VistaPHw in Oregon
Web-Based Software for Public Health Assessment

Oregon Data Currently in VistaPHw

- Births
- Birth Risk Factors
- Deaths
- Infant Mortality
- Communicable Disease
- Population Estimates

...more to come

What is Public Health Assessment?

Assessment is the work of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and sharing information about population health status, and it is one of the core functions of public health. Through assessment, public health officials and their partners identify their communities' important health issues in order to set local prevention priorities and guide policy decisions. To do this work, they need timely information as well as technology and skills to analyze it.

What is VistaPHw?

VistaPHw is a web-based, user-friendly software package that allows the public health community in Oregon to access and analyze population-based health data on the county or state level. The program calculates rates of disease or other health events for specific age, gender and race groups with appropriate statistical measures: confidence intervals, case counts, and time trends. VistaPHw is a powerful tool for supporting grant proposals, analyzing trends in key public health issues, writing reports, and generating data for program planning and policy development.

The VistaPHw Partnership

The Washington State public health system has been using VistaPHw as a standardized tool for community health assessment for ten years. Three years ago, Oregon Health Services entered into partnership with the Washington State Department of Health to disseminate VistaPHw across local health departments in Oregon as part of a CDC-funded Assessment Initiative Grant. Multnomah County Health Department – an early adopter of VistaPHw in Oregon – is also a major partner.

Oregon Health Services is committed to providing the technological support and training needed by local health departments and other public health partners to take advantage of this assessment tool. Future plans for the initiative include adding more Oregon data sets and allowing analysis on sub-county geographic levels for counties with large populations.

The VistaPHw Package

VistaPHw is both an intuitive, point-and-click interface *and* a collection of public health data sets. Oregon data sets currently in VistaPHw include birth, birth risk factor, death, infant mortality, communicable disease, and intercensal population estimates and projections. VistaPHw can also be used to analyze other population-based datasets provided by the individual user.

The interface is downloaded from the web to the user's computer. During each session, data files are accessed from webservers over the internet. VistaPHw output is sent to the user's desktop as an Excel spreadsheet for chart or table production.

The VistaPHw User Interface

Online help menus

Create and save a customized geographic area by grouping counties.

Select a single year, range of years, or combine years to get a rolling average.

Select an Assessment Topic such as "Communicable Diseases," then choose a disease such as "Campylobacteriosis" or "Hepatitis A".

Select demographics and choice of crude, age-adjusted or age-stratified rates. Trend tests are available for all rates and include significance levels and slopes. The user can also create demographic groupings (e.g. combine age groupings).

For More Information

Juanita Heimann, OR State Vista Coordinator
Oregon Department of Human Services, Health Division
Health Systems Planning
800 NE Oregon Street, Ste 930
Portland, OR 97232
(971) 673-1267
Juanita.A.Heimann@state.or.us