

CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program

Keeping Track, Promoting Health



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**CDC'S National
Environmental Public
Health Tracking Network**

is the

**most important
accomplishment
of the past decade.**

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Thomas Burke, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Public Health Practice and Training and Professor in Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The Problem

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 Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network).

Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of deaths in the United States, and environmental hazards are linked to many of them. Environmental hazards are among parents' top health concerns for their children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. In the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that current exposure to air pollution contributes to 1 out of every 20 deaths each year. The need for a nationwide tracking system representing all 50 states has never been greater.

Understanding how the environment affects public health has led to actions such as removing lead from paint and gasoline, placing carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and providing local air quality health alerts. However, other links remain unproven, such as the suspected link between exposure to disinfectant by-products and bladder cancer.

Public health officials and policymakers need timely, integrated environmental and health data at the federal, state and local levels to make critical decisions about where to focus resources and interventions.



www.cdc.gov/ephtracking

Tracking Network National Partners

- APHA: American Public Health Association
- ASTHO: Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- CSTE: Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
- EPA: Environmental Protection Agency
- NAACCR: The North American Association of Central Cancer Registries
- NACCHO: National Association of County and City Health Officials
- NAHDO: National Association of Health Data Organizations
- NAPHSIS: National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
- NASA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- NCSL: National Conference of State Legislatures
- NEHA: National Environmental Health Association
- SAHSU: Small Area Health Statistics Unit of Imperial College London

Visit the Tracking Network

www.cdc.gov/ephtracking



1-877-923-TRACK

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The Solution

The Tracking Network is a dynamic Web-based tool that tracks and reports environmental hazards and the health problems that may be related to them. The Tracking Network was the first surveillance system to provide environmental data and public health data together in one place.

The Tracking Network monitors broad environmental public health concerns that affect communities across the nation. State and local tracking networks contribute data to this national effort and also have the flexibility to address specific local level issues and needs. This allows scientists, health professionals, policymakers, and members of the public to see where these hazards and health problems are occurring and how they are changing over time.

Scientists will be better able to assess the connections between the environment and its effect on health. Public health professionals now can easily assess unusual trends and events to determine which communities may be at risk. Elected officials can make more informed policy decisions, and people can learn more about how the environment may affect their health.





Building the Tracking Network

From 2002 through 2006, CDC funded pilot projects in state, county, and city health departments to provide proof of concept data for the Tracking Network. In 2006, CDC moved from planning and capacity building to the implementation of the Tracking Network. At that time, CDC funded 16 states and one local health department to build and implement data systems to feed into the National Tracking Network. Tracking funding was used to: improve information technology; expand environmental public health tracking capacity; train public health workers; and improve the accessibility of information to those who need it to take action.

Now, CDC funds health departments in 23 states and one city to participate in the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. In addition, CDC is funding five universities to support state and local health department work and investigate possible links between health effects and the environment through data linkage projects.

