

KEEPING INFORMED ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

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Chapter Summary

The ever-increasing amount of health information available makes it essential to have a set of current awareness strategies to help manage the flow of knowledge. The multidisciplinary nature of public health creates the challenge of capturing useful updates without becoming overwhelmed with too much information. This chapter will offer strategies for keeping up with public health information, followed by sources to use for each strategy and then case studies to show the strategies and sources applied to public health questions. The public health workforce is a busy one, so ways to keep up with limited time investments are emphasized.

Note that the text of this chapter is in the public domain and may be copied, adapted and used freely for the training of members of the public health workforce.

Learning Objectives

After reviewing this chapter, a public health worker will be able to:

- Identify strategies and resources to help stay informed of developments and events related to a field of interest within public health.
- Identify specific resources related to area(s) of interest within public health including:
 - Web sites that have news updates or continuous news feeds or blogs
 - RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds
 - E-mail discussion lists (Listservs™)
 - E-mail announcement/notification lists
 - Journals (content for the latest issue)
 - Automated subject-specific literature searches
 - Professional organizations
- Outline a plan for incorporating keeping up-to-date into a work routine

Applications of Learning

Knowledge and use of the strategies and resources introduced in this chapter will enhance public health workers' competencies in:

- **Analytic assessment:** “Identifies relevant and appropriate data and information sources.”
- **Inform, educate and empower people about health issues:** “Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.”
- **Communication:** “Uses the media, advanced technologies, and community networks to communicate information.”

Introduction

While collaborative in nature, public health agencies and community based organizations often find themselves competing with industry for the public’s attention and funding for health concerns [1]. Businesses describe staying informed as competitive intelligence, and like businesses, public health organizations cannot afford to be out-of-date. Staying informed about news and developments in public health is a crucial component of health competencies related to communication [2]. Communication is a two-way street, and public health practitioners need to use the media, advanced technologies, and community networks to gain information as well as communicate it.

The ever-increasing amount of information available makes it all the more important to have a set of current awareness strategies to help manage the flow of knowledge. The multidisciplinary nature of many public health disciplines makes it especially hard to capture useful updates without becoming overwhelmed by the breadth of the information.

Why should one adopt new strategies for staying informed?

- Staying informed is a professional responsibility. The Public Health Code of Ethics [3] suggests that public health should seek the information needed to implement effective policies and programs that protect and promote health.
- Keeping up with newsworthy areas helps public health leaders respond with expertise to legislators at all levels who propose laws or initiatives that can impact health policy or services.
- Watching the news and noting who is publishing on topics of interest can help identify experts in other agencies, academia and industry with whom to collaborate.
- Being informed about developments in public health is important at every level of one’s career. Searching to find information just-in-time is more efficient, but there are times when being notified of new research or a new health threat prior to the media coverage will be quicker than searching.
- In hard budget times, time and funds for traveling to meetings or continuing education events may not be available.

- Access to electronic forms of public health information is faster than reliance on mail delivery or interoffice routing of print materials which may be slowed or delayed.
- Having time to prepare responses or proposals for hot media topics or funding opportunities in advance of being asked about them generally produces a better result.

Discussion Question: *Are there other reasons that might convince colleagues or administrators to make time for keeping up?*

What are the costs of keeping up? Keeping up can take as much or as little time and money as available. Later in this chapter there is a list of strategies and the time they may require. All resources and services discussed in this chapter are free unless otherwise stated.

Strategies

Efficient strategies for keeping up will provide the most value (relevant items) while expending the least amount of time. Strategies for keeping up can be short-term, project-specific or long-term. Some people set up “current awareness searches” when they are looking for new positions or filling in for a colleague in an area not directly related to their area of expertise. A librarian or other information-savvy colleague may be able to assist in composing a useful set of strategies. Strategies should be examined from time-to-time to ensure that they are still meeting the needs for which they were established. Be sure to save information about your strategies in some way so that you can easily update them or pass them on to others. Long-term ongoing strategies can be assigned to others on staff to monitor, especially if one area encompasses a variety of disciplines.

