



Business Plan 2007 – Division of Environmental Health - Florida Department of Health

Mission: "Promote and Protect Health"

Vision: "Healthier Floridians"

**Goal: To prevent disease of environmental origin
Medical and Analytical Epidemiology**

Trends and Conditions:

The section of Medical and Analytical Epidemiology in the Bureau of Community Environmental Health is staffed with expertise in bio-statistics, medicine and epidemiology. A major activity for the section is to address possible associations between environmental contaminants and human health problems. The Department of Health, through the local 67 CHDs, receives inquiries from the public to investigate sites where people may have been exposed to toxins. Florida has 587 Superfund (CERCLIS) sites, of which 52 are National Priority List (NPL) sites. Each county has a facility that is either a generator, transporter, storehouse, treatment facility, or disposer of hazardous waste as categorized under Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. These are regulated under Title 40 of the code of Federal Regulations (CFR), as adopted by reference in Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 62-730. Health from past exposure or currently unabated emissions from these sites remains a source of concerns for Floridians. Citizen's may report that facilities containing radioactive materials, old dry cleaning sites, incinerators, abandoned industrial sites, and gasoline stations may emit chemicals or other materials that eventually find their way into the aquifer, lakes or streams. Exposures are often suspected to cause cancers, poisonings, chronic diseases, and birth defects.

Division Cost: The funding for this program was allocated from General Revenue funds 2006-07
Division Positions: 2

County Program Cost:
County Positions:

Often, requests are made to the CHDs about health concerns thought to be related to environmental exposures. The response to these requests is time intensive due to the high level of fear and emotion, combined with the tendency to place blame, which often accompanies such a request. In addition, a scientific approach such as a health statistical review and medical plausibility analysis require technical expertise beyond the capacity of some CHDs. The Medical and Analytical Epidemiology Section has access to and an understanding of existing sources of health information such as the Florida Cancer Data System, the statewide surveillance systems, including GIS mapping and the vital statistics records.

This section is working with the Risk Assessment Program to review and analyze the collected health survey data for the nearby communities of the Wingate landfill and incinerator at Fort Lauderdale in Broward County and submitted a draft report to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). In 2006, this section also provided support to review the cancer data for another site in Manatee County. This section supported the division's PACE-EH efforts in Indian River County by helping with data analysis and report writing for a community environmental health assessment survey. This section also provides technical assistance to other programs in various bureaus of the Division of Environmental Health.

This section has represented the Division of Environmental Health and the department on national workgroups like the Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Workgroup and Cancer Workgroup of CDC's Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Program and CSTE's national Air Quality Workgroup. Working with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Section prepared Florida's Profile of Environmental Health Programs in 2006. The Section also represented the division at the CSTE, FPHA and FEHA and the Department's internal cancer workgroup and cancer inquiry response workgroup. This section will continue to represent the Division of Environmental Health at a state and national level when requested and resources are available.



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Short Term Objectives

By January 1, 2008:

- Coordinate epidemiologic studies for cancer cluster concerns.
- Support the EPHT Program by providing expert help in Medical and Analytical Epidemiology.
- Support the Birth Defects Program by providing expert help in Medical and Analytical Epidemiology.
- Coordinate ongoing posting of selected environmental health indicator data on the department's CHARTS website.
- Provide medical and analytical support to other programs in the division.
- Promote data analysis and publishing of findings in programs throughout the division.

Long Term Objectives

By January 1, 2009:

- Increase occupational medicine surveillance and education.
- Promote utilization of EPHT for environmental health studies, research and policy.
- Seek available funding to establish an Occupational Health Surveillance and Educational Program in Environmental Health.

By January 1, 2010:

- Establish the Occupational Health Surveillance and Education Program.



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Measure #1: Provide environmental epidemiology, medical and analytical expertise and support to our partners and customers; CHDs, DOH bureaus, offices and divisions, state and federal agencies and universities.

Division Objective	HP 2010 Objective	Strategy	Benchmark	Responsible Party	Target Date	Status
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	23-17 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and local public health agencies that conduct or collaborate on population-based prevention research.	Provide technical assistance to the division’s EH programs in data collection and management.	EH related data sets are updated annually.	Drs. Patel and Blackmore, Laurel Harduar-Morano and EH program managers.	December 2007	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent Div. of EH on DOH BRFSS workgroup 	Include at least 10 questions related to environmental epidemiology in 2008 survey.	Dr. Patel, other related program staff members.	Annual meeting of BRFSS workgroup. (June 2007).	Attended meeting for selection of questions to be included in 2007 survey. Will meet the coordinator to check about questions regarding PACE-EH.
			Summary report of data analysis of related questions for programmatic use from 2007 survey.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano & other program staff.	On availability of collected data. (April 2008)	
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in the division’s efforts to use epidemiological data to increase level of preparedness for emergencies. 	Represent EH on syndromic surveillance workgroup in the Dept. and have parameters selected for EH related syndromes for surveillance.	Dr. Patel, Dr. Blackmore, Dr. Hammond.	Ongoing participation.	Attended the Syndromic Surveillance workgroup meetings and provided appropriate input related to EH issues.



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	health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct carbon monoxide poisoning surveillance during hurricane season and other emergencies 	Review and update the surveillance protocol for CO. Submit daily CO data to the SWP and DOH PIO.	Dr. Patel, HSEES Program Coordinator, Dr. Blackmore, Heather Lake, Clark Eldridge, Tim Wallace	Ongoing	During 2006, a small workgroup was established to collect different sets of data from different sources like AHCA, Poison Control Centers and HAZMAT contacts.
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	23-2 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State, and local health agencies that have made information available to the public in the past year on the Leading Health Indicators, Health Status Indicators, and Priority Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with division's CHARTS workgroup members and assure posting of Env. Health indicators data on the website for CHARTS. 	Updated data for selected indicators are posted on the website.	Dr. Patel and CHARTS committee.	December, 2007.	Office of Planning and Evaluation is working on the provided datasets and posting them on the website as they are prepared. Programmatic data need further work for proper posting on the website. Program managers are reminded to provide the data for indicators with missing datasets.



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	Needs. 23-6 Increase the proportion of Healthy People 2010 objectives that are tracked regularly at the national level from 59 percent of objectives are tracked every 3 years to 100 percent in 2010.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the relevant objectives from Healthy People 2010 and provide the interim goals with recent data on each objective to the Office of Planning and Evaluation. 	Objectives for the environmental programs identified and interim goals are set based on the most recent data and 2010 goals.	Dr. Patel and environmental program managers.	March, 2007	List of objectives related to environmental programs is prepared. Individual program managers are provided with selected objectives for their programs to enter the data for recent years from 2000 onwards and interim goals.
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Measure #2: Assist CHDs in developing and implementing environmental health studies and cancer cluster investigations.

Division Objective	HP 2010 Objective	Strategy	Benchmark	Responsible Party	Target Date	Status
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-10 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and public local health agencies that provide continuing education to develop competency in essential public health services for their	Provide technical assistance to CHDs in EH studies and cancer cluster investigations.	A successful completion of a study or investigation.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano, DOH programs, CHDs.	December 2007	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide education and training for CHD epidemiologists on the initial assessment and how to conduct an environmental health investigation for presumed cancer clusters. 	Formal training offered at available opportunities at least once a year.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano.	Ongoing	Provided presentations about cancer cluster investigations at Epidemiology seminar in Tampa in 2006.



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	employees.					
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon request of a health study or an investigation, the program staff will respond to requesting party with an initial assessment. 	An initial response completed. Requests will be monitored by logging into a tracking system. The completed report	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano.	Within two weeks of request	Tracking process is ready and being utilized to enter the requests regularly. Duval CHD was provided with initial assessment for a site with cancer concerns at the end of 2006.
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When deemed necessary, develop a study proposal for acceptance and approval by appropriate entities. 	A study proposal draft will be submitted to the requesting unit. Key steps in the process will be logged into a tracking system.	Dr. Patel, Laurel, Harduar-Morano and other related staff members.	Within 2 months of decision to conduct a health study	A review of cancer data is being performed at present for the site in Duval County.
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the purpose and limitations of the health statistics review (cancer cluster) is communicated to the requesting party. 	Upon receipt of a written health statistics review request, provide an initial response to the requesting party within one week.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano	Ongoing, respond within one week of request	Screening tool will be filed and tracked.



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	provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.					
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop appropriate health statistics review methodology, which will include the intent of the review, the sources of data and the statistical analysis to be conducted. 	Submit a health statistics review methodology for approval by appropriate entities within one month of the decision to conduct the effort.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano	Ongoing	As requested.
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist CHDs in the implementation of health studies/investigation whenever needed such as conducting interviews, environmental samples, entering and analyzing data. 	A summary report of the study/investigation prepared within the proposed timeline.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano.	Ongoing	



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	health services.					
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop department wide cancer inquiry response plan. As a part of this plan, an advisory group to the Department will help guide complex cancer investigations. 	Finalize the plan.	Drs. Patel, Huang, Middaugh, Ms. Hylton, Ms. Higgins, Ms. Harduar-Morano, Ms. Glotzbach. Cancer Prevention Program (Bureau of Chronic Diseases)	June 2007	Cancer inquiry workgroup meetings attended, response plan is undergoing review.
			Organize the department wide cancer inquiry response advisory group		April, 2007	Suggestions to recruit the non-departmental members were made for the advisory group.
			Build website for cancer inquiries.		July, 2007	A preliminary website is built and was discussed at the last meeting. Items to be posted on the website and other issues are being discussed in the meetings.
Create a statewide culture of environmental health.	23-10 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and public local health agencies that provide continuing education to develop competency in essential public health services for their employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide medical and epidemiological guidance and expert assistance to programs of different bureaus within the division. 	Support at least two programs from different bureaus in a year for medical and analytical support on their projects.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano and related program staff.	Meet with Bureau Chiefs and Program Managers at least once every six months according to their schedules.	At present Bureau of Onsite Sewage is designing a study of septic tank failures with assistance from Section staff.



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<p>Create a statewide culture of environmental health.</p>	<p>23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wingate: Symptoms & Disease Prevalence study. 	<p>Respond to comments from peer-reviewers and submit the final draft to ATSDR.</p>	<p>Randy Merchant, Laurel Harduar-Morano and Dr.Patel.</p>	<p>03/31/07</p>	<p>The responses to comments are being prepared and compiled by the team and will be submitted to ATSDR as soon as completed.</p>
<p>Create a statewide culture of environmental health.</p>	<p>23-10 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of Federal, Tribal, State and public local health agencies that provide continuing education to develop competency in essential public health services for their employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide medical and epidemiological guidance and expert assistance to programs of different bureaus within the division. 	<p>Support at least two programs from different bureaus in a year for medical and analytical support on their projects.</p>	<p>Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano and related program staff.</p>	<p>Meet with Bureau Chiefs and Program Managers at least once every six months according to their schedules.</p>	<p>At present Bureau of Onsite Sewage is designing a study of septic tank failures with assistance from Section staff.</p>



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Trend and condition statements for asthma:

Asthma is a major public health concern. Asthma and other respiratory conditions often are triggered or worsened by substances found in the air, such as tobacco smoke, ozone, and other particles or chemicals. Although various reports indicate that asthma rates are increasing, it is not a disease that requires routine hospital admission nor does it result in immediate death. Therefore, each set of data captures only a piece of asthma burden and is problematic in defining the rate and distribution of asthma in the population. Asthma surveillance continues to rely on multiple sources of information and no mandatory reporting of the disease.

Nationwide asthma accounts for an estimated 14.5 million lost workdays for adults and 14 million lost school days for children annually. (American Lung Association, Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality, March 2003) In Florida, between 2001-2003 an average of 625.6 per 100,000 hospitalizations were due to asthma. During 2004 in Florida, 190 people died from asthma. (Vital Statistics) School records show that for every 1000 children, 55 of them have been identified as having asthma by the school health program. (DOH, School Health Program, 2004-05) Additionally, over 10% of the adults in Florida report having had asthma. (BRFSS, 2002)

Measure # 3: Develop information base to support an environmental and or occupational asthma initiative by Dec. 2007.

Division Objective	HP 2010 Objective	Strategy	Benchmark	Responsible Party	Target Date	Status
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	24-8 (Developmental) Establish in at least 15 States a surveillance system for tracking asthma death, illness, disability, impact of occupational and environmental factors on asthma, access to medical care, and asthma management.	Compile the datasets related to Asthma in Florida from the available data sources.	Draft a descriptive summary report about asthma in Florida.	Drs. Patel and Blackmore, Laurel Harduar-Morano, Jane Correia	April 2008	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with data sets to identify strengths and limitations 	Quarterly analysis of Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) hospitalization and Emergency Room visits data.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano with assistance from Health Tracking Team.	Emergency Room data from AHCA will be transferred on a regular basis to DOH for use in the EPHT program.	AHCA has agreed to share more specific data for use by the EPHT Program. AHCA provided the first set of hospitalization data for asthma by electronic transfer and will update on a quarterly basis.
			Relationship of Asthma to elements of ambient air like O3 and PM 2.5 reviewed.	If funded by EPA.	June 2010	.Application to EPA was submitted in Nov.2006.



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			The study report will build an index to show the relationship of these elements to asthma.			
		▪ Link data to health tracking website	Annual updates of BRFSS data on the EPHT website	Same	Ongoing	Updated as BRFSS data becomes available
		▪ Link data to health tracking website	Annual updates of School Health Program Data on the EPHT website	Same	Ongoing	Information is current to '04-'05 school year
		▪ Link data to health tracking website	Annual updates of Vital Statistics data on the EPHT website	same	Ongoing	'04 data available



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Trend and condition statements for the Florida Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance and Intervention Network (OSHSI) Network:

The development of Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance and Intervention Network (OSHSI Network) is a step in the direction of establishing future Occupational Health Surveillance Program. While this basic surveillance program will provide minimal occupational health surveillance, a critical long term goal will be to develop and implement effective strategies to prevent work-related injuries through the education of employers and employees and the application of effective prevention activities. These strategies will include collaboration with existing state-wide resources, training and educational programs. As Florida was not funded by NIOSH in 2006, the Department of Health can not perform the preventive and educational functions, but can collect and analyze morbidity and mortality data related to occupational settings from various sources like AHCA, Dept. of Worker's Compensation and DOH Vital Statistics. In the long run, upon setting up the prevention education programs, the workers in Florida will benefit through improved understanding of occupational health risks and a safer work environment with fewer injuries and illnesses. Employers will benefit through diminished occurrence of work-related injury and illness resulting in lower workers compensation costs, fewer lost time injuries, less worker turnover, lower legal costs, improved worker moral and enhanced efficiency and productivity of operations.

Measure # 4: Develop information base to support Florida Occupational Health Surveillance initiative:

Division Objective	HP 2010 Objective	Strategy (Program level)	Benchmark	Responsible Party	Target Date (up to 18 months)	Status (What is happening now)
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	Compile datasets related to occupational health in Florida.	Draft a descriptive summary report about occupational health in Florida.	Drs. Patel and Blackmore, Laurel Harduar-Morano, Rosanna Barrett.	April 2008	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect available data for occupational indicators in Florida 	Prepare the data for occupational indicators. Provide occupational data for the CSTE's national report. Publish indicators on our website	Drs. Patel and Blackmore	Ongoing.	Data for the Occupational Indicators were prepared for Florida except the indicators for which data were not available from the sources and data were provided to CSTE to post with other states on their website. We will continue to collect and publish those indicators
Strengthen	23-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to 	Attend DOH employee	Drs. Patel and	Ongoing	Met with the employee health



