Massachusetts
Department of Public Health

APHL Annual Meeting
Biomonitoring Session, May 19, 2015
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DPH Bureau of Laboratory Sciences

DPH Bureau of Infectious Diseases

DPH Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH)/ Food Protection Program

UMMS Newborn Screening Program
History of Biomonitoring in Massachusetts

1978-present: Blood lead screening for children

1983-1984: Norwood PCB Exposure Assessment

1984-87: Greater New Bedford Health Effects Study (Serum PCB analysis)

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1985-96: Housatonic River Area PCB Exposure Assessment Study (Serum PCB analysis)

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1993-97: Determining arsenic exposure in relation to Baird and McGuire (Hair & urine sample analysis)

2001-2003: Weymouth urinary arsenic investigation

2006-07: Lead in jewelry and children’s toys (Blood lead levels)

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2006: Assessment of exposure at Allendale Elementary School (Serum PCB analysis)

2009: Sherwood Middle School (Serum PCB analysis)

2009-2011: New Bedford High School/Keith Middle School – PCBs in building materials (Serum PCB analysis)

1981-present: Multiple emergency events (Urine mercury analysis)

2009-2010: Arsenic and uranium in private wells (Urine sample analysis)

2001-2003: Weymouth urinary arsenic investigation

1983-1984: Norwood PCB Exposure Assessment
MA Project’s Goals

Biomonitoring Cooperative Agreement Project

• Enhance State laboratory biomonitoring and surveillance capabilities & readiness
• Conduct Statewide Surveillance (Metals and PCBs)
• Complete targeted projects in high risk communities (Metals)
• Have rapid biomonitoring capabilities in response to Emergencies
Statewide Surveillance (Metals & PCBs)

• Purpose: Establish state-specific background levels for contaminants of community environmental health concern and for comparison with NHANES

• Study Population: Representative sample of MA residents

• metals in urine

• PCBs and Metals in blood

• Targeted sample size: n=2000
Targeted Project in High Risk Communities

- Purpose: Assess environmental exposures to sensitive populations in high risk communities (e.g. CLPPP/EJ)
- Study Population: Low income women of childbearing age and children (age 5-12)
- Lead, mercury, cadmium, manganese
- Urine and blood
- targeted sample size: n=1000
- Anticipated Outcome: Assess human exposure and identify needs for additional prevention and outreach
The Approach

Challenges:

• Identifying representative populations and actually getting people to give us their blood and urine

• Using Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for targeted high risk population identification

• How the Environmental Toxicology Program is collaborating with the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) and Environmental Epidemiology Program (EEP) within BEH to target a high risk population?
BEH team is developing the following approaches:

**Community Health Workers**: Enroll participants through the use of CLPPP contracted Community Health Workers (CHWs) who perform follow-up on cases of lead elevations and/or poisonings. Under this scenario, we would provide outreach materials for these contractors to distribute to the families that they visit.

**CLPPP Database**: Select participants (a) prospectively from the existing CLPPP database by identifying children currently age 3 – 4 years old, for future contact by BEH staff (i.e., enroll in the biomonitoring study when the children reach an age > 5); (b) retrospectively select participants using the CLPPP database to identify children who are currently aged 5 to 12 years old.

**Community Health Centers**: Partner with Community Health Centers in High Risk communities to assist with identification of persons/families meeting a target population criterion. We are in the process of coordinating meetings with potential contacts related to enrollment via this methodology faculty at the Boston University School of Medicine/Boston Medical Center and the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program at MDPH.
Training and Mentoring:

• As a level I lab, MA state laboratory is well equip and staffed

• Training and mentoring opportunity is available at Hinton State Laboratory (e.g. ICPMS, LC/MS and GC/MS)
Sharing of specimens with other SPHL: Good idea, but is it possible?!

Things to consider:

- **Benefits**
  - expanded regional coverage
  - more data (some state may have limited samples or not participating in the program)
  - data comparison

- **Limitation**
  - State & local law & regulation
  - IRB issue (if any)
  - Use of data & participants personal information and limitations
  - Sample quantity
Collaboration:

• Similar testing (analytes)

• Equipment suitability and feedback on service, robustness, sensitivity, etc.

• Method Harmonizing (benefits & challenges)

• Exchanging QC’s and samples for method comparison

• Data sharing (if allowed), how the data used
Collaboration (Cont’d):

- Create partnership and collaboration with other states, government agencies, and academia to achieve the best results

- Get epidemiologist(s) expertise and recommendation

- Be part of the biomonitoring network & possible method comparison studies

- Have regional discussion group (quarterly meeting or as needed)
Thank you!