

## ABOUT US

The Louisiana Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (LEPHT) is a cooperative initiative between the Department of Health and Hospitals' (DHH) Office of Public Health, Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology and the Office of Management and Finance, Section of Information Technology that keeps track of important environmental health issues impacting Louisiana's communities. We provide information to environmental and public health professionals, legislators, advocacy groups, researchers and the public to facilitate better decision making, evaluation and policy development.

## MISSION

Our mission is to develop a secure electronic network for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of environmental public health data and information; to guide policy, practice and other actions toward improving the health of Louisiana residents; and to foster collaboration among the state's environmental and public health partners.

## VISION

Our vision is for Louisiana to be a state where high-quality information on environmental health is available to all in a rapid, simple form in order to support an environment of wellness consisting of an abundance of clean air, clean water, and healthy buildings.

## News from the Louisiana Environmental Public Health Tracking Program



## LEPHT Announcements

### Website Development

The Louisiana Environmental Public Health Tracking (LEPHT) staff is developing a new website that will include information on the indicators that have been identified by the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. (CDC). These indicators include:

#### Health Effects

Asthma Hospitalizations  
Childhood Lead Poisoning  
Birth Defects  
Reproductive Health  
Heart Attacks  
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning  
Cancer

#### Environment

Outdoor Air  
Public Drinking Water  
Well Water

Background information and state data for all of the indicators will be included on the site.

### LEPHT Community Workgroup

LEPHT will be establishing a community work group to assist them in:

- identifying indicators of interest,
- identifying individuals to participate in community outreach workgroups, and
- crafting messages to educate residents about the national and state tracking programs.

Contact Emán Williams at 1-888-293-7020 or [ewillia5@la.gov](mailto:ewillia5@la.gov) if you are interested in receiving additional information about the workgroup.

### BP Oil Spill Follow-Up

The State has received \$18 million dollars to monitor seafood for 3 years. Samples of oysters, finfish, crabs and shrimp will be collected and LDHH will analyze the data for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and dioctylsulfosuccinate. LEPHT plans to incorporate these data into the tracking database and to create messages to address public concerns regarding seafood consumption.

## Upcoming Events

**Sept. 12-15** CDC is hosting its bi-annual EPHT Workshop in Atlanta—Scholarships are available for individuals to attend! See story inside.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What data will be available?

Data on LEPHT will include asthma and myocardial infarction hospitalizations, cancer, births, birth defects, vital statistics, childhood blood lead levels, ozone and particulate matter in ambient air, arsenic, disinfection by-products, nitrates and nitrites in public drinking water.

### How will LEPHT data be displayed?

LEPHT will feature analysis, visualization and reporting tools that allow users to create maps, graphs and charts of selected data. Users will be able to view multiple displays of data side-by-side, drill down levels of data, and export data in usable formats such as Excel. Public users will have the ability to select from a predetermined set of indicator measures while authorized users will have the ability to perform ad-hoc queries. Data will be presented with information on the data source and its limitations.

### Will personally identifiable data be protected?

Data provided to the public by LEPHT will be appropriately de-identified and aggregated and will conform to strict confidentiality and suppression rules as determined by the CDC and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals. Secure data will be accessible only to authorized users via a pin/password login.

## SAVE THE DATE: 2011 Environmental Public Health Tracking Workshop in Atlanta Sept. 12-15



We are pleased to announce the CDC's 2011 National EPHT Workshop will be held in **Atlanta, Georgia, Sept. 12-15**.

The purpose of the workshop is to provide training to, and face-to-face meetings for, EPHT-participating states and partners.

The **CDC is awarding scholarships** for individuals to participate in the workshop!

This will allow state partners to gain knowledge about the national program and other state and local tracking programs.

If you are interested in attending this event, we encourage you to apply.

For more information about the scholarship or workshop please refer to <http://www.trackinginaction.com/scholarships.htm>

Good Luck!!

The workshop breaks out into various teams: content-specific workgroups; outreach; security and network development; and geospatial information workgroups.

