



Connections Community of Practice

Collaborating to promote the health of our nation's children

Connections is a community of practice that assists public health agencies with planning and developing integrated information systems essential to improving the health of children. The Public Health Informatics Institute (the Institute) launched *Connections* in fall 2004 to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and problem solving among its 18 participating public health agencies throughout the country.

Connections focuses on public health programs that identify children with congenital or genetic conditions and those who may be at risk for adverse health outcomes (e.g., under-immunization or lead exposure). Participants share their strategies, best practices, and lessons learned while collaborating on issues specific to integration of early child health information systems, including newborn dried blood spot and hearing screening, vital records, immunization registries, and lead screening programs.

The primary objective of *Connections* is to advance the development of information systems that meet a public health agency's programmatic goals. To that end, *Connections* helps build relationships between agencies to encourage the free exchange of ideas in a community setting.

The community that practices together ...

A community of practice encourages and facilitates the sharing of ideas and information among individuals who share common interests. In the public health arena, practitioners often face similar issues when integrating their information systems. Through their interactions in the *Connections* community of practice, agencies share their experience and avoid "reinventing the wheel" every time they tackle new challenges

when integrating information systems. By learning from each other, community members shorten the learning curve, foster new approaches, and expand the knowledge base more rapidly.

Participants from across the country

Connections members represent 18 public health agencies in Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, New York City, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, and Washington.

Sharing knowledge
and best practices
on integration of
child health
information systems

Connections members include public health agencies that are the Special Projects of Regional and National Significance (SPRANS) implementation grantees of the Genetic Services Branch of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB)—along with other

public health agencies interested in integrated child health information systems.

Over the next several years, the *Connections* community of practice will:

- conduct monthly conference calls on topics of specific interest to the community.
- participate in several face-to-face conferences and workgroup sessions.
- create useful products in specialized workgroups to assist public health agencies with planning and developing their integrated information systems.
- document its findings in publications such as a topic brief and case study.

Delivering value to the larger public health community

Specialized *Connections* workgroups develop useful toolkits and publications developed by public health

practitioners *for* public health practitioners—to assist them in more effectively integrating their child health information systems. Workgroups are formed to focus on areas of interest and include *Connections* members and other experts in the field. Workgroup products are then disseminated nationally.

In addition, the *Connections* electronic newsletter reports every other month on the community's activities and progress. Topic briefs and case studies that document key findings will also be disseminated to the larger public health community.

Connections sponsored by HRSA/MCHB

Connections is supported through a cooperative agreement awarded to the Public Health Informatics Institute by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB).

Project summaries and contact information

Child health information systems integration projects by Connections members

Colorado: Newborn Evaluation, Screening, and Tracking (NEST)

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Section

NEST is a Web-based system linking the statewide blood-spot screening database with the statewide hospital-based hearing screening database pre-populated with information from the state's electronic birth registry. NEST also links to the birth defects and immunization registries.

Contact: Bill Letson MD, MCH Epidemiologist (303) 692-2424; bill.letson@state.co.us

Georgia Newborn Surveillance and Tracking Information Integration Project

Maternal and Child Health Section (MCH), Epidemiology Branch, Georgia Division of Public Health, Department of Human Resources

The goal of this project is to develop a secure, Web-based newborn surveillance and tracking system for

the collection, management, and analysis of newborn and child health screening and case management information.

Contact: Siobhan Gilchrist, Epidemiologist (404) 657-4657; smgilchrist@dhr.state.ga.us

The Indiana Operational Data Store (ODS)

Indiana State Department of Health

The Indiana ODS has developed an integrated data model based on a person-centric schema that links the state's birth records, deaths, birth defects, fetal deaths, lead screening, newborn dried blood spot screening (39 conditions), and newborn hearing screening.

Contact: Roland Gamache, PhD., MBA, Director, State Health Data Center (317) 234-1335; rgamache@isdh.state.in.us

Iowa: IDPH Interbureau Data Liaison Project

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Bureau of Information Management and Bureau of Family Health

This project builds infrastructure and capacity for data integration between the Bureau of Information Management (responsible for the health department's electronic infrastructure) and the Bureau of Family Health (responsible for child health, maternal health, and family planning).

Contact: Lucia Dhooge, Data Liaison (515) 281-7613; ldhooge@idph.state.ia.us

Maine: Integrated Public Health Information System (IPHIS)

Maine Bureau of Health

The goal of IPHIS is the integration and coordination of all public health data systems, including implementation of an integration broker and Web interface for public access.

Contact: Lisa Tuttle, MPH, IPHIS Director (207) 287-5716; lisa.tuttle@maine.gov

Massachusetts: Virtual Gateway / Enterprise Service Management (ESM) / Enterprise Invoice Management (EIM)

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)

A Web-enabled, single point of entry to all health and human services, the Virtual Gateway provides an inte-

grated intake for Medicaid, child and adult services, and other programs. Enhanced service tracking and invoicing functionality will launch in late 2005/early 2006.

Contact: Nancy Wilber, Director, Community Health Services Information Initiatives
(617) 624-5532; Nancy.Wilber@state.ma.us

Michigan Childhood Immunization Registry (MCIR)

Michigan Department of Community Health

MCIR is populated with the electronic birth certificate of every child born in Michigan starting in 1994. MCIR, launched in 1997, interoperates with Vital Records and links with WIC and Medicaid. Schools and preschools report immunizations using MCIR.

