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<tr>
<td>Presenter Name:</td>
<td>Jennifer Ibrahim, PhD, MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title of Presentation:</td>
<td>“Building Access and Understanding of Law in Public Health Practice in Nebraska”</td>
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<td>Name of Meeting:</td>
<td>Research-in-Progress Webinar</td>
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<td>Host of Meeting:</td>
<td>Public Health Systems &amp; Services NPO</td>
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<td>Date of Meeting:</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
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<td>Place of Meeting:</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
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Building Access and Understanding of Public Health Law in Nebraska

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Acknowledgments

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  – Darrell Klein, Colleen Svoboda

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Accessing the Law?
Using the law
Need for Legal Datasets

- Policy surveillance
  - Tracking laws over time
  - Tracking laws across jurisdictions
  - Examining legal provisions in a particular topic area
Need for Information on Law

• Policy Inventory
  – What does the law say?
  – How does the law impact my authority to act?
BUILDING ACCESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF PUBLIC HEALTH LAW IN NEBRASKA
Theoretical Framework

Macro-Context:
Social, Political, Economic force operating in the overall society; Social values and preference for products of PHS; External forces such as medical delivery system, technology, nature of federal-state-local relationships.

Input

Legal Authority

Mediators

Legal Capacity
- Institutional Legal Culture
- Legal Competency
- Legal Consciousness

Structural capacity
- Physical Resources
- Human Resources
- Financial Resources
- Organization
- Technology
- Information

Implementation

Outputs

- Protect from health hazards
- Health education
- Engage the community in problem-solving
- Help people receive health services

Outcomes

- Monitor health status
- Maintain competent public health workforce
- Evaluate & improve programs/interventions.
- Contribute to and apply evidence base of public health

- Develop health policies & plans
- Enforce public health laws & regulations

Decrease in Morbidity and Mortality
Sustained Population Health

Study Aims

- **Aim 1**: To systematically collect and code state and local laws in Nebraska that govern the authority of public health agencies to perform essential public health services.

- **Aim 2**: To create an online policy surveillance system to readily access the laws that govern public health activities in Nebraska.
Study Aims

• **Aim 3**: To evaluate changes in perceptions of law and the use of law by the public health workforce in Nebraska as a result of using the online policy surveillance system.

• **Aim 4**: To conduct an evaluation of the impact of a particular set of legal provisions on public health agency performance and population.
BUILDING THE NEBRASKA LAWATLAS SYSTEM
• Scope of Laws
  – State and local law
  – Not just topic specific, but larger authority to act

• Data Collection
  – Nebraska team collected laws
  – Temple team verifies
Methods: Coding Laws

- Defining question – generalizability
- Data Coding in Workbench on LawAtlas.org
Bodies of Law Covered

- Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs
- Chronic Disease & Injury
- Environmental Health
- Foodborne Illness
- Structure & Governance
- Health Professions & Licensure
- Disasters & Emergencies
- Maternal Health, Children & Families
- Nutrition & Physical Activity
- Vital Statistics
- Mental & Behavioral Health
- Seniors & Aging
- Disabilities
NEBRASKA’S LAWATLAS SYSTEM

Nebraska Public Health Laws

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NE DHHS) provides public health services to Nebraskans and promotes public health by implementing laws and regulations that address health issues, track health outcomes, and certify and license health professionals.

This section of LawAtlas tracks laws and regulations that relate to NE DHHS’s core mission. Below are links to pages that provide contextual information and texts of relevant laws and regulations on key functions of the NE DHHS. Select one of these options below for more information on the specific topic area and to access the surveillance of key public health laws and regulations.

- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- Chronic Disease and Injury
- Disabilities
- Disasters and Emergencies
- Environmental Health
- Foodborne Illnesses
- Health Professions Licensure
- Maternal Health, Children, and Families
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Seniors and Aging
- Structure and Governance
- Vital Statistics

Available at: www.lawatlas.org/nebraska

www.lawatlas.org/nebraska
WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT
Baseline Workforce Assessment

- 155 respondents
- Respondents were:
  - staff (37%), program managers (34%) or executives (11%)
  - worked in the health department for less than 2 yrs (26%), 3-14 yrs (26%), 15 yrs or more (27%)
Engaging with Public Health Law

What do you do to learn more about a law?

- Look up the law: 29%
- Google: 51%
- Dept Health website: 40%
- State Legislative website: 60%
Frequent Public Health Law Issues

- Most frequent public health law issues:
  - alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
  - health professions practice
  - vital statistics and surveillance
  - chronic disease and injury
How often do you think about public health law?

- **Less than once/week**: 66%
- **2-5 times/week**: 41%
- **More than 6 times/week**: 33%

- **In position <5 yrs**:
  - Less than once/week: 66%
  - 2-5 times/week: 23%
  - More than 6 times/week: 11%

- **In position > 5 yrs**:
  - Less than once/week: 44%
  - 2-5 times/week: 27%
  - More than 6 times/week: 33%
Workforce Assessment of Public Health Law

I do not feel confident.....

- Contacting proper individual to discuss PH law issue: 32% (5 yrs), 18% (>5 yrs)
- Discussing PH Law issue with lawyer: 45% (5 yrs), 20% (>5 yrs)
- Conducting a meeting related to PH law: 68% (5 yrs), 60% (>5 yrs)
Additional Resources Needed

- Requests for additional resources include:
  - online directory of laws (84%)
  - in-person workshops (89%)
  - live webinars (85%)
  - online certificate program in public health law (74%)
6 month follow-up survey

- Survey currently in the field
EVALUATION OF LAW
Evaluation of PH Law

• Integration of legal dataset with existing surveillance data within the health department
  – Clean indoor air laws with data on secondhand smoke exposure and infractions of the law
Implications

• Opportunities to improve awareness of law as a tool to advance health

• Critical thinking about updating the law

• Evaluation to generate evidence to support or refute laws
  – Real time assessment
Next Steps

• Collaboration with:
  – ASTHO
  – NACCHO
  – NALBOH

• Opportunities for sharing methodology to advance a new area of research
Thank you

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COMMENTARY AND DISCUSSION