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<p>environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.</p>	<p>Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.</p>	<p>DOH Occupational (Employee Health) initiatives to identify potential risks for occupational morbidity by review of worker's comp. data.</p>	<p>health meetings. Provide medical and analytical support to review data. Prepare a brief descriptive summary of annual occupational morbidity.</p>	<p>Blackmore, Laurel Harduar-Morano. Other related staff members from DOH.</p>		<p>workgroup in 2006. Will reconvene the group to discuss the issues and the access to data for review.</p>
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Trend and condition statements for the Environmental Health Research Network: The Division of Environmental Health, FDOH headquarters, and the CHDs statewide have a variety of environmental epidemiology functions/programs serving the citizens of Florida. These environmental epidemiology functions have commonalities as well as diversities while they collaborate with many bureaus and divisions within the FDOH, other federal and state agencies, professional organizations, universities and various community groups. The Florida Environmental Health Research Network will serve to strengthen these collaborations, enhance services, enhance communications and synergy between programs, and promote excellence in environmental health. The network will serve to share information, opportunities and publications.

Measure #5: Promote data analysis, epidemiological research and epidemiologic competency in the Division of Environmental Health

Division Objective	HP 2010 Objective	Strategy	Benchmark	Responsible Party	Target Date	Status
Strengthen environmental health by data collection, analysis and use of the findings.	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	Support staff development and presentation of DEH epi data.	10 presentations, 4 peer-reviewed articles	Dr. Patel Dr. Blackmore	December 2007	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in the Division's efforts to support essential public health services by improving communications between universities providing graduate training in public health and epidemiology. 	Develop a list of academic programs indicating who provides what kind of training in the field of EH and Zoonotics.	Dr. Patel and other related staff members from the division.	By the end of 2007.	As a member of Academic Committee, efforts are already made in this regard. At next meeting, our interest will be expressed for future internship projects.
			Facilitating the establishment of 2 epidemiology internship for graduate students in DEH	Dr. Patel Dr. Blackmore	July 2007	



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			Facilitating 2 partnerships between university programs and DEH epidemiology programs	Dr. Patel Dr. Blackmore	Dec.2007	
	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a SharePoint site with links to department wide and state wide programs, resources and contacts. 	Create a useful site on SharePoint to locate publications, posters, presentations, research articles, available datasets with links, etc.	Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano, Chris Duclos, John Folsom, Dr. Blackmore, Joe Mucha, Mitch Stripling and other interested staff members.	March 2007	The site named EH Epidemiological Research, a link from Environmental Epidemiology is in the planning stage - notifying and established on SharePoint.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An academic epidemiology list serve to be developed so that the members can be informed about potential research opportunities, sharing of research documents and referring students with interest in research to appropriate mentors for internships. 	The listserve established.	Dr.Patel, Dr. Blackmore.	March 2007	A list of interested members will be prepared for distribution of research information. Universities may be contacted through Academic Committee of FPHA.
	23-14 Increase the proportion of Tribal, State, and local health agencies that provide or assure comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host presentations at meetings, conferences, professional organizations (eg. FPHA, FEHA, Annual Epidemiology Seminar, CSTE Conference. 	Provide at least 10 DEH epidemiology presentations per year at educational meetings.	Dr. Blackmore Dr.Patel and other staff members.	Ongoing	Different presentations were offered at professional conferences like FEHA, FPHA, CSTE, etc. during 2006.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the publication of DEH 	Four peer-reviewed publications	Dr. Patel, Dr. Blackmore	December 2007	Staff published on CO poisoning, E coli O157:H7,



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	epidemiology services to support essential public health services.	epidemiological work in peer reviewed journal or MMWR by providing guidance on research initiatives, methods, available data sets and writing.				hurricane epidemiology and pesticide poisoning surveillance in 2006.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote professional growth among DEH epidemiologists 	<p>12 Epidemiological seminars</p> <p>4 Journal Club meetings</p> <p>2 Breeze presentations on epidemiological methods</p>	Dr. Blackmore Dr. Patel, Laurel Harduar-Morano and others	December 2007	Epidemiological seminars were held monthly in 2006. Two breeze presentations on biostatistics were produced.