Use of an Online Tool for Public Health Reporting and Outbreak Investigation

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Deschutes County Health Services
1. Why was the site created?

1. Not receiving all Environmental Health Concerns
2. Not receiving all Communicable Disease concerns
3. Unable to prioritize concerns
4. Concerns/calls being forwarded to the wrong program

Solutions:

1. Online concern submission site
2. External information dissemination campaign
3. Internal communication

Root-Cause Analysis:

- Frustration with the phone tree
- Only way to submit concerns
- Not receiving all EH concerns
- Inaccurate information in tree
- Unsure where to submit concern
- Information not readily available to public
- Unable to prioritize concerns
- No system to prioritize calls/walk-ins
- Cannot prioritize calls/walk-ins and maintain customer services

Solution:

- Create an online concern submission site with database
- Information Dissemination Campaign
- Create a direct and easy way to submit concerns & allow for prioritization in database
- Modify the public health phone tree
- Create a resources and transfer guide for PH front desk

People give up. A phone tree project separate from this was also initiated.
Report a public health concern

If you have a Public Health concern that you would like to inform us about, please choose from the following options:

Animal Bites
Please Contact Animal Control Immediately. The Phone Number is (541) 693-6911. For additional information about Animal Bites, please click here. If you are a health care provider, please print and fax the following form.

Mold, Bed Bugs, Disease, Pool/Spa, Hotel/Motel, Other
Deschutes County Health Services does not investigate the presence of mold and certain other concerns. All reports are reviewed by qualified Public Health Staff and investigated as appropriate. A follow up call may or may not be deemed necessary.

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Web Links
* Information on resources provided by other agencies

www.deschutes.org/healthconcern
3 How are concerns submitted?

1 Fill in information to submit concern

2 Thank you, information on processing, and link to more information on selected topic

Deschutes County - Report a Public Health Concern

Thank you for submitting a public health complaint.

All reports are reviewed by qualified Public Health Staff and investigated as appropriate. A follow up call may or may not be deemed necessary.

Additional information about bed bugs can be found here: http://www.deschutes.org/health/page/bed-bugs
4 How does the process work?

An email is automatically sent to the staff person identified as the "point of contact" for the type of concern.

Ex: An email is send to the CD staff contact if "Disease" is selected.

Staff person opens email, which contains a link. Staff person clicks the link to view the submission in the database.

Staff member responds to concern based on urgency and concern type.

Once a concern has been fully addressed, the entry is given a completion date.

Data is reviewed regularly, and a dashboard report is generated quarterly to review trends.
How does the process work?
Online Reporting Dashboard: January 2016

Number of Concerns by Month

- November: 8
- December: 4
- January: 18

Items to note:

- In total 50 concerns have been submitted to the online reporting site since its launch, all related to environmental health.
- 80% of concerns submitted in January were closed by the end of the month.
- The average time to close a concern in January is approximately 1 day.
- Only one concern submitted before January, 2016 remains unclosed.
- Annual and monthly baselines have yet to be determined, and will become more apparent over time.

Please visit: [www.deschutes.org/healthconcern](http://www.deschutes.org/healthconcern) to submit your public health concern
Website Promotion

- June 12th 2015: Launched website
- September & October 2015: Distributed EH/CD Public Health resource list to Public Health front desk staff.
- July through December, 2015: Disseminated information via media release, social media, business cards, and posters at DCHS and external locations
- December 2015: Modified DCHS Public Health phone tree to better direct clients, include information about the online concern site, and relay accurate information.

Want to report a public health concern?

Example:
- Report the meal that made you sick
- Reveal unsanitary restaurant conditions
- Report concerns about bedbugs
- Ask questions about infectious diseases

www.deschutes.org/healthconcern

1,168 | Total number of page views
892  | Total number of unique page views

Number of Monthly Page Views, June 2015-September 2016
## Types of reports: 9/2015 - 8/2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foodborne Illness</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Complaint</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Total number of reports:** 76

* "Other" category includes: bed bugs, mold/mildew, pool/spa facility, water problem, disease, and "other."
Gastroenteritis Strikes Central Oregon

On 1/11/16:
Received multiple online reports of gastroenteritis symptoms all from the same facility.
- Determined all attended the same holiday party

Able to quickly identify an outbreak was unfolding.
- 51 attendees
- 23 reported illnesses
- 7 stool samples collected (6 positive for norovirus, including 1 food handler employee)
Gastroenteritis Strikes Central Oregon

Epidemic Curve, 2016-3803

Onsets from 1/8/2016–1/9/2016 in eight 3-hour intervals per day.

1/21/2016
Only 1 CD staff person working the investigation.

Worked with party organizer to send a reporting site link to party attendees.
Received 14 responses through the website

Decreased incoming phone calls and streamlined investigation response.

May customize and use for future outbreaks:
Large exposure (measles outbreak)
THANK YOU

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Visit our online reporting site at: www.deschutes.org/healthconcern