Keeping organized makes it all easier. Here are some electronic organization strategies:

- Create an e-mail folder for items that aren't of immediate use, but might be useful in the future. It may be helpful to set up this folder to occasionally purge items that have not been accessed after a period of time.
- Use Web browser bookmarks or favorites to store the addresses of sites that will be visited frequently.
- Know about organizational policies for e-mail and computer use before signing up for services using office computers.
- Remember that not all information is electronically available. Physical folders may still be needed to collect relevant announcements or information.

Following are some general strategies that can be helpful for keeping up. Details on resources for each of these strategies appear in the Sources section of this chapter.

Discussion Question: *Are there any other suggestions for staying organized?*

Web sites with News Updates and Blogs

Identify Web sites related to areas of interest that have news updates or continuous news feeds. To make it easier to find these sites again, add these sites to browser bookmarks or favorites. Making one of these sites the default search page when the browser opens so it appears first thing in the morning is an easy way to be presented with the news. If news doesn't get added very often, setting a Web site page alert (covered below) sends a notification when the page has been updated.

Many sites provide news blurbs announcing the findings of studies. Very few of the news pieces offer the complete citation to the original article—it is important to read the actual studies and data if using the information for decision-making purposes.

Weblogs, or blogs, as they are commonly known, are frequently updated Web sites that point to and comment on resources elsewhere on the Web and sometimes offer onsite articles. They are maintained with special blogging software that makes them easy to update. The content of the blog is only as valuable as the editorial capacity and commitment of the person(s) providing it. Reading personal health-related blogs can share diverse viewpoints on health issues of public interest or debate. Other blogs announce new resources – one example of this is Bringing Health Information to the Community (BHIC) by Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, National Network of Libraries of Medicine at <<http://medstat.med.utah.edu/blogs/BHIC/>>

RSS Feeds

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds are a method of distributing Web site content to RSS reader software. You must use a program known as a RSS News Aggregator (also called news reader) to collect, update and read RSS feeds. A number of free and commercial News Aggregators are available. Some Web browsers such as Firefox and Safari can handle RSS feeds.

Example RSS Readers:

SharpReader - Windows RSS Reader
<<http://www.sharpreader.net/>>

NetNewsWire - Mac OSX RSS Reader
<<http://ranchero.com/netnewswire/>>

Look for an RSS or XML logo to identify feeds. RSS feeds are available for journal contents (see MMWR example below), PubMed search results and many news sources.



Web Page Change Detection Services

If a relevant site does not provide e-mail updates or RSS feeds, there are free Web services to track changes and send an e-mail notification when a particular page is updated. Be aware that not all changes to a page will be due to substantial content updates.

One free site that offers this service is ChangeDetection.com
<<http://www.changedetection.com/monitor.html>>.

E-mail Discussion Lists (Listservs™)

Discussion lists are interactive lists in which members or anyone (depending on the level of moderator control) may post e-mails. The disadvantage is that the volume of e-mail postings may be large. A benefit of the interactive lists is that participants can ask questions when advice is needed from others with similar interests. The default is to receive each posting separately, which may be useful if one anticipates wanting to respond to messages or needs to see messages as they are posted. Some lists offer the option of subscribing to a once-a-day digest format that reduces the volume of e-mail received.

A time cost-benefit analysis for discussion lists is important. Sign on to observe a list for a week or look at a period of time in the archives. Consider the percentage of the messages that were on target or potentially valuable.

Workers of government organizations may have restrictions against actively participating in advocacy work. If the institution has restrictions and subscribing or posting to advocacy lists is part of the plan, it may be best to use a personal e-mail address.

Remember that some lists have searchable public archives and what one posts now can be searchable and findable years later.

E-mail Announcement/Notification Lists

Announcement lists provide one-way communication of information. These lists may be daily, weekly, monthly or as there is news. The volume of these lists tends to be lower and more predictable than interactive lists. Some of these lists are organization-specific such as the Department of Health and Human Services announcement list or the Association of Schools of Public Health's *Friday Letter*; other lists are subject-specific.

