



# Environmental Health Activities in New Hampshire



## NCEH in Partnership with New Hampshire

The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NCEH's work focuses on three program areas: identifying environmental hazards, measuring exposure to environmental chemicals, and preventing health effects that result from environmental hazards. NCEH has approximately 450 employees and a budget for 2004 of approximately \$189 million; its mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing or controlling diseases and deaths that result from interactions between people and their environment.

NCEH and partners in **New Hampshire** collaborate on a variety of environmental health projects throughout the state. In **fiscal years 2001–2004**, NCEH awarded more than **\$2.2 million** in direct funds and services to New Hampshire for various projects. These projects include activities related to environmental public health tracking, biomonitoring, and childhood lead poisoning prevention. In addition, New Hampshire benefits from national-level prevention and response activities conducted by NCEH or NCEH-funded partners.

### Identifying Environmental Hazards

NCEH identifies, investigates, and tracks environmental hazards and their effects on people's health. Following are examples of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **New Hampshire**.

#### **Asthma**

- **Addressing Asthma from a Public Health Perspective**—NCEH is funding the **New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS)** to develop asthma-control plans that include disease tracking; science-based interventions; and statewide partnerships to reduce the burden of asthma in the home, school, and occupational environments. Funding began in fiscal year 2002 and continues through fiscal year 2004.

### **Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Projects**

- **Planning and Capacity-Building for the National EPHT Network**—

NCEH is funding **NHDHHS** to develop data linkages that allow direct electronic data reporting across three areas: environmental hazards, human exposure to those hazards, and human health effects resulting from exposure to those hazards. NHDHHS also will explore links between arsenic and bladder cancer, radon and lung cancer, and asthma and air quality. Funding began in fiscal year 2003 and continues through fiscal year 2005.

*In fiscal years 2001–2004, NCEH awarded more than \$2.2 million in direct funds and services to New Hampshire.*

### **Measuring Exposure to Environmental Chemicals**

NCEH measures environmental chemicals in people to determine how to protect people and improve their health. Following are examples of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **New Hampshire**.

#### **Funding**

- **Antiterrorism Funding to Increase State Chemical Laboratory Capacity**—In 2003, CDC provided more than \$840,000 to **New Hampshire** to help expand chemical laboratory capacity to prepare for and respond to chemical-terrorism incidents and other chemical emergencies. This program expansion will allow full participation of chemical-terrorism response laboratories in the state to fully participate in the Laboratory Response Network.
- **Biomonitoring Grants**—In 2001 and 2002, NCEH awarded planning grants to **NHDHHS** to develop an implementation plan for a state biomonitoring program. In this way, the department could make decisions about which environmental chemicals within its borders were of health concern. It could then make plans for

measuring levels of those chemicals in the New Hampshire population. In 2003, NCEH also awarded a grant to implement the biomonitoring program in **New Hampshire**.

### Services

- **Helping State Public Health Laboratories Respond to Chemical Terrorism**—NCEH is working with **New Hampshire**'s public health laboratory to prepare state laboratory scientists to measure chemical-terrorism agents or their metabolites in people's blood or urine. NCEH is transferring analytic methods for measuring chemical-terrorism agents (including cyanide-based compounds and other chemicals) to New Hampshire. In addition, NCEH instituted a proficiency-testing program to measure the comparability of the state's analytic results with results from the NCEH laboratory.
- **Blood Lead Laboratory Reference System (BLLRS)**—One laboratory in **New Hampshire** participates in NCEH's standardization program to improve the overall quality of laboratory measurements of blood lead levels. This program helps laboratories nationwide evaluate their performance on these critical laboratory tests. NCEH provides BLLRS materials to the laboratories four times a year without charge.
- **Newborn Screening Quality Assurance Program**—NCEH provides proficiency-testing services and dried-blