



## Environmental Public Health Tracking: 2010 State-to-State Peer Fellowship Program Evaluation Summary Report

### ASTHO's 2010 State-to-State Peer Fellowship Program Evaluation Summary Report

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. Information on the Tracking Network is intended 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) partnered with CDC's Network since 2002, and played a crucial role in guiding its development. Currently, CDC funds 23 states and one city to build and maintain state-wide networks as components of the National EPHT Network. To bridge the gap between funded and non-funded tracking states and territories, ASTHO launched its Environmental Public Health Tracking: State-to-State Peer Fellowship Program in 2009. As of 2010, the second installment of the Tracking Fellowship Program, ASTHO has supported a total of eight Tracking Fellows. In 2009, ASTHO awarded three fellowships to principal investigators from the state health agencies in Louisiana, Michigan, and District of Columbia. In 2010, new fellowships were awarded to state health agency staff from Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Fellows were given the opportunity to gain first-hand tracking experience from peers in funded states and encouraged to explore the application of a small tracking project that would advance environmental public health tracking in his or her state. ASTHO continues to offer tracking fellowships on a yearly basis.

To evaluate the educational outcome and impact of the Fellowship Program, ASTHO conducted an online evaluation of its 2010 Tracking Fellowship recipients. All respondents agreed that the EPHT program met their educational expectations and would recommend the program to other prospective fellows. Tracking Fellows considered the Fellowship Program unique and non-duplicative of other EPHT programs/events that they may have access to. The fellowship also helped past fellows build peer networks and establish long-lasting relationships with those experienced in implementing EPHT programs.

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 2010 Fellows via a Web-based survey and received a 100% response rate. 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 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.

#### Fellowship, Overall Quality and Structure (N = 5)

Question/ Statement	Mean
The objectives of this fellowship were clearly explained to me.	4.80



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Attending the National EPHT Workshop was beneficial.	4.60
The length of the fellowship was sufficient.	4.40
The fellowship was well organized.	4.80
The fellowship funds were sufficient to carry out proposed activities.	4.80
The overall design of the fellowship was conducive to my learning.	4.80
I enjoyed the overall quality of teaching, environment, and support offered by the program.	5
The fellowship helped me strengthen peer networks across state health agencies.	3.80
This fellowship duplicated other EPHT programs/events that I have access to.	2.00

### Site-Visits, Overall Quality, Logistics, and Delivery (N = 5)

Question/ Statement	Mean
The meeting agenda and topic met my expectations.	5
The presentation by the host state was relevant and useful to my work.	5
The presenter covered concepts in a clear and concise manner.	5
There was ample opportunity to contribute to discussion.	5
I was comfortable sharing my comments openly and honestly.	5
The length of the site-visit was sufficient.	4.20
The site-visit was content rich and helpful.	4.80

### Meeting Expectations and Learning Objectives (N = 5)

Question/ Statement	Mean
Understanding portal development and standards.	4.40
Securing data steward partnerships.	4.60
Creating metadata and tracking metadata creation tool.	3.80
Challenges of data sharing and types of datasets.	4.80
Risk communication and program outreach.	4.40
IT Infrastructure	3.80
Implementing and sustaining EPHT activities.	4.40
Building capacity to collaborate with peers on EPHT activities.	4.20
Increasing your overall knowledge of EPHT	5



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### Main Survey Findings:

ASTHO's Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT): State-to-State Fellowship Program continues to receive positive reviews from former fellows. All of the respondents spoke very highly of the program and described the fellowship as an invaluable opportunity for non-funded tracking states to gain first-hand knowledge of EPHT and prepare for the opportunity to become a funded tracking state in the future.

The overwhelmingly positive results from the 2010 Tracking Fellowship Evaluation demonstrate the overall value of the program for non-grant states and territories. ASTHO will be supporting an additional five states and continues to help non-grantee 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. Even after the completion of the fellowship program, ASTHO Tracking Fellows continue to receive support and technical assistance to aid in their pioneering efforts through ASTHO's Tracking Alumni Group. Examples of activities pursued by former Tracking Fellows include the launch of internal tracking workgroups; engagement with data stewards, IT departments, and other potential stakeholders; and preliminary collection and analyses of environmental and public health data. The capacity building and activities pursued by ASTHO Tracking Fellows provide them with a good stepping stone to expand their environmental health tracking efforts and put them in a better position to become CDC funded tracking states if the opportunity arises. The 2009 fellow from Louisiana successfully competed for the CDC EPHT Network Implementation Grant in 2009 and is now a part of CDC's National EPHT Network.

The 2010 fellowship recipients provided ASTHO with a variety of suggestions to improve the fellowship program, which include modifying the length of site-visits, facilitating a formal discussion among awardees prior to attending the EPHT workshop to facilitate the networking process, and providing additional information on the process of applying for the CDC EPHT RFA. When asked what dataset states would like to see implemented in their portals should funding become available, 100% of respondents said that they would like to have air quality and drinking water datasets, 80% requested cancer, lead, and other data (asthma, respiratory/hearth and stroke, pesticide, and immunological disease), and 40% requested vital statistics/birth outcomes and carbon dioxide data be integrated into their portals. All fellow suggestions will be taken into consideration as ASTHO continues to improve the quality of its Tracking Fellowship Program. To learn more about this fellowship program, please visit ASTHO's [Tracking Environmental Hazards](#) webpage.