



Epidemiology and Program Evaluation

Introduction

- The Epidemiology and Program Evaluation (EPE) Branch of the Riverside County Department of Public Health (DOPH) specializes in epidemiology, program evaluation, biostatistics, data management, and GIS analysis.
- The EPE Branch works in collaboration with other DOPH Branches and community partners to transform data into useful information.
- EPE provides public health officials and the community with data to influence health policy and resource allocation.

What are Epidemiology and Biostatistics?

- Epidemiology is the study of how diseases or health-related states are distributed in populations and what determinants influence this distribution. Epidemiologists examine these distributions and determinants to guide the prevention and control of health problems.
- Biostatistics is the application of statistics to the fields of health and medicine. With biostatistics, what's going on in a population can be numerically described. Specifically, it is a tool that epidemiologists use to determine whether there have been significant changes in the state of disease, risks for illness and efficacy of intervention activities.

What is Program Evaluation?

Program Evaluators work with stakeholders to study the implementation, activities, outcomes, and impacts of a programs to achieve and demonstrate their desired results and to inform future programming and policy decisions.

What is Public Health? An Informational Campaign

The "What is Public Health" project is a campaign sponsored by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) supported by Pfizer Public Health and Policy Group. The purpose of the project was to answer three key questions: what does public health encompass?, what impact does public health have on our lives?, and what type of careers are available in the field of public health?. To help the community better recognize the number of things they come on contact with daily that constitutes public health the ASPH sticker campaign was devised. This campaign, an element of the what is public health campaign, uses public health students as conduits for education. Students travel throughout cities and communities demonstrating the ways in which public health improves our lives. Interactive maps and photos display the action as students label everything from drinking fountains to buses with the "This is Public Health" stickers.

This is Public Health



Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, research, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and disease and injury prevention.¹ With a multidisciplinary approach, public health aims to target the individual's personal choice, biology and genetics, and environmental exposures. Over the past 200 years public health has evolved. The achievements include increased life expectancy, global reduction in infant and child mortality, and the reduction and elimination of many communicable diseases.² New challenges for public health include chronic disease prevention, emerging and re-emerging diseases and conditions, public health preparedness and emergency response, and the elimination of health disparities. As our nation's population continues to increase, so will the need for public health professionals, as we encounter new challenges while battling old ones. For further information on the ASPH sticker campaign, please visit: <http://www.thisispublichealth.org/>



Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, and Vital Records Staff

Bottom row from left...

Wendy Betancourt, Marshare Penny, Adriana Moreno, and Danyte Mockus.

Second row from left...

Aaron Gardner, Bobbie Mueller, and Victoria Cardenas.

Third row from left...

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2008 EPE Publications— Available for download at www.rivcohealthdata.org

- *Lead and the Effects of Long-term Exposure*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Teen Birth Rates in Riverside County, 1997-2006*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Communicable Disease Report 2007*. Riverside County Department of Public Health.
- *Health Insurance and Health Service Utilization Among Children Aged 0-17 in Riverside County, 2001-2005*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *A New Population at Risk for HIV: The Aging Population of Riverside County*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Differences in Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Incidence between Riverside County and Select Southern California Counties*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Exposure in Riverside County*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *The Local Food Environment in Riverside County, 2007*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Presentations at the APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition: Riverside County Department of Public Health sets a precedent*. Riverside: Riverside County Department of Public Health, Epidemiology and Program Evaluation, 2008.
- *Community Health Profile, 2008*. Riverside County Department of Public Health.

From the desk of Wendy Betancourt, MPH— Epidemiology and Program Evaluation Chief

The Epidemiology and Program Evaluation Branch has access to a wide variety of data sources--birth and death, hospital discharge, health behaviors and risks, traffic collisions, reported communicable diseases to name a few. Our role is to turn data into useful information for other DOPH programs and community partners. One way we accomplish this is through collaboration with our associates to determine the goal or outcome of the data request or report. Is it to showcase a need? Identify outliers? Highlight successes? What about driving health policy and planning decisions? Our best work is born out of both internal teamwork and external partnership. Therefore, we look forward to many successful collaborations in 2009!



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Acknowledgments:

Sarah Mack.

References:

1. Association of Schools of Public Health. What is Public Health. www.whatispublichealth.org
2. Turnock, BJ. Public Health: What it is and How it Works, 3rd Ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2004.



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