Table of Contents of Relevant Journals

You can receive the table of contents of relevant journals (such as *Emerging Infectious Diseases* or the *MMWR*) via e-mail or an RSS feed from the publishers' Web sites, a commercial service like Ingenta or Infotrieve, or a free journal title search set up from the PubMed database <<http://www.pubmed.gov>>. Some fields have their own journals and

therefore receiving the contents is a good strategy for keeping up; this strategy is less successful for fields that are too narrow to have their own journal or so multidisciplinary that their literature is published in many journals. The Automatic Update Searches strategy discussed in the next section is better suited for those new or multidisciplinary areas.

How does one identify which journals to follow? Most practitioners are already familiar with the key journals in their disciplines. The Core Journal list in Public Health from the Public Health/Health Administration section of the Medical Library Association (<http://info.med.yale.edu/eph/phlibrary/phjournals/>) provides a starting point. Doing a search of PubMed or other databases will allow the identification of journals with articles related to one's interests. Searching the Journals Database feature in PubMed (<http://www.pubmed.gov>) or PubList (<http://www.publist.com/>) can also give you ideas. A librarian or colleague in the field of interest can also help identify journals.

Once journals have been identified, use a favorite search engine to find the home page for the journal and then look for a link to something like "e-mail alerts" or "e-mail notifications." Some sites only require your e-mail address; others may require more complete registration information. Some publishers with several relevant journals may allow registration for multiple titles simultaneously.

As relevant articles are identified and need to be obtained, a local medical, state or public library can help obtain the full text of the articles. If there is no local library, call the National Network of Libraries of Medicine at 1-800-338-7657 to find a library. Full-text of articles may be available through PubMed's LinkOut feature or through the Loansome Doc service.

Automatic Update Searches (also known as SDI – Selective Dissemination of Information)

Setting up "automatic update searches" in a variety of databases relevant to a particular discipline is another strategy. There are free services in which one can set up automatic searches of the PubMed database to be e-mailed regularly. These searches can be by subject area, by author to track particular experts, or by institution to track the work of particular organizations. If only occasional, irregular updates are desired, the My NCBI feature of PubMed can save strategies to be re-run in the future. Just register for a free My NCBI and then save the strategies. PubMed often includes the e-mail address of the first author of papers so that you may contact the author to request a copy of the article or to ask follow-up questions.

Some database producers prepare "canned" searches on topics of interest that you can receive as e-mail updates. Another method of getting these search updates is to visit a page with links to prepared PubMed searches such as the Healthy People 2010 Information Access Project (<http://phpartners.org/hp/>).

Join or Follow Associations or Organizations in an Area of Interest

Benefits of joining an association or organization related to one's professional interests may include journals, newsletters, discussion lists, real and virtual meetings, and continuing education opportunities in a variety of formats. If it is not clear whether an organization will be worthwhile, visit its Web site to see if sample issues of the newsletter or journal are available online. Talk to colleagues about whether the networking in that group has been valuable to them. Keep in mind that local or regional groups may be less expensive and more relevant than national ones. Some aspects of an organization's Web site may be free to all visitors, not limited to members.

Online Access to Subscriptions

Many individual and institutional journal subscriptions allow online access to the full content of recent issues. Be sure to activate the online access to subscriptions, particularly those resulting from individual or organizational memberships.

Updates from Central Offices and Other Agencies

Within one's organization there are central offices such as the grants office, the communications/public relations office, and the library that make be able to provide relevant material as they follow broad issues in public health. For example, the communications office might offer a daily news clipping service with local and national news articles related to public health or publications mentioning local agencies. Ask the library's staff for notification when the library acquires new books or videos in your areas of interest. Other agencies such as a local health department may provide a service to receive press releases via e-mail or fax.

Discussion Question: *Has anyone tried any of these strategies already? How did it go?*

Time for Keeping Up

Now that a palette of possible strategies has been presented, consider the time available for keeping up. Examples of what one can do with limited time follow:

- Five minutes a day: read and act on one e-mail announcement listing or discussion list digest and peruse the table of contents of one journal.
- One hour a week: the above, plus read relevant abstracts from an update search.