Please contact **Emán Williams** if you should have additional questions at [Eman.Williams@la.gov](mailto:Eman.Williams@la.gov) or (504)568-8143.

## Partner Activities:

- The **US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** has just launched their updated Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) website: <http://www.epa-echo.gov/echo/>. This site provides fast integrated searches of EPA and state data for 800,000+ regulated facilities. It includes inspection, violation and enforcement data; Safe Drinking Water Act data, Toxics Release Inventory data, National Emissions Inventory data, and Water Quality Data
- The **Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network (LBDMN)** is one of three programs in the Children's Special Health Services Section. In the Center for Preventive Health under the Department of Health and Hospitals' Office of Public Health, LBDMN staff conduct active surveillance of active surveillance of children born with congenital medical conditions. Each year the LBDMN staff provides Reports to Louisiana legislature and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network. Some of the 2010 accomplishments included:
  1. Expanded the program to achieve statewide surveillance.
  2. Developed an electronic information management system for future surveillance data collection.
  3. Formalized partnership with LEPHT
  4. Established a collaboration website that supports LBDMN staff surveillance,
- The **Louisiana Departments of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF), Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Agriculture and Forestry (DAF)** continue to monitor Louisiana seafood to ensure it is safe to eat. Monitoring reports are updated weekly and are available at: [http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/SurveillanceReports/SeafoodSurveillance/SeafoodUpdate\\_5\\_3\\_11.pdf](http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/SurveillanceReports/SeafoodSurveillance/SeafoodUpdate_5_3_11.pdf)

## Training Available

If you are interested in tracking health effects, hazards and/or exposures or are interested in receiving information or training in risk communication, developing information for target audiences, or using social media tools, please contact Emán Williams at [Eman.Williams@la.gov](mailto:Eman.Williams@la.gov) or at 1-888-293-7020.

## CDC Announcements

### CDC's New Strategies & Agendas

The CDC recently announced the release of the first ever "[National Prevention Strategy](#)" to help move the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on prevention and wellness. The strategy can be accessed at: <http://www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc/strategy/index.html>. CDC has also released, its "[Addressing Public Health and Chemical Exposures: An Action Agenda](#)." This agenda can be downloaded at: <http://www.nationalconversation.us>.

### CDC's Launches New Website

CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has just launched a toxic substance site <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/>. This site serves as a "one-stop shop" for info on hazardous chemicals. Information can be queried by: 1) health effect, 2) chemical classification, or 3) target audience (public, emergency responders, professionals & providers). There is also info on organ systems, and specific toxic substances.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How can the data be used?

Data provided on LEPHT Network can be accessible to researchers, public health and environmental practitioners, policy makers, and the public. Data can be used by local and state health departments, physicians and other public health officials to analyze trends over time, identify high-risk groups, target effective public health and environmental interventions, and advance public health research. The LEPHTN will help agencies and others perform key functions, including monitoring and distributing information about environmental hazards and disease trends; advancing research on possible linkages between environmental hazards and disease; and developing, implementing, and evaluating regulatory and public health actions to control environmentally-related diseases. Information from LEPHTN can also be used by policymakers to guide public health legislation and help the public understand indicators of environmental public health in their communities.

## LEPHT 2011: Future Activities

Activities planned for 2011 include:

- Implementing EPHT Network;
- Reaching out to LDHH Programs & stakeholders to identify Network needs;
- Finalizing data use, sharing and re-release agreements with data partners;
- Collecting and processing data into nationally consistent data and measures (NCDM);
- Creating LEPHT training webinars for partners & stakeholders;
- Testing network security.