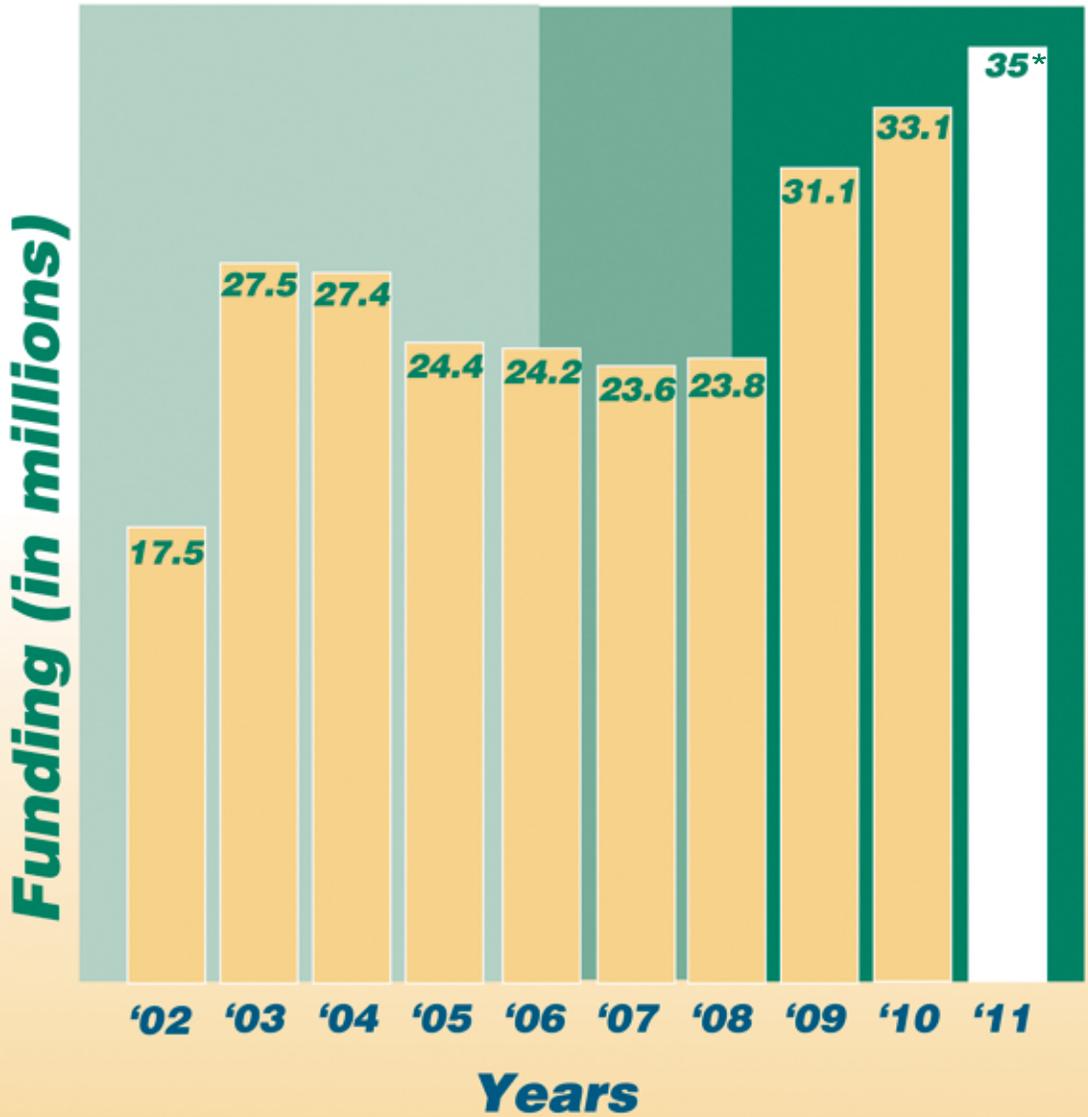
CDC also funds national professional organizations to develop educational materials and tools to build environmental public health tracking capacity among state and local health officials and other critical partners.* In addition, CDC works with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency to collaborate on tracking-related initiatives.

* See back for a full list of Tracking Network partners





Budget



* Budget authority eliminated, funding from Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund

Capacity Building & Pilot Projects

Implementation

Expansion



Key Features

The Tracking Network provides users standardized environment and health data, information by location, and easy-to-read maps, charts, and tables. Some data cover all 50 states, and some are contributed by funded grantees.

Health Data

- Asthma
- Birth defects
- Cancer
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Childhood lead poisoning
- Heart attacks
- Population characteristics
- Reproductive and birth outcomes

Environmental Data

- Age of housing
- Air quality
- Climate change
- Community design
- Community water
- Well water

