

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

**Site visit conducted by Jonathan Drewry and Brian Hubbard, CDC/NCEH
Environmental Health Services Branch, Division of Emergency &
Environmental Health Services**

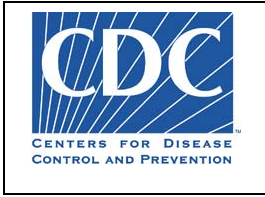
Overview of Site Visit:

Brian Hubbard, Environmental Health Scientist, and Jonathan Drewry, Community Environmental Health Assessment Advisor, from the National Center of Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC/NCEH) attended multiple meetings centered on the PACE community environmental health assessment process that is being implemented by the Multnomah County Health Department. Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Drewry met with the following members of the community-based coalition 1) assessment team members, 2) local environmental health activists, 3) staff from the health department, 4) members of the environmental health services division, and 5) the steering committee. The visit included a tour of facilities related to the work of the environmental health services division, a windshield tour of Northeast Multnomah County communities and attendance in the PACE EH environmental health community coalition meeting.

Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Drewry of the Environmental Health Services Branch (CDC/NCEH/EHSB) attended the 4th PACE EH community coalition meeting taking place on April 30th in Portland, Oregon. Attending this meeting as members of the coalition were approximately 40 representatives from a wide spectrum of organizations within the Multnomah County community. The coalition is served by four committees. Each of the four coalition committees provided activity updates. The focus of the meeting was the assessment committee's presentation of findings from the previously selected five distinct geographical regions of the county. The assessment team outlined some of the environmental conditions in these regions and used GIS mapping to overlay population demographics with various environmental concerns. The following provides a brief description of the committees created under the guidance of Multnomah County Health Department, with a brief overview of the role of each in the PACE EH process:

Steering Committee: This committee makes recommendations for the coalition, plans coalition meetings, assures sound decision making processes and communication between committees and promotes diverse community participation. During the PACE EH community coalition meeting a representative from this group spoke briefly about the goal of sustaining this process well into the future by achieving 501c (3) status for the coalition.

Membership Team: This team is dedicated to community outreach, forming inroads into the communities that will be impacted by the community connectors, seeking out new



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

and diverse members to join the coalition and assuring inter-coalition communication. During the meeting this group briefly mentioned the five geographic areas that were currently under study as possible areas for the environmental health assessment to take place, as well as the outreach activities taking place.

Support Team: This team is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure to support the PACE EH process through May 2004. In this role the team members serve as liaisons to other committees, supporting leadership development among members, assuring funding for community connection positions and assuring that the community environmental health assessment process is completed satisfactorily. This group discussed the development of a web-site for the coalition that would contain meeting dates, priorities, and housekeeping notes.

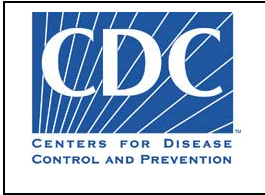
Assessment Team: This team develops the PACE EH work plan/time frame, identification of environmental issues to be assessed, the scope of assessment, research methods, research questions, form of analysis, etc. This group presented environmental conditions using GIS mapping for the five designated areas for possible assessment. The selection of the geographic region will be decided upon at the next coalition meeting based upon the following criteria selected by the assessment team:

- Environmental justice issues,
- Presence of multiple environmental exposures,
- Community support for outside involvement, and
- Availability of existing data.

Stage in the PACE Process: The environmental health coalition spent the majority of this meeting discussing the five geographic regions of Multnomah County to be assessed. GIS mapping was used by the assessment team to overlay the environmental concerns and human health affects for each of these five regions. The last session of the coalition meeting provided members the opportunity to breakout into individual groups to discuss regions that would be most appropriate for the assessment. Each member was then given three votes that could be applied to any of the five regions, where they felt an intervention would have the greatest impact and success.

The environmental health coalition is in the process of completing the following tasks:

Task 1- Determine capacity to take on the assessment- Community connectors were hired by the health department to involve and inform the populations/organizations living and working in Multnomah County. Utilization of these connectors seems to allow a thorough understanding of community support for the environmental health assessment, while additionally stimulating community capacity, and promoting the commitment of the health department to this assessment. One of the principle reasons for the health



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

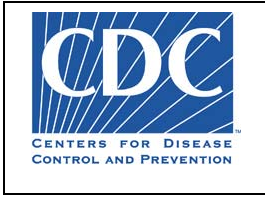
department to begin this process was to ensure that the environmental health priorities at the county level are driven by the people and not policy makers.

Task 2- *Characterize the community-* The environmental health coalition, with the support from the various committees, is in the process of researching each of the potential geographic areas where this assessment will take place. The coalition will ultimately make a decision based upon four different criteria (environmental justice issues, the presence of multiple environmental exposures, community support for outside involvement, and availability of existing data) to better focus the environmental health assessment and develop an intervention.

Task 3- *Assemble a community based environmental health assessment team-* Through community member support, the aforementioned committees that are responsible for various integral components of the PACE EH process, and the multitude of community-based organizations represented, a diverse coalition has formed over the past year. The membership committee's responsibilities ensure that the coalition will continue to grow and provide outreach to the general population of Multnomah County.

Task 4- *Define the goals, objectives, and scope of the assessment-* This has yet to be determined by the coalition but will be based upon community surveys, analysis of primary and secondary data sources, and mapping of environmental hazards. The overarching goals for the Multnomah County Health Department in this process are the following: 1) Coordination of local stakeholders to demonstrate the role of the community in the PACE EH process; 2) Decision-makers, health officials, affected populations, and other stakeholders become informed about the environmental agents and conditions in the community that impact human health; 3) Ensure that PACE EH is used as a defensible process to identify and rank environmental health issues; 4) Evaluation of existing public health resources; and 5) Support environmental justice by ensuring that Multnomah County residents regardless of socioeconomic factors are assured of the opportunity to live free from environmental agents or conditions that might be harmful to human health.

