

Meeting Minutes
Epidemiology Workgroup
December 8th, 2010

In attendance of this meeting were the following people: Deborah Hull-Jilly, Jesse Metzger, Andy Jessen, Bill Herman, Margaret Young, Randy Burton, Marny Rivera, Alice Rarig, Laurie Orell, Michael Powell and Devon Urquhart

Survey on Alaska Epi Profile

The 2007 (revised in 2009) Alaska Epi Profile was sent to Epi Workgroup members for their review. After reading through the profile members took a Survey Monkey and scored each of the five following areas on a scale of 1-5; 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest:

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| 1. Overall Format | Average 3.44 |
| 2. Appendices | Average 3.33 |
| 3. Readability | Average 2.89 |
| 4. Ease of Use | Average 3.22 |
| 5. Date Usefulness | Average 3.89 |

Epi Workgroup members also gave the following feedback in their question and comments section:

- Line graphs aren't as helpful because the data points are not clearly indicated
- There is not comprehensive data presented due to data gaps in the collecting structures and practices at the state level
- The use of maps, rather than charts, would be more helpful to articulate data
- Group census areas/boroughs into labor market regions
- Print format could be shorter
- DHSS Accessibility requirements will make a complete update of existing PDF version very time consuming
- I rated readability lower because of multiple typos and unclear sentence structures
- BRFSS is not consistently referred to as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance "System" (versus "Survey")
- For some of the information presented, such as that from the ATR, it would be helpful to present the comparison group of hospitalizations NOT associated with drug use
- An Appendix defining all of the acronyms used would be helpful
- It would be nice if the table of contents had hyperlinks that would take a reader directly to a specific table or chart

Questions/Answers/Discussion

Bill Herman: Who is our audience?

Answer: Our audience consists of a broad section of people such as program managers, researchers, community representative, legislature, staff, anyone who would need to find a starting place to find data and looking at an overview and a baseboard of where to go next.

Margaret Young: Does it have to be in a word document format—can it be in a different format?

Answer: We can explore options of making this a more dynamic website. It may be helpful for people to easily access the data and profile.

Question: Are there any documents we could use as a model?:

Answer: Deborah likes the format of the BVS as it's presented on the internet, because it's easily searchable, presented in chapters and the reader is able to print the document in its entirety or in individual chapters.

Question: Who is creating the website?

Answer: group working on it is the EPI workgroup, the document itself there will be a lead and others as they want may contribute to sections of work so that the overall tone of the document is maintained. The final document will go to the PIT group. Public information team group. Application will be submitted soon—layout and design format will be completed by them. overall structure for website will be done by a web designer in DHSS.

Question: Is there a way data could be warehoused so it can be used interactively over the internet?

Answer: This has been discussed in length and it's challenging to keep everything up to date- it's easier to go to the source for data. One way to ensure that the reader can access the data would be to have a link immediately below chart or graph so that the reader can immediately go to the data source.

Comment from *Alice Rarig:* I suggest that we don't let information get stale, and to put everything in PDF format to make it more reader friendly.

Comment: May be able to borrow formatting from the CDC for the website, as it is easily accessible to compare national and state data.

Comment: It may be helpful to ask Public Information Team (PIT) workers for advice, as they may have received feedback regarding earlier publications.

Including Influences

Influences Definition: Influences associated with substance use include family and community environments proceeding, during, and following substance use. This construct focuses on extensive research that demonstrates a strong association life domain influences and substance

consumption and consequences issues. Factors such as parental modeling, interpersonal interaction, and psychosocial and socioeconomic factors contribute to substance use and other risk-taking behaviors, if not included, limit strategic planning and prevention measures. As part of the SEW, the influences subcommittee was tasked, to: 1) identify and prioritize the factors that influence substance use and abuse, and 2) identify existing and recommend new indicators to monitor over time. While the information is duly noted in the State Plan, the data for this construct will be evaluated for inclusion at a future date.

In the past, the Epi Profile has worked with concrete constructs of consumption and consequences; risk and protective factors which influence youth and adult consumption have not been included. Deborah Hull-Jilly posed the question of whether workgroup members would like to see the inclusion of consumption influences in this revision. The workgroup consensus was to include a section on influences: risk and protective factors. Traditional epidemiology reports do not typically include this information, but extensive work has gone into this project, and workgroup members feel it necessary to include influences into the Alaska Epi Profile.

Plans and Timeline for Publication

Deborah Hull-Jilly will be in communication with the PIT group about taking on the new sections of the Epi Profile. The PIT group wants to be provided the data so that they may create the necessary graphics.

Devon Urquhart may act as a liaison for the Epi Workgroup and the PIT group.

Data on Alternative Schools may be constructed into a “stand alone” section.

The link to a data source will be included with each graph to connect to web links.

Deborah Hull-Jilly and Jesse Metzger will review data gaps and document them for the profile to SAMSHA to demonstrate our efforts and steps being taken to document data effectively. This was included in the original document on page 73.

Deborah Hull-Jilly will work with Andy Jessen regarding updating the BVS data.

The timelines includes that the updated Alaska Epi Profile be published and on the website no later than the end of February. That is approximately two months from now. This timeline would allow the workgroup to incorporate new data and reformat the document.

Reference

Stephen Few’s book, [Show Me the Numbers](#), is a great reference. He has simple summaries with the key points. It helps the eye go straight to the important data. He also has a book titled, [Beyond the Numbers](#). This book demonstrates ways of displaying charts and graphs to better present data.

Future Meetings

Our next meeting will be on January 12th from 1:30 PM-2:30 PM.