

OPERATING GUIDELINES:

Occupational Health Indicators (OHI) Workgroup of the
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee
FINAL
December 29, 2011

I. Background

For several years, occupational health and safety professionals from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have worked in partnership to develop and maintain a standard set of public health measures, called Occupational Health Indicators (OHI), that could be used to measure the baseline health of working populations and changes that take place over time.

Though an OHI Workgroup has existed since the start of this effort, as more states are actively collecting and reporting OHI data annually, the CSTE and NIOSH partners recognized the need for a more structured approach to coordination of OHI data collection, interpretation and development efforts. The ultimate objective of this Workgroup is to engage a coordinated unit of occupational health and safety professionals committed to on-going improvements in state and national OHI data, enhancing the public health utility of these data.

II. Authority

The Occupational Health Indicators (OHI) Workgroup (hereinafter referred to as the "Workgroup") exists within the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee. The Workgroup is created under its structure and authority.

III. Purpose and Scope

The Workgroup is organized for the following purposes:

1. To identify and resolve technical issues relating to the calculation and interpretation of the Occupational Health Indicators (OHI) described in the CSTE document *Occupational Health Indicators: A Guide for Tracking Occupational Health Conditions and their Determinants* (hereinafter referred to as the "How-to Guide").
2. To develop and foster expertise in OHI data usage, such that members can:
 - a. Make recommendations to the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee for the improvement of the OHI when necessary and where feasible to make them more valid, useful, practical or to make them easier to calculate or interpret.
 - b. Make recommendations to the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee regarding any proposed adoption or development of new Indicators that may be useful for enhancing occupational health surveillance at the national, state or local level.
3. To annually review and revise (as needed) the How-to Guide to ensure the background/significance, collection, calculation, and limitations of OHI data are accurately described and documented. Changes and updates to the written How-to Guide are facilitated by designated "indicator leads", members of the Workgroup who oversee development of one or more specific OHI measures.

4. To determine and implement the annual schedule for OHI data collection, submission to NIOSH, QC/QA review, and CSTE publication, and to ensure timely completion of How-to Guide updates in relation to the due date for state OHI data submission.
5. To serve as the primary forum by which information from NIOSH and CSTE regarding the collection, submission, review, dissemination, and online publication of OHI data is communicated to states engaged in occupational health and safety surveillance efforts.
6. To promote and facilitate use of the OHI for occupational health and safety surveillance at the national, state and local level as broadly as possible throughout the United States.
7. To promote and facilitate the timely and regular submission of OHI data to NIOSH, using standardized reporting templates and procedures, for quality assurance and subsequent publication by CSTE on their website by as many states as are willing, whether or not they are funded by NIOSH for that purpose.

In furtherance of these purposes, the Workgroup may take the following types of actions:

1. Disseminate guidance and information about the calculation and interpretation of the OHI to promote their widespread use and understanding, and to provide clarity and consistency.
2. Evaluate existing dissemination methods for nation-wide, aggregate OHI data and work with NIOSH and CSTE to update or improve presentation of OHI data on websites or in aggregate reports.
3. Update the How-to Guide and disseminate revisions at least annually. . This may include development of a process and annual timeline for revising the How-to Guide, revising background information, referencing source data, updating or providing new data collection methods, and revising case definitions as deemed necessary by changes in numerator/denominator source data.
4. Develop and implement an explicit process for the OHI Workgroup and CSTE Occupational Health Subcommittee to review and approve of substantive changes to the How-to Guide. Substantive changes are those which involve the addition, deletion, or regrouping of OHI measures.

IV. Membership

Membership is open to representatives of state health departments, other state agencies (i.e. departments of labor), or their *bona fide* agents that are conducting state-based occupational health and safety surveillance in accordance with the CSTE OHI How-to Guide.

Each such institution may delegate one representative and one alternate to represent them as members of the Workgroup. Institutions shall make such delegations by submitting the names and contact information for the representative and alternate to one of the Workgroup co-chairs. The co-chairs shall add the names of the representative and the alternate to the membership roster. An institution's representative or alternate may be changed by submitting the name(s) and contact information for the replacement(s) to one of the Workgroup co-chairs. The intent is that each state conducting OHI surveillance will have one primary and one alternate representative.

