



# IOWA PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING

## PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

### *Tracking Builds Capacity Through Data Trainings*

The number of users of the Iowa Tracking Portal had been slow to increase since the launch in 2013. A Needs Assessment was conducted to determine the direction of the portal and the needs of its users.

#### **What was the Problem/Situation?**

The results of the 2017 Iowa Public Health Data Needs Assessment showed a lack of training opportunities offered around the use of the Iowa Tracking portal and the data that resides on it. The Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) Data Management and Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) programs combined resources to partner with the University of Iowa College of Public Health and the Iowa Institute of Public Health Research and Policy to develop a curriculum that targeted using the Iowa Public Health Tracking portal and building capacity through teaching basic fundamentals of data analysis, interpretation, and communication.

#### **How was Iowa Public Health Tracking Involved?**

There were three trainings offered to both state and local health professionals around the state in which 109 participants attended the "Tackling Data: Get off the Sideline and make a Touchdown!" football themed training. A pre and post assessment was given to each participant to identify the confidence levels for attendees using the portal and data in general before and after the training.

Most attendees went from no/slightly confident to moderately/highly confident post training. Identifying online data sources, selecting comparable data, and communicating public health information had the greatest shift in confidence. On average, participants went from 20 to 30 percent moderate/high on the pre assessment to 80 to 90% moderate/high confidence on the post assessment.

#### **What Action was Taken to Solve the Problem/Situation?**

The EPHT program conducted a sample follow-up with some of the training participants to determine if aspects of the training were able to be transferred to public health practice. One particular program that sent 4 staff members gave 2 examples on how they have utilized the training materials. The first was the ability to download and apply the census data to their program data. In past years they requested this data through Data Management or tried to find it online with limited success. The bureau chief stated "Having a single location to always locate and download census data is not only convenient, but also ensures data quality and consistency". The second use of the training was the ability of program management to understand and interpret the data findings.

The efforts of the EPHT program, in partnership with the IDPH Data Management program, University of Iowa College of Public Health, and the Iowa Institute of Public Health Research and Policy provided state and local health employees with a training identified through the 2017 Needs Assessment. These trainings gave the employees the knowledge, skills, and abilities to locate, utilize, and communicate data to impact the health of Iowans.