Discussion Question: *How much time can you make available for keeping up?*

The following table provides rough time estimates for specific strategies for keeping up-to-date.

Table 1: Tasks with Set-Up and Maintenance Times Estimates

Task	Set-Up Time	Maintenance Time	Frequency
Follow a discussion list message-by-message	15-30 min. to find, evaluate and join list	45 sec. per message to read and delete or forward on messages Time to respond to a message varies	A few times a day
Follow a discussion list in digest form	15-30 min. to find, evaluate and join list	30 sec. per message to read and delete or forward on messages Time to respond to a message varies	Once daily
Read an announcement list	15-30 min. to find, evaluate and join list	30 sec. per message to read and delete or forward on messages	A few times a week
Peruse a table of contents e-mail with links to relevant articles	10-15 min. to find and sign up for a table of contents e-mail	2 min. to consider titles and click through to relevant abstracts	At set frequencies – weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly
Review the results of an “automatic update search”	30-60 min. to sign-up and create search strategy	1-5 min. to consider titles and click through to relevant abstracts depending on number of results and quality of search strategy	At set frequencies – choose once weekly, twice weekly, twice monthly, monthly
Visit a Web site that has just been updated	5 min. to identify and activate notification for page	2 min. to visit site and identify the new info.	A few times a week
Read the daily news on your topic	30 min. to find, evaluate and bookmark sites	2-5 min. to read relevant articles	Once daily

Sharing the work of keeping up makes sense, especially in a larger department. A single staff member can receive e-mail updates from a mailing list or discussion list and then forward relevant items with commentary to other staffers as would be useful. A policy-oriented person might want to follow the local news and legislative issues, while a more research or evaluation position might be responsible for following the peer-reviewed literature and deciding which articles need to be obtained and shared.

Sources for Getting Started

Here are some general sources for each of the strategies. Consulting a librarian may yield additional resource suggestions for particular topics.

Web sites with News Updates

Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce - News

<<http://phpartners.org/news.html>>

Provides public health news, but also valuable as a collection of links to other public health news sites

MedlinePlus – National Library of Medicine

<<http://medlineplus.gov>>

Offers Current Health News section with the last 30 days of news from the New York Times Syndicate, Reuters Health Information and others

Medscape Public Health & Prevention®

<<http://www.medscape.com/publichealthhome>>

Offered in collaboration with the American Public Health Association

Center for the Advancement of Health

<<http://www.cfah.org/>>

Health news site funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

World Health News – Harvard School of Public Health

<<http://www.worldhealthnews.harvard.edu/>>

World Health News offers a combination of original reporting and a digest of news stories and commentaries from newspapers and magazines worldwide on pressing issues in public health.

Google News Search Engine

<<http://news.google.com/>>

Beta version links articles from regional, national and international newspapers, radio stations and other news venues. Be aware that some news sites may charge readers for content once it has gone into their archives and readers may have to make a note of the source and date to retrieve it from the archives once it has been taken off the source's Web site.

Blogs

Bringing Health Information to the Community

<<http://medstat.med.utah.edu/blogs/BHIC/>>

Updated regularly by Siobhan Champ-Blackwell, National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

Google Blog Search

<<http://blogsearch.google.com/blogsearch>>

RSS Feeds

Public Health News Center – Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

<<http://www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews/rss>>

Medscape Headlines in RSS

<<http://www.medscape.com/pages/public/rss>>

Example RSS Readers:

SharpReader - Windows RSS Reader

<<http://www.sharpreader.net/>>

NetNewsWire - Mac OSX RSS Reader

<<http://ranchero.com/netnewswire/>>

Many subject-specific sites include a significant news component, for example for HIV/AIDS news:

HIV Daily Briefing – AIDS Education Global Education System

<<http://www.aegis.org/>>

Web Page Change Detection Services

A list of Web Page Change Detection Services is available at:

Steven Bell's Keeping Up Web Site

<<http://staff.philau.edu/bells/keepup/detectit.htm>>

E-mail Discussion Lists (Listservs TM)

Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce - Discussion and E-mail Lists

<<http://phpartners.org/dlists.html>>

A mix of links to discussion and announcement lists on a variety of topics hosted by APHA, CDC, FDA, PHF and others.