Task 5- *Generate a list of environmental health issues-* An initial assessment of these issues was conducted at one of the first community coalition meetings through ideas provided from environmental and community-based organizations. Through the work of the assessment team, a number of environmental health issues have been analyzed and compared by region, where minority and/or impoverished populations reside. The environmental health issues researched by the assessment team were health-based community water system violations, solid waste facilities, illegal dump sites, presence of formaldehyde, childhood lead poisoning cases, pre-1950's housing, superfund sites, industries generating hazardous waste, potential brown fields, and cancer risk per million for select air toxics.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

Activities and Tools Used to Advance the PACE EH Process:

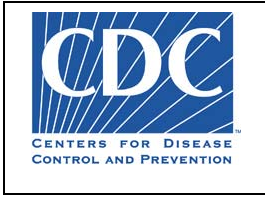
Support from Previous PACE EH Users- The communication between Island County and Multnomah County at the beginning of the PACE EH process seems to have improved the level of understanding around effective ways in which this process can be implemented. This relationship seems to have assisted the health department in areas like organizational development and planning of the assessment. In other words, involvement from Island County may have been beneficial in emphasizing the critical points in the process that require planning and a well organized community commitment.

Community Commitment- The direction of the health department towards ensuring that the community advance this process, generate the agenda, fill the committee seats, decide upon the mission of the assessment, and promote an organic process generated by the community and for the community, may be an important factor in developing a sustainable process. This is a very environmentally progressive county with a great deal of activism among community members, which may also be an important element towards sustaining the energy required to fully complete this environmental health process.

Organizational Structure of Coalition- This aforementioned organizational structure where very specific teams are developed, with clearly defined roles to play, appears to be a good approach to ensure that vital components of this process are completed. Additionally, it appears to be a good method for ensuring that the workload is spread more equally among team members, and that it is not just the facilitator or health department representative who has to complete some of the work behind the more difficult tasks.

Analysis of Data Using a Geographic Information Format- The use of spatial mapping to present data on environmental health conditions and demographics in geographic areas of concern is a useful tool for the presentation of data. Taking into consideration the fact that this coalition is very much interested in environmental justice issues, this method for presenting information is clear and concise. The assessment team used geographic information systems to create a map of the five regions and overlay various maps of environmental conditions (exposure concentrations for diesel particulate matter) and demographic information.

Organizational Involvement- An extensive list of organizations form the coalition with each one bringing a certain expertise in understanding the community, processes, and science involved in completing this community environmental health assessment. Organizations such as the Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG) appear to have far



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

reaching community networks in place, and a support structure that should benefit the work of the coalition. Faculty and students from local educational institutions assist in the community assessment, mapping, and analysis.

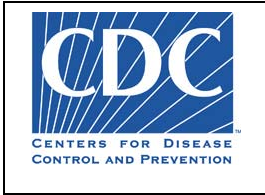
Community Connector Positions- These positions, created by Multnomah County Health Department, work directly with the community on PACE EH. These positions appear to be valuable in the promotion of the PACE EH process, community involvement, and outreach. The fact that the health department has funded several additional employees to work at least part-time on this community environmental health assessment demonstrates the health department's commitment to PACE EH.

Challenges and Accomplishments:

Plan for Sustaining PACE EH- During a meeting with officials from Multnomah County Health Department, Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Drewry discussed possibilities for locating other funding mechanisms to sustain the PACE EH process. Specific topics included the possibility of involving private organizations, local governments and foundations to fund environmental health assessments and interventions. Grant writers from the health department suggested that one approach may see the CDC taking a lead role to encourage foundations that provide funding to community health activities to assist sites implementing PACE EH. Since the coalition hopes to have selected a geographic region and environmental intervention by May 2004, the health department would like to work with the community to secure funding for the interventions and/or action plans they have selected.

Demonstrating the Value of PACE EH- During the meeting with Multnomah County Health Department there was concern over being able to demonstrate the value of PACE EH to the community and to justify, over the long-term, the health department hiring two people to facilitate the process. In the future, the health department hopes to find new ways to clearly demonstrate the value of using PACE EH. In addition, marketing the value of PACE EH in clear and simple terms will be useful when seeking funding from foundations and state and local governments.

The Multnomah County PACE EH project has been planned and managed well, and methodically implemented over the course of this past year. The time and energy that has been dedicated to defining the community, understanding the community, and generating collaboration should prove valuable to the assessment and subsequent interventions. The health department is actively encouraging the community to direct and have ownership of this project thereby ensuring the sustainability of this project. The broad support and multitude of organizations committed to the process should encourage the development of community supported interventions in the selected geographic region.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health**

**Report of PACE-EH Demonstration Site Visit
Multnomah County, Oregon
April 29, 2003**

One of the challenges facing this group will be to develop innovative funding mechanisms in order to sustain this process well into the future. As a result of competing health department programs, combined with a state budget crunch, the health department will have to increasingly justify its reasons for continuing to invest time and money in the PACE EH process.

Reported by:

Jonathan Drewry, MPH
CDC/NCEH/EHSB Community Environmental Health Assessment Fellow

Reviewed by:

John Sarisky, RS, MPH
CDC/NCEH/EHSB Senior Environmental Health Scientist