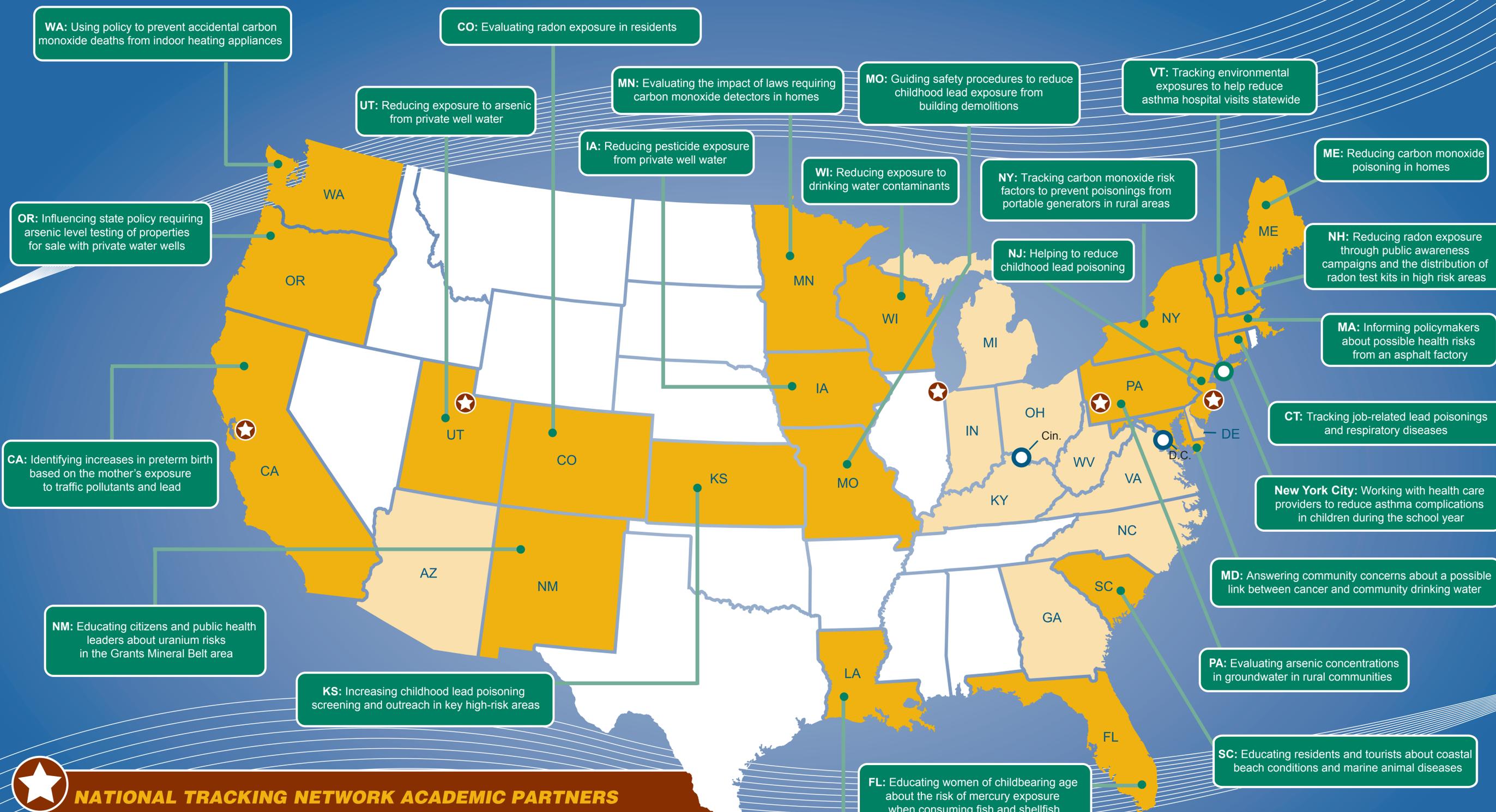
More planned enhancements for both data and functionality of the Tracking Network are coming soon.

Future Directions

The Tracking Network will continue to grow as CDC increases the types of data available and adds new functionality. Plans include supporting more grantees to contribute data to the Tracking Network as funding allows. This expansion will allow more people from around the country to see vital public health and environment information about their communities.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING

TRACKING IN ACTION»»»



NATIONAL TRACKING NETWORK ACADEMIC PARTNERS

University of California Berkeley

- Developing a tracking model to detect unexpectedly high disease rates associated with environmental exposures
- Studying the association between air quality and heart attacks, heart disease, and stroke with population characteristics

University of Pittsburgh

- Linking air quality and heart attacks, heart disease, and stroke using hospitalization and mortality data
- Using air quality and biomonitoring data to identify populations at higher risk for childhood lead poisoning

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

- Conducting comprehensive analysis of PM_{2.5} and cardiovascular disease studies to determine how reducing air pollution levels may improve public health

University of Illinois - Chicago

- Linking water contamination and adverse reproductive and birth outcomes

University of Utah

- Studying how chemicals in tap water may impact reproductive and birth outcomes

MAP LEGEND

- National Tracking Network Grantee (State)
- National Tracking Network Grantee (City)
- National Tracking Network Academic Partner
- Peer Fellowship Program (State)
- Peer Fellowship Program (City)