ProMED-mail (Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases, International Society for Infectious Diseases)

<<http://www.promedmail.org/>>

The global electronic reporting system for outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases and toxins, open to all sources.

The School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Washington has several lists through the Mailman system

<<http://mailman.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/>>

Insert the name of any of the following lists at the end of this URL, or search for the list name in the list of groups: PHNUTR-L (Public Health Nutritionists List),

PNWHEALTH (Pacific Northwest Health Educators and School Health Educators), PHNURSES (Public Health Nurses), PHSW (Public Health Social Work), BIRTH23MH (Mental Health in Children from Birth to Age Three), and HSR-L (Health Services Research List), PH-INFO (Public Health Informatics).

Many other lists can be located through central list directories:

- **CataList:** L-Soft - <<http://www.lsoft.com/lists/listref.html>>
- **Topica** (formerly Listz of Lists) - <<http://lists.topica.com/>>
- **Tile.Net** - <<http://tile.net/lists/>>

E-mail Announcement/Notification Lists

General collections:

Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce - Discussion and E-mail Lists

<<http://phpartners.org/dlists.html>>

Organization-specific announcements:

News from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

<<http://www.dhhs.gov/aspa/>>

Association of Schools of Public Health - *Friday Letter*

<<http://www.asph.org/press/fridayletter/subscribe.cfm>>

Friday Letter is a weekly publication of the Association of Schools of Public Health.

Environmental Protection Agency Mailing Lists

<https://lists.epa.gov/read/all_forums/>

Public Health Foundation's E-News

<<http://www.phf.org/E-News.htm>>

Subscribe to a CDC Mailing List

<<http://www.cdc.gov/subscribe.html>>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service - Registration Services

<<http://www.ncjrs.gov/subreg.html>>

Receive NCJRS Catalog: a bi-monthly resource with an online order form;
JUSTINFO: a bi-weekly electronic newsletter with links to full text; E-mail Notification: periodic messages about new publications and resources that match your specific interests.

Some local health departments have set up e-mail alert lists for their constituents that provide press releases and other announcements – for example:

Public Health, Seattle & King County – Public Health Email Alerts

<<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/about/subscriptions.htm>>

New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene –E-mail Update Registration

<<http://www.nyc.gov/health/email>>

Subject-specific announcement lists abound:

Daily Reports from Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

<http://kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm>

Daily reports on health policy, HIV/AIDS or women's health policy, also available as RSS feeds.

Table of Contents of Relevant Journals

Both general medical journals such as *JAMA* or *New England Journal of Medicine*, and general public health journals such as *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* provide e-mail table of contents services. Select journals of interest.

Individual title services include:

Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) (RSS available)

<<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwrsubscribe.html>>

Emerging Infectious Diseases

<<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/subscribe.htm>>

JAMA (RSS available)

<<http://jama.ama-assn.org/>>

Examples of publisher-specific alert services include:

SAGE Content Alerts and My Favorite Journals

<<https://online.sagepub.com/cgi/register>>

SAGE publishes the SOPHE journals *Health Education & Behavior*, *Health Promotion Practice* among others.

PubList powered by InfoTrieve

<http://www4.infotrieve.com/journals/toc_main.asp>

Automatic Update Searches (also known as SDI – Selective Dissemination of Information)

The following services are free. Note all require registration.

BioMail (Searches PubMed database) – SUNY Stony Brook

<<http://biomail.org/>>

My NCBI (Searches PubMed and other Entrez databases) – National Library of Medicine

<<http://www.pubmed.gov>>

Access My NCBI from the PubMed sidebar.

PubCrawler (Searches PubMed and GenBank databases)

<<http://www.pubcrawler.ie/>>

Paid alert services include those available from Current Contents Connect® and Ingenta. Other databases with fee-based access may also provide content alert services.

