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Environmental Health Surveillance – A Continuing Discussion

Environmental Health Surveillance Workshop
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Canada

Committee on Environmental and Occupational Health

- Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee
- 1998 – Development of an epidemiological data management system identified as a strategic priority
- Environmental and Occupational Health (EOH) Surveillance Working Group established

Principles:

- EOH surveillance should be linked to and complement existing surveillance work
- Emphasis on disease relationships, hazards, exposure, interventions and outcomes
- Consideration given to all potential EOH surveillance infrastructures and networks
- Proposed surveillance network would be national rather than federal

2002 EOH Surveillance Working Group Report

Stakeholders confirmed that:

- EOH surveillance lags behind other health and safety domains
- Interest in strengthening EOH dimensions of existing major national surveillance systems
- Components of what constitute key elements of a network or system exist and provide a foundation upon which to build
- Strategic first step – make existing data more accessible to key users
- Dedicated organization needed for coordinating and facilitating the measures to strengthen EOH surveillance within a framework of collaboration

Priority Improvements for EOH Surveillance (2002 report)

Short term

- Central coordinating agency or body
- Strong partnerships, networks
- Single portal
- Good accessible inventory of existing products, sources
- Increased profile of EOH surveillance issues and needs
- Greater standardization of data definition and capture
- Linkage of work/occupational data with other environmental data
- Stable funding

Priority Improvements for EOH Surveillance (2002 report)

Long term

- National research centre with funding sources
- Linkages of hospital, health unit data with occupational and environmental monitoring systems
- Support group and training/support program for users
- Full integrated surveillance system
- Longitudinal cohort studies
- GIS systems and capabilities well linked to data
- Full internet access

Committee on Health and the Environment

- Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee – Replaced CEOH

Health and Environment Tracking/Surveillance Task Group – Expert Workshop 2006

Workshop Objectives

- Discuss what a health and environment tracking/surveillance network in Canada would be trying to achieve
- Discuss what a network would look like, be comprised of, how it might work
- Develop a list of priority actions and recommendations for moving forward

Health and Environment Tracking/Surveillance Task Group – Expert Workshop 2006

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of a Network

- Provide access to timely data
- Provide standardization of data gathering and systems
- Identify trends, patterns, comparisons
- Provide coordination of reporting
- Improve communication and dissemination of products
- Support policies, regulations, and risk management practices
- Be tailored to a variety of audiences
- Clarify terms – provide common definitions for activities

Health and Environment Tracking/Surveillance Task Group – Expert Workshop 2006

Summary and Recommendations

The Network – What it would look like and how it might work


- Secretariat/governance structure consisting of the following elements:
 - Secretariat linked with other agencies and organizations at the development stage
 - Secretariat developed through a federal-provincial-territorial framework
 - Secretariat developed with ability to innovate and create structures that have no history and can garner support
 - Working groups established to deal with diversity of questions/issues
 - Governance structure should be plugged in to top-level decision makers for accountability, direction, and approval

Health and Environment Tracking/Surveillance Task Group – Expert Workshop 2006

Summary and Recommendations

The Network – Recommendations for moving forward

- Form a Secretariat/governance structure
- Develop Working Groups for areas such as:
 - Users
 - Systems and data
 - Data content
 - Communications/outreach
 - Funding
- Conduct inventory of current surveillance data
- Conduct a needs assessment and summarize what the network or system should achieve
- Develop a business case or proof of concept with tools and pilot projects



Recommended approaches from strengthening environmental health surveillance

- Secretariat and governance
- Build upon existing systems and networks
- Consistent with F/P/T priorities and strategies
- Collaborative among health and environment agencies and partners
- Based on indicators and measurement selected by consensus
- Incremental with piloting leading to concrete results