As only those states currently funded by NIOSH to conduct OHI state-based surveillance are required to implement any changes in the collection or reporting of OHI data, only representatives from NIOSH-funded states are considered voting members. Each funded state will receive one vote, which can be cast by either the primary or alternate representative.

Ex officio members without voting privileges are designated as the following:

- Representatives from any such institution as described above, collecting and submitting OHI data to the CSTE or NIOSH, but not-funded by NIOSH to do so.
- Individuals previously identified by the CSTE as an “indicator lead” for one or more of the OHI measures who are not also state representative members.
- NIOSH officials who are identified by CSTE and NIOSH as “national indicator data leads/stewards” who are not also one of the workgroup co-chairs.

Other participants: As states may collect, report and interpret OHI data with the assistance of academic partners, student interns, or other organizations, members may invite non-member collaborators to participate in Workgroup meetings. Workgroup members are responsible for sharing Workgroup updates with their collaborators.

V. Quorum

At all meetings, the presence of 50% of voting members of the Workgroup (See Article IV) shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except for amendments to these Guidelines as described in Article XI. In the absence of a quorum, those present may decide to recess decision making items until a quorum shall be present. Typically, decisions of the Workgroup will be reached through discussion and consensus of a majority of the members present. In the event members cannot reach general agreement, a vote may be taken to resolve.

When post-meeting follow-up is needed to better inform decisions or approve documents, approval by Workgroup members may be obtained through e-mail communication or additional special meetings.

VI. Meetings

The Occupational Health Indicators Workgroup shall hold regular meetings each quarter. These meetings shall be held in the second month of each quarter of the calendar year (February, May, August, and November). The specific date and time will be announced at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

Special meetings of the Workgroup may also be held when deemed necessary by the co-chairs. Special meetings shall be held at a time to be determined by the co-chairs, provided it is reasonably convenient for the majority of workgroup members.

Regular or special meetings may be conducted via conference call, web meeting or in any other venue that is reasonably accessible to all of the workgroup members. Regular or special meetings of the Workgroup may also be held in other venues in conjunction with other meetings or events (e.g. the CSTE Annual Conference), provided a quorum of the members is reasonably expected to be present at that meeting or event.

One week prior to any regular or special meeting, the Workgroup co-chairs shall send an email announcement specifying the date, time and venue of the meeting and providing an agenda of the business to be conducted.

One day prior to any regular or special meeting, the Workgroup co-chairs shall send an email reminder containing the same information as the announcement plus any additional necessary information that shall have arisen since the announcement was sent.

VII. Communications

The Workgroup co-chairs shall jointly serve as the primary points of contact for the Workgroup. Members and others from the CSTE Occupational Health Subcommittee and NIOSH Surveillance Programs are encouraged to include them on communications affecting the functions or activities of the Workgroup or development of the NIOSH and CSTE OHIs.

The primary means for dissemination of Workgroup member communications shall be the Occupational Health Indicators Workgroup listserv maintained by the CSTE. This includes communication on meeting announcements, progress updates on activities from the Workgroup and *ad hoc* committees, conference call minutes, post-meeting follow-up, and calculations inquiries or guidance. Members are encouraged to forward these e-mail communications to their in-state OHI collaborators as necessary. Members can post to this listserv by contacting Erin Simms at esimms@cste.org.

The OCC-HLTH-STATE-SURV listserv, maintained by NIOSH, will be used to disseminate communications of interest to the broader occupational health and safety research and surveillance community. Examples include meeting minutes or quarterly summaries from the Workgroup co-chairs, data release announcements, requests for comments substantive OHI changes.

Whenever possible, requests for technical assistance (TA) in calculating or interpreting the OHIs should be directed to the Indicator Leads. Indicator Leads will advise the co-chairs and Workgroup members of changes or clarifications that can be incorporated to the CSTE How-to Guide to address recurring TA requests.