An example of a subject-specific free service is:

REHABDATA-Connection: Your Link to Disability Research

<http://www.naric.com/services/rehab_connect.cfm>

Once per month e-mail update of items added to the REHABDATA database

Some sites offer pre-formulated literature searches on the site (not via e-mail):

Healthy People 2010 Information Access Project

<<http://phpartners.org/hp/>>

Librarians and public health workers collaborated to create these pre-formulated PubMed/MEDLINE searches on objectives in Healthy People 2010 focus areas.

POPLINE ® (POPulation information onLINE)

<<http://db.jhuccp.org/popinform/basic.html>>

“Instant Searches” provide results from the latest five years of literature on key topics.

Join or Follow Associations or Organizations in an Area of Interest

A list of organizations is available at:

Public Health Foundation - Links to Public Health Organizations and Resources Online

<<http://www.phf.org/links.htm>>

Online Access to Subscriptions

PubMed Link Out Journals by Title

<<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/linkout/journals/jourlists.cgi?typeid=1&type=journals&operation=Show>>

This is a list of journals in PubMed which provide links to full text articles. User registration, subscription fee, or some other type of fee may be required to access the full text of articles for some journals. Policies vary by provider and by journal.

Case Study A

Scenario for Case Study A

The director of an STD and family planning clinic, Dr. Sara Smith, is concerned about keeping up with local and national trends in reproductive health care. The city's climate towards sexual health can be tense as advocacy groups debate issues such as access to emergency contraception, the growing rates of STDs, and access to reproductive health care for underinsured immigrant populations. Keeping up with the latest scientific information is important to justify the clinic's services, but Dr. Smith also wants to be aware of advocacy activities and events that may affect the staff and clients of her clinic.

What combination of resources could Dr. Smith track to keep her informed, given how little time she has available?

Think about which organizations might provide information on STDs and reproductive health. Bookmark their Web sites:

Women's Health Policy: Reproductive Health from the Kaiser Family Foundation
<<http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/repro.cfm>>

What's New section of the CDC STD Prevention page
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/Whats_New.htm>

Reproductive Health home page – CDC
<<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/>>

Explore discussion lists linked from reproductive health sites:

OB-GYN Net Forums
<<http://www.obgyn.net/english/forums/forums.asp>>

Reproductive Health Gateway - Information & Knowledge for Optimal Health (INFO) Project, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
<<http://www.rhgateway.org/listservers.html>>
A selection of electronic discussion lists and newsletters

E-mail updates are convenient:

Kaiser Family Foundation has a Daily Women's Health Policy Report via e-mail
<http://www.kaisernet.org/daily_reports/rep_repro.cfm>

The Alan Guttmacher Institute offers several lists
<<http://www.agi-usa.org/listserv/index.html>>

A few of these are "News Providers Can Use" (distributed quarterly), "State News Quarterly" and "Guttmacher Update" (distributed as produced).

Journal literature is important for evidence-based practice:

Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health is a free online journal produced by the Alan Guttmacher Institute

<<http://www.guttmacher.org/archive/indexPSRH.html>>

Table of contents distributed as part of Guttmacher Update mentioned above.

Population Reports

<<http://www.infoforhealth.org/pr/>>

Free quarterly publication of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Sexually Transmitted Infections (RSS available)

<<http://sti.bmjournals.com/>>

Select New Content Alerts to receive the contents via e-mail. The full text of the journal is by paid subscription.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (RSS available)

<<http://www.stdjournal.com/>>

Register for eAlerts (link at top of page) to receive the contents via e-mail. The full text of the journal is by paid subscription.

Regular searches of the literature also reveal the latest evidence:

Dr. Smith discovered that in MEDLINE/PubMed, the term Sexually Transmitted Diseases is one possibility for developing a search strategy. She also discovered that there is not a good subject heading for STD clinics. There is the subject heading Community Health Centers, but that would miss a lot of articles about clinics. She concluded that the most comprehensive strategies in PubMed searching use combinations of textwords and Medical Subject Headings. This is the strategy she saved in PubMed's My NCBI feature:

Sexually Transmitted Diseases AND (std clinics OR ambulatory health facilities OR clinics OR community health centers)

The Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (<<http://www.arhp.org/>>) is just one of many organizations to which Dr. Smith could belong. The journal *Contraception* is a membership benefit.

