

Presenter



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Protecting the Health of *Children*

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WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH?

The branch of public health that focuses on the **relationships between people and their environment**; promotes human health and well-being; and fosters healthy and safe communities.

The field of environmental health works to advance policies and programs to reduce harmful exposures in air, water, soil and food to protect people and provide communities with healthier environments.

The National Environmental Health Partnership Council is a diverse group of stakeholders that aim to expand and sustain awareness, education, policies and practices related to environmental health.

WHY FOCUS ON CHILDREN?

“Even after controlling for economic status, communities with a large percentage of minority residents tend to have higher rates of mortality and environmental health hazard exposure compared to communities with a large percent of white residents. For example, children of color and children living in poverty bear a high burden of lead exposures, lead toxicity and other environmental hazards.”

Our Approach

National Scan

- Identified 210 baseline services
- Reviewed states websites with
- Included 27 groups of health services
- Divided services into 5 broad categories

Engagement

- Gauged community awareness of EH field
- Identified most pressing health issues
- Discussed availability of environmental health services
- Shared how services can be accessed

Expert Review

- Conducted phone discussion with experts
- Hosted 2 roundtable discussions
- Solicited individual feedback on the draft report and recommendations

Common Barriers to Accessing EH Services

- Budgetary or staffing limitations
- Accountability
- Culturally sensitive or linguistically appropriate information
- Lack of public awareness

Recommendations

To Advance the Conversation

1. Engage Communities
2. Enhance Coordination
3. Improve Website Communications
4. Prioritize Sustained Funding
5. Encourage Federal Leadership

Recommendations

1. Engage Communities

- Meet with community members to identify resources, needs and environmental health priorities
- Involve members in the development and implementation of environmental health communications for children

Recommendations

1. Engage Communities (cont.)

“Some [Flint, MI] residents had sufficient resources to move during the water crisis, but they stayed, demanding change and their right to safe and healthy living conditions.”



“[Washington, D.C.] forum participants emphasized the effects of community violence, broken sidewalks, and second-hand smoking and poor water quality have on their and their children’s health.”

Recommendations

2. Enhance Coordination

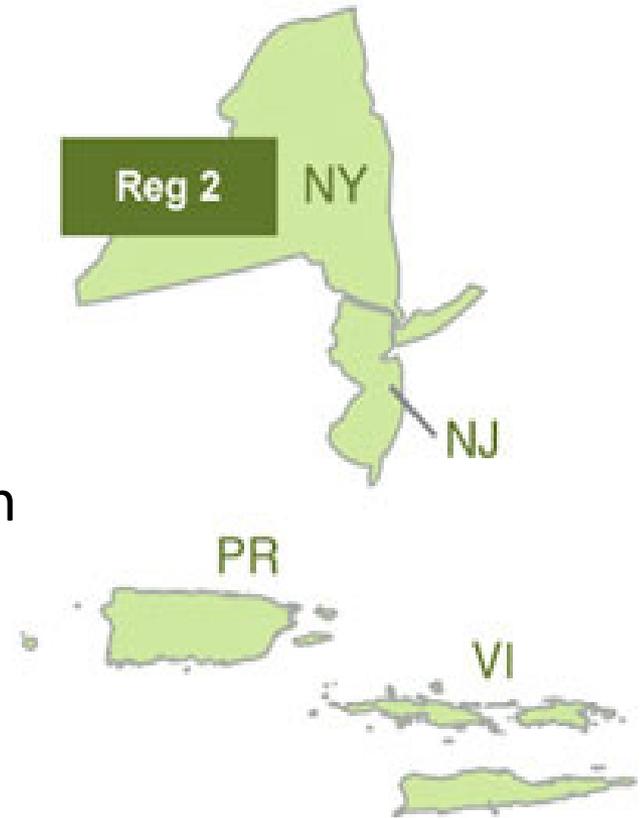
- Dedicate staff to help community members navigate services
- Provide step-by-step guidance to accessing services
- Develop an environmental health surveillance and information system for children in school and child care settings
- Encourage collaboration among health departments and health care providers/payers
- Actively partner with other governmental agencies and NGOs

Recommendations

2. Enhance Coordination

An example of successful coordination:
PEHSU Region 2

- Build a broad coalition
- Forge partnerships with champions in government
- Conduct formal needs assessment



Source: PEHSU Network

Recommendations

3. Improve Website Communications

- Indicate availability of services
- Link to other programs that may offer additional information or services about an environmental health concern
- Makes websites mobile-friendly
- Provide information in languages other than English

4. Prioritize Sustained Funding

By establishing a steady funding stream, the field can:

- Systematically streamline and enhance efforts at the state, local and regional levels
- Enhance capacity to help users navigate services through more robust call centers and websites
- Create an integrated system that can respond to, evaluate onsite and track at-risk children for hazardous exposures

Recommendations

5. Encourage Federal Leadership

- The federal government should develop policies and dedicate funding to increase public awareness services
- Example: Clean Air Act



Source: The Economist

Future Directions

What's next?

1. Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships
2. Enforce environmental health services
3. Conduct needs assessments on information gaps
4. Extend this work into rural and tribal communities
5. Explore accreditation criteria

Future Directions

Keep the Conversation Going

We want to hear from you on how you will use the report.

Come talk to us about children's environmental health. We want to learn from you!

environment@apha.org
[@EH_4_All](https://twitter.com/EH_4_All)



Source: Surili Patel