



Environmental Public Health Tracking

USING EPHT DATA AND RESOURCES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Identifying Areas at Risk for Radon

What was the problem/situation?

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, one in every 15 homes nationwide has a high radon level at or above the recommended radon action level of 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the nation overall. Historically, targeted outreach and testing was challenging as prior to 2005 Missouri was tracking radon test kit requests manually with no means to link the test kit with the corresponding test result. Often times the mailing address noted on the test kit and the physical address of the site being tested differed.

How was Tracking involved?

In response to the Surgeon General's National Health Advisory on Radon released on January 13, 2005, the Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking team, in partnership with the Healthy Indoor Environment (HIE) Program's Radon team, constructed a radon tracking database, otherwise known as the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) database. The creation of the database allowed Missouri to track test kit requests electronically, as well as deploy a web-form so radon test kits could be requested online. In 2007, the IAQ database was enhanced to include and link each distinctive laboratory testing result to the corresponding test kit request. The web-form was revised to include four additional questions: phone number, email address, address of property being tested, and how did the requestor hear about the radon program. The EPHT program staff were able to analyze the historical data to create a baseline for HIE program staff to assist in determining both high-risk areas as well as those areas lacking testing. The IAQ database was expanded to include schools (2008) and daycare centers (2009), which were being tracked manually prior to their inclusion into the IAQ database. In 2015, EPHT staff created a monthly query for HIE staff use to identify those requests that had not yet been completed. The Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking Program was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the United States Environmental Protection Agency for all the assistance provided to the Missouri Radon Program on March 3, 2015.



The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program
Missouri Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) is a program within the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. EPHT is part of a larger initiative to establish Environmental Public Health Tracking systems at the national and state levels.





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What action was taken to resolve the problem?

Missouri was able to resolve multiple issues by adding the four supplementary questions to the test kit form. Phone numbers are utilized when a test results in a radon level above the recommended radon action level of 4 pCi/L. The email address is utilized for follow-up on test kits that have been distributed, but no lab test result has been received and recorded into the database. The address of property being tested question resolved multiple issues. Oftentimes a post office box was used as a mailing address to request a test kit but the physical address was recorded on the test kit that was returned to the lab. Also, landlords often requested multiple test kits for testing rental properties. The final question of how the requestor heard about Missouri's Radon Program identifies areas where testing is being performed, allowing program staff to target outreach activities to areas that were identified as high-risk as well as areas lacking sufficient testing. In 2014, there were 5,429 radon test kits distributed with only 2,443 being completed and mailed in to the lab. To improve the percentage of test kits returned to the lab, the monthly query was developed.



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