Keeping Up Plan for Case Study A

Dr. Smith decided to receive the Kaiser Women's Health Policy report and the Guttmacher Update, to set automatic notifications for updates to the CDC STD and Reproductive Health Web sites, and to get e-mailed tables of contents for *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* and *Sexually Transmitted Infections*. Setting all this up took her about an hour. Monitoring will take about four hours a month depending on the number of updates to the CDC sites and the number of abstracts she reads from the journals' tables of contents.

Case Study B

Scenario for Case Study B

Mike Jones is a public health sanitarian with the local health department who investigates foodborne illness complaints and does restaurant inspections. He wants to keep up-to-date on issues in the area of food safety and he is particularly interested in knowing about food recalls in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

What combination of resources could Mr. Jones track to stay on top of recalls and other food safety issues?

Think about which organizations might provide information on food safety and food recalls. Use your favorite search engine to find their Web sites, then make them a bookmark or favorite in your Web browser.

National

United States Department of Agriculture - Food Safety and Inspection Service
<<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>>

U.S Food and Drug Administration - Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition
<<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/>>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Food Safety Office
<<http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>>

State, Local or Non-Governmental

Consider creating a bookmark for state and local health departments which investigate foodborne illness as well as agriculture departments.

Center for Science in the Public Interest
<<http://www.cspinet.org/>>

National Coalition for Food-Safe Schools
<<http://www.foodsafeschools.org/>>

Look for automatic update services and e-mail lists relevant to information needs.

FSIS (Food Safety and Inspection Service) Recalls - United States Department of Agriculture

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fsis_Recalls/index.asp>

Sign up for the Email Subscription Service to automatically receive FSIS press releases and product recall releases by e-mail. This page contains links to state agencies involved in food recalls as well.

The screenshot shows the FSIS Recalls website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About FSIS, News & Events, Fact Sheets, Careers, Forms, Help, Contact Us, and En Español. Below the navigation bar is a search box and a sidebar with navigation options. The main content area is titled "FSIS Recalls" and features a section for "Open Federal Cases". This section includes a table with columns for "Product Recalled" and "Date of Recall". To the right of the table, there is a "Media Help" section and a "Sign up for Email Updates" button.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

Home About FSIS News & Events Fact Sheets Careers Forms Help Contact Us En Español

You are here: Home / FSIS Recalls / Open Federal Cases

FSIS Recalls

Open Federal Cases

This page contains summary data on active recall cases. After a recall is completed, it will be removed from this listing, but will be included in the Recall Case Archive.

The link under **Product Recalled** displays the Recall Notification Report (RNR) issued by FSIS. The RNR contains complete information about the recall.

The link under **Date of Recall** displays the text of the press release, if one was issued, in connection with the recall.

Receive Open Federal Cases updates by email

Product Recalled	Date of Recall
001-2006, Lancaster and Hatfield Brand Beef Franks	Jan 5, 2005
052-2005, Expanded Turkey, Ham and Bologna Lunch Makers@ Meals	Dec 10, 2005 Dec 1, 2005
053-2005, Pot Roast Dinners	Dec 10, 2005
050-2005, Various Chicken Products	Nov 13, 2005

FSIS Recalls

- Open Federal Cases
- Recall Case Archive
- Open Retail Recall Cases
- Problems with Food Products
- Additional Recall Links

Media Help

To view PDF files you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer.

Sign up for Email Updates

U.S Food and Drug Administration – Center for Food Safety & Applied Nutrition
<<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html>>

See the Inspections, Compliance, Enforcements and Recalls area for the Recalls, Market Withdrawals and Safety Alerts page. There isn't an e-mail update feature, but you could set an auto-notification for the page.

Foodsafe is an interactive electronic discussion group intended as a communication tool to link professionals interested in food safety issues. To subscribe, go to <<http://www.foodsafetyweb.info/foodsafe/index.php>>.

