

MISSOURI

Keeping Track, Promoting Health



"CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is the most important accomplishment of the past decade."

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For decades, the United States has faced a fundamental gap in understanding how environmental contaminants affect people's health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working to close this gap by improving surveillance through the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network). The Tracking Network is a dynamic Web-based tool that, for the first time, provides health and environment data in one easy to find location.

Policy makers and public health officials can use the Tracking Network to make critical decisions about where to target environmental public health resources and interventions. Health practitioners and researchers can use the Tracking Network to learn more about health conditions related to the environment, and improve treatment plans. Anyone can use the Tracking Network to find out how the environment may be affecting them, their family's or community's health.

The building blocks of the national network are state and local health departments around the country that are funded to build local tracking systems. These systems supply data to the National Tracking Network and address local environmental public health concerns. The tracking programs use their networks every day to improve the health of their communities.

Why Tracking Matters in Missouri

Missouri's diverse landscape ranges from rural farming to urban industrial settings. Each environment presents public health challenges, such as elevated blood lead levels related to building demolitions and concerns about extreme heat. To meet these concerns and others, the Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Missouri Tracking Network) provides a gateway for environmental public health information. Missouri's Tracking Network informs concerned citizens, state and local government officials, health and environmental organizations, community organizations, and researchers about illnesses and diseases in the state.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has been part of CDC's National Tracking Program since 2002. The state started building the Missouri Tracking Network in 2006. Since its launch in 2008, the network has featured easy-to-read graphs, charts, maps, and data on environmental public health issues that are important to Missouri residents.



TRACKING IN ACTION

The Problem	Tracking in Action	Improved Public Health
<p>Providing easy-to-access information during extreme heat events</p>	<p>Missouri residents experience many days of extreme heat from May to September each year. Some people, especially the elderly, do not have or use air conditioning in their homes. Many counties and cities in the state have cooling centers as part of their “All Hazards” preparedness planning. The public needed easy access to information about these centers.</p>	<p>The Missouri Tracking Program and the Division of Senior and Disability Services joined forces to develop an online map of cooling centers available to all Missourians. Working together, the Tracking Program and its partners identified cooling centers on a searchable map. The map includes a center’s address, phone number, and hours of operation, when such information is provided. It is searchable by address, ZIP code, or county. Information is updated weekly. The interactive map is available on the DHSS Web site from May through September of each year.</p>
<p>The effect of building demolitions on blood lead levels in children</p>	<p>Childhood blood lead testing data for 2003 indicate that 63% of Missouri children with elevated blood lead levels live in the city of St. Louis. However, only 6% of the state’s children live in St. Louis. U.S. Census data show that 94% of the housing stock in St. Louis was built before 1979. As urban renewal has increased, so has the number of demolitions within the city.</p>	<p>The Missouri Tracking Program partnered with the Center for Applied Environmental Public Health at Tulane University to examine the relationship between demolition of housing units constructed before 1979 and blood lead levels in children living near demolition sites.</p>