had a



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value of 5. Responses for each item were summed and presented as means. The closer the mean score to 5, the more respondents agreed with the statement. All responses remain confidential and are summarized below.

### Quality and Structure (N = 3)

Question/ Statement	Mean
The objectives of this fellowship were clearly explained to me.	4.67
The length of the fellowship was sufficient.	4.67
The overall design of the fellowship was conducive to my learning.	4.67
This fellowship duplicated other EPHT programs/ events that I have access to.	2.00
I enjoyed the overall quality of teaching, environment, and support offered by the program.	4.67

### Logistics (N = 3)

Question/ Statement	Mean
The fellowship was well organized.	5
The meeting agenda and topic met my expectations.	4.67
The presentation by the host state was relevant and useful to my work.	5
There was ample opportunity to contribute to discussion.	5
The presenter covered concepts in a clear and concise manner.	5
I was comfortable sharing my comments openly and honestly.	5
The fellowship increased my knowledge of EPHT.	5
The fellowship helped me strengthen peer networks across state health agencies.	5
The fellowship funds were sufficient to carry out proposed activities.	4.33

### Meeting Expectations and Learning Objectives (N = 3)

Question/ Statement	Mean
Understanding portal development and standards.	4.67
Implementing small project.	4
Building capacity to collaborate with peers on EPHT activities.	5