For specific local alerts, look for an alerts or updates page on the local health or agriculture department Web site:

Connecticut – Food Protection Program – Alerts
<<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/food/fpalerts.htm>>

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets – Food Safety Alerts
<<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AD/alertList.asp>>

New Jersey Local Information Network and Communications System – Public Health Alerts
<<http://www.state.nj.us/health/lh/lincs/phalst.htm>>

Following the literature on food safety may also be helpful for keeping up

Set up an automated search of PubMed using My NCBI that includes the terms
food safety OR food contamination OR food poisoning

Agricola (<<http://agricola.nal.usda.gov/>>) produced by the National Agriculture Library is another good database to search, but it does not have an automatic update service.

Set up an automatic update search for a journal's table of contents for relevant journals such as:

Foodborne Pathogens and Disease <
<http://www.liebertpub.com/publication.aspx?pub_id=108>
Sign up on journal Web site to receive table of contents as an e-mail alert.

Journal of Food Protection (International Association for Food Protection)
<<http://www.foodprotection.org/publications/jfp.asp>>
Sign up for an online issue alert from the publisher at
<<http://apt.allenpress.com/aptonline/?request=get-static&name=issue-alert>>.

Keeping Up Plan for Case Study B

Mike Jones decided to subscribe to the Food Safety and Inspection Service e-mail news list and set up Web page update notifications for state food recall pages with ChangeDetection.com. Finding these sites and setting it up took about 45 minutes. Monitoring will take about 5-10 minutes a day depending on the number of alerts released via e-mail or on the sites.

Practice Exercise

Scenario for the Practice Exercise

The North Dakota tobacco control program wants to create a multifaceted plan to keep up with health and legal issues related to secondhand smoke exposure. They want to share the work among a couple of staff members.

Suggested solution:

General tobacco updates

Sign onto an e-mail discussion list. See the list at Smokescreen.org with 33 tobacco control-related electronic distribution (newsletter-type) lists and 69 listservs (discussion lists) that are hosted through the Web site smokescreen.org. Several states use this service to host their own discussion forums and/or coalition e-mail lists. Anyone can join these lists. However, one must log in first in order to subscribe to any of the smokescreen list serves. Once you subscribe to a discussion list, you will be sent instructions on how to post notes and handle maintenance such as unsubscribing. Visit the “Email Lists” link at the URL <<http://www.smokefree.net/lists.php>>.

Peer-reviewed literature and program information

1. Identify a few key journals in the field: *Tobacco Control* and *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. Arrange for the online table of contents for the journals to be e-mailed to you:
 - *Tobacco Control* (<<http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/alerts/etoc>>)
 - *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*
(<<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14622203.html>>
This journal publisher has a service called SARA which allows you to have the TOC e-mailed to you.
2. Set up an automatic update search on tobacco smoke exposure. Use BioMail (<<http://www.biomail.org>>) or My NCBI to set up a PubMed search using the Medical Subject Headings “tobacco smoke pollution” or keywords such as “secondhand smoke.”

3. Join an organization such as Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (<<http://www.srnt.org/>>) and attend their meetings

Local news and legal information

1. Ask your Communications office to send you tobacco-related news from local papers that may not be covered by other new services.
2. Tobacco.Org News (<<http://www.tobacco.org/news.php>>)
View news stories by state – choose North Dakota from the pull-down menu on the left. Click on the “Subscribe” tab to register for the daily news summary, a compilation of all the day’s stories, and/or the Breaking News, which allows you to get the stories as they come on a national or state basis. An RSS feed is also available.
3. State Legislated Actions on Tobacco Issues (<<http://slati.lungusa.org/>>)
This American Lung Association Web site has a clickable state map to show North Dakota tobacco legislation. Sign up for the **The Tobacco Control Tribune** e-mail newsletter which provides updates on tobacco control initiatives, advocacy and legislative rulings.

References

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2. Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice. Core competencies, <<http://trainingfinder.org/competencies>>. Accessed September 26, 2003.
3. American Public Health Association. Public Health Code of Ethics, <<http://www.apha.org/codeofethics/ethics.htm>>. Accessed April 18, 2004.