Contact: Robert Swanson,
Manager of Assessment and Local Support
(517) 335-8179; swansonr@state.mi.us

Minnesota: Newborn Screening / Program and Data Integration

Minnesota Department of Health

The project's primary goal is the integration of programs and their data. Data integration is being achieved through linkage of the newborn screening database—currently linking dried blood spot and hearing screening databases—with vital statistics.

Contact: Nancy Vanderburg,
Public Health Policy Planner
(651) 281-9993; nancy.vanderburg@health.state.mn.us

Missouri Health Strategic Architectures and Information Cooperative (MOHSAIC)

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

The principal goal of MOHSAIC is to develop an integrated public health information system that includes information on immunizations, newborn hearing, dried blood spot screening, lead screening, and other public health encounters.

Contact: Garland Land, Director, CHIME
(573) 751-6272; Garland.Land@dhss.mo.gov

New Jersey Perinatal Linkage Project

Maternal Child Health Epidemiology Program in the Division of Family Health Services, New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services

This project focuses on integrating birth certificates,

hospital discharge records (newborns and mothers), fetal and infant death certificates, Medicaid eligibility records, and WIC eligibility records to create a surveillance and applied research database for perinatal outcomes.

Contact: Lakota Kruse, MD, MPH, Medical Director
(609) 292-5656; Lakota.Kruse@doh.state.nj.us

New York City Master Child Index (MCI)

Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPPP), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The MCI facilitates matching and consolidating patient records in the CIR and LPPP. This integration also allows information dissemination to parents and providers and helps identify populations in need of immunizations or lead screening.

Contact: Amy Metroka, Director,
Citywide Immunization Registry
(212) 676-2319; ametroka@health.nyc.gov

New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS)

Immunization Program in the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control

The New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) is building a statewide immunization information system that connects all health care providers.

Contact: Michael Flynn, NYSIIS Project Manager
(518) 473-4437; Mkf06@health.state.ny.us

Oklahoma Child Health Information System

Oklahoma State Department of Health

This project integrates short-term follow-up newborn screening programs (hearing and metabolic), long-term follow-up newborn screening program, and vital records. Expansion plans are to integrate immunization, lead poisoning screening, and Public Health Oklahoma Client Information System (PHOCIS).

Contact: Pam King, MPA, RN, Director of Genetics & State Genetics Coordinator
(405) 271-9444, ext. 56737; pamk@health.ok.gov

Oregon: FamilyNet Data System

Department of Human Services, Health Services, Office of Family Health

FamilyNet integrates population-based and targeted

public health programs to support coordinated, community-based services to children and families on the local agency level and to provide public health policy and program information at all levels of government.

Contact: Sherry Spence,
MCH Data Systems Coordinator
(971) 673-0260; Sherry.Spence@state.or.us

Rhode Island KIDSNET

Rhode Island Department of Health

KIDSNET facilitates the collection and sharing of data with health-care providers, parents, MCH programs, and other child service providers for Newborn Developmental Risk, blood spot screening, hearing assessment, immunizations, lead poisoning, vital records, WIC, Early Intervention, Family Outreach home visiting, and birth defects.

Contact: Magaly C. Angeloni, Operations Manager
(401) 222-4602; MagalyA@doh.state.ri.us

Tennessee Comprehensive Genetics Plan for Integration of Newborn Screening and Health Information Systems

University of Tennessee Department of Medical Genetics, Graduate School of Medicine, Knoxville

The statewide genetics plan integrates the Newborn Genetic Screening program and other genetic services into the information technology plan to coordinate genetic services with all other programs for children with special health care needs.

Contact: Carmen B. Lozzio, MD, FACMG,
Program Director
(865) 544-9031; clozzio@mc.utmck.edu

Utah: Child Health Advanced Records Management (CHARM)

Utah Department of Health

CHARM integrates the state's birth registration system; Newborn Hearing Screening; Newborn Metabolic Screening; immunization database; Birth Defects Network; Women, Infants & Children (WIC); Medicaid; Lead Screening; Early Intervention; and many other public health programs.

Contact: Richard S. Harward,
CHARM Program Manager
(801) 584 8215; rharward@utah.gov

Washington: Maternal and Child Health Data Integration

Washington State Department of Health, Genetic Services Section

This integration project is focused initially on linking the state's newborn metabolic screening follow-up program with the newly developed Early Hearing loss Detection, Diagnosis, and Intervention (EHDDI) program.

Contact: Debra Lochner Doyle, MS, CGC,
State Genetics Coordinator
(253) 395-6742; Debra.lochnerdoyle@doh.wa.gov

About Public Health Informatics Institute

The Public Health Informatics Institute is dedicated to advancing public health practitioners' ability to strategically apply and manage information systems.

The Institute assists federal, state, and local public health agencies and other public health stakeholders that are grappling with information systems challenges.

Our services provide clarity about the information systems problems to be solved and identify the solutions to those problems.

The Public Health Informatics Institute is a component of The Task Force for Child Survival and Development.

For more information visit www.phii.org, call toll-free (866) 815.9704, or e-mail info@phii.org.

Connections is a program of the Public Health Informatics Institute and is supported by the Genetic Services Branch of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA/MCHB).



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