## LEPHT Milestones

A few important milestones have been celebrated this year in the planning of the LEPHT Network:

- A SharePoint site was developed to allow for preliminary data analysis, visualization and reporting;
- A Data Steering Committee was developed to guide LEPHT data sharing policies & network planning;
- Aggregated data for asthma, myocardial infarction and childhood lead poisoning were submitted to CDC;
- Data for vital records, cancer and water quality were procured and are being processed into nationally consistent data and measures (NCDMs)- i.e., standardized indicators which enable users to compare data
- Created the first set of data cubes for automated data processing & reporting
- Data Sharing Agreements (DSA) were finalized with Vital Records, LA Tumor Registry, Childhood Lead Poisoning Program, & Office of Policy & Health Systems Analysis. DSAs outline criteria for using/sharing data.
- An updated LEPHT Web site was launched at: [www.lepht.dhh.louisiana.gov](http://www.lepht.dhh.louisiana.gov)
- LEPHT purchased 2 years of Emergency Department data for LDHH. Please contact Lucas Tramontozzi if you are interested in obtaining these data at [Lucas.Tramontozzi@la.gov](mailto:Lucas.Tramontozzi@la.gov)
- Collaborated with LA Birth Defects Monitoring Program to digitalize data
- Obtained needed IT hardware and software and initiated contracts for LDHH network architecture review.

### Program Staff:

Dianne Dugas, Section Chief  
Shannon Soileau, Program Manager  
Adrienne Katner, Principal Investigator  
Roshan Badakhsh, Epidemiologist  
Kate Strevva, GIS & Data Analyst  
George Frierson, GIS & Data Analyst  
Emán Williams, Communications Liaison  
Karen Danel, Information Technologist  
Rimond Allam, IT Program Manager  
Mei-Hung Sun, Biostatistician



## Free Webinars & Podcasts

### LEPHT

LEPHT has developed a learn line webinar introducing folks to the LEPHT Program and Network. This webinar, “Environmental Public Health Tracking in LA 6/11”, is available at <http://ilinc.oph.dhh.la.gov>. To access this and other LDHH webinars, you can set up a password with Rosemarie Robertson at [Rosemarie.Robertson@LA.GOV](mailto:Rosemarie.Robertson@LA.GOV).

### ASTHO

As part of a continuous effort to enhance the capacity of states to conduct tracking related activities, ASTHO in partnership with CDC has archives a series of webinars about Environmental Public Health Tracking. To access these webinars go to: <http://www.astho.org/Programs/Environmental-Health/Tracking-Environmental-Health-Hazards/>

### CDC

**Tracks FAQs** begins this month with a special feature on: [How Can I Tell If Asthma Hospitalization Rates In My Area Are Changing Over Time?](#) You can link directly to the Tracks FAQs podcast from CDC (<http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/createrss.asp?c=401>), or by selecting the Tracks FAQs button found on the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program Website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/>). Other podcasts up are: What is Modeled Air Data? and “What Are Suppressed Data and How It Can Be Used?” The CDC will release a different podcast each month so check back often for any new updates! If you have a question for our Tracking experts, please e-mail [trackingsupport@cdc.gov](mailto:trackingsupport@cdc.gov).

CDC and National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) are pleased to offer [Environmental Public Health Tracking 101](#), a free course that provides an introduction to the major components of environmental public health tracking. The course is available online on an ongoing basis and may be taken by anyone. ([http://www.nehacert.org/catalog/index.php?cPath=28&main\\_page=index](http://www.nehacert.org/catalog/index.php?cPath=28&main_page=index))

### Upcoming EPHT Workgroup Calls for Data Partners

- **Lead Workgroup Calls**  
July 11 (1 pm)
- **Pesticides Workgroup Calls**  
July 13 (noon)
- **Hospital Workgroup Calls**  
July 14 (1 p.m.)
- **Water Quality Workgroup Calls**  
July 19 (1 pm.)
- **Air Quality Workgroup Calls**  
July 19 (2 p.m.)
- **Climate Change Workgroup Calls**  
July 20 & 28 (noon)
- **Cancer Workgroup Calls**  
July 25 (2 pm)
- **Birth Defect Workgroup Calls**  
July 28 (1 p.m.)

Please contact Emán Williams for information on how to sign up for workgroup updates:

[Eman.Williams@la.gov](mailto:Eman.Williams@la.gov) or  
504-568-8143