VIII. Workgroup Leads

Operations of the Workgroup will be coordinated by:

- **2 Co-chairs:** Two co-chair positions will be held by one representative of a state-based occupational health and safety surveillance effort, and one representative from NIOSH.¹ The co-chairs will share the responsibility of overseeing activities and meetings of the Workgroup, reporting back to the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee, and leading and assisting Workgroup members in completing activities identified by the group to improve collection and reporting of the How-to Guide. They are responsible for the following activities:
 - Serve as the points of contact for Workgroup members to bring forth agenda items and topics for group discussion.
 - Create and disseminate meeting agendas.
 - Approve and disseminate meeting minutes from the secretary.
 - Facilitate meeting discussions.

¹ These Guidelines call for shared state and federal representation to reflect the collaborative nature of OHI development and efforts to integrate occupational health and safety into core public health practice. Co-chairs' actions in their roles do not necessarily reflect the official positions or policies of their agencies.

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- o Summarize and present the Workgroup positions and recommendations on substantive changes to the OHIs or How-to Guide for review of the broader membership of the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee.
 - o Create, maintain, and disseminate the annual schedule for OHI data collection, submission to NIOSH, QC/QA review, and CSTE publication.
 - o Identify and recruit Indicator Leads to fill vacancies.
 - o Serve as final reviewers and editors for How-to Guide revisions put forth by the Indicator Leads.
 - o Oversee updates to the member roster and contact list.
- **1 Secretary:** A CSTE staff member assigned to support activities of the Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee will serve as secretary to the Workgroup. The secretary will set-up and provide technical support for phone conference calls, record meeting notes or minutes, and liaise with the co-chairs to maintain the most up-to-date How-to Guide and membership contact list. The Secretary will coordinate and oversee online publication of the updated How-to Guide and OHI data on the CSTE website.

Co-chairs serve 3-year terms, and may serve up to 2 consecutive terms. Vacancies due to expired terms or resignations will be filled and announced at the annual CSTE Occupational Health Subcommittee meeting. The state-representative co-chair will be identified through a call for volunteers. If more than one representative volunteers, a vote of the Workgroup members will determine the replacement. The NIOSH co-chair replacement will be identified by the NIOSH State-based Surveillance Program staff. The CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Leadership Committee must also approve co-chair appointments.

IX. Indicator Leads

Prior to establishment of this formal Workgroup structure, each OHI measure was assigned an “indicator lead” who has the responsibility of overseeing the technical aspects of calculating the indicator, implementing updates to relevant sections of the How-to guide, and providing guidance on the interpretation and limitations of the indicator.

As OHI data have several limitations and nuanced case-definitions, long-term experience working with and generating OHI measures is needed in order to achieve a high-level of understanding of calculation and interpretation. For this reason, existing indicator leads are asked to remain in their positions for an unlimited amount of time. In the event an indicator lead can no longer serve in his/her position for any reason, he/she will notify the co-chairs. If the indicator lead has not identified a suitable replacement, the co-chairs will seek self-nominations from the Workgroup membership for a replacement.

Upon identifying a replacement, the departing indicator lead will meet one-on-one with his/her replacement (via conference call or in person during a business meeting of the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee) to educate and train the new lead on all aspects of the OHI measure(s) documented in the How-to Guide.

X. Sub-Workgroups

The Workgroup co-chairs may form *ad hoc* sub-workgroups, whose membership shall be appointed from among volunteer Workgroup members, to work on specific issues. The co-chairs shall dissolve such *ad hoc* sub-workgroups when they have finished their work. All sub-workgroups shall make reports on the progress of their work at all regular meetings.

XI. Amendments

After initial approval of this document, it may be altered, amended, repealed or added to by agreement of not less than two thirds (67%) percent of Workgroup members. Amendments must also be approved by the CSTE Occupational Health Surveillance Subcommittee.

When a proposed alteration, amendment, repeal or addition has been presented in writing to the current Workgroup co-chairs, the proposal will be brought forth during the next regular meeting. To allow adequate time for members to review the proposal, it must be submitted to the co-chairs at least 30 days prior to the meeting, and the co-chairs must distribute the proposal to the broader membership at least 15 days prior to the meeting. In the event the meeting does not have enough members present to secure two-thirds approval of the amendment, approval may be obtained through e-mail communication or during a special follow-up meeting scheduled for members unable to attend the regular meeting.