

Occupational Health Indicator Data

Quality Assurance Recommendations

The purpose of this document is to help you perform quality assurance checks of your state's OHI data before submission. These recommendations include issues that have commonly appeared in past OHI data submissions. We understand calculating these indicators can make your eyes blur. There are more than 120 individual data elements to report! There is ample opportunity for error, especially given our "classical" approach to data submission which we are currently working on improving for next year. Most of the quality assurance issues we see are minor, but they take time to investigate and correct. We hope this provides a helpful starting point for things to look for as you proofread your data submission. Thanks for supporting the OHI Workgroup!

Data template issues:

1. Please use the data submission spreadsheet that CSTE sends out to submit your OHI data.
 - a. Updates are often made to the spreadsheet. Don't re-use a spreadsheet from a prior year.
 - b. Please do not start a new spreadsheet for entering data. It may seem harmless, but it causes issues with Microsoft Excel's auto-formatting of data types within cells.
 - c. If you insert a column into the data template to compare the previous year's estimates with the current year's estimates, please insert the column to the RIGHT of the data cells in the template. We use formulas to collate the data from separate states into a single file and the formulas pull data from specific columns in the data template. (But looking at your numbers side-by-side with data from prior years is a good idea! See below...)
 - d. Make sure all data are properly formatted. For questions, please see "Formatting Notes" tab on the submission spreadsheet.

Data consistency:

1. Compare your current year of data being collected to previous years for any discrepancies that may raise a red flag:
 - a. If estimates for an indicator are far higher or lower than in previous years, please double-check the estimate. This is by far the most common quality assurance issue we deal with. Our usual approach to reviewing OHI data is to compare the value for each indicator to the average value from the preceding years. This process can give a better picture than comparing the data only to the prior year.
 - i. **For example**, in the 2017 data submission the numbers for some indicators were less than half of the estimate from the prior year. For others, the rates reported were up to 10-fold higher than prior years (jumping decimal points!). Some of these were genuine anomalies. Still, apparent outliers typically will be flagged. Especially for rates, consider whether the estimate is plausible based on what you know about the data, and based on comparison to prior years.
 - b. Likewise, if the estimates for an indicator are identical to the previous year it raises suspicion of a data entry error.
2. For the Demographic Profile: Percentages for P.4 – P.9 should come to 100%, or close to it. Small deviations from 100% can occur due to rounding (e.g., "100.1%, or 99.9%). But if the percentages for different subcomponents add up to say, 96%, may be a proofreading error or you may have left out a subcomponent.
3. For indicators with age-standardized rates: Check to make sure the number for age-standardized rates makes sense in light of the crude rate. In a few cases, we have seen a typical number reported for a crude

rate, with “zero” reported as the corresponding age-adjusted rate. This kind of discrepancy will usually get flagged.

4. Once you have checked for any data inconsistencies compared to prior years and you have confirmed that some fluctuations or large discrepancies that may get flagged are correct, let us know you have done so. A note in an email is fine for this, or you can insert a new column for notes to the right of the data cells in the data template stating you are aware of the discrepancy and have checked the data to make sure it is correct *(Please don't change the template in a way that would change which column the current year's data go into.)*

Other:

1. Data Not Ready: If data are not ready at the time of submission due to something beyond your control, but you expect to have the data later, enter “DNR” (“data not ready”).
2. Data Note Available: If the data are not available, and will not be available (for example, if you do not have access to the data source at all, or if BLS suppresses your state's small number, etc.,) enter “N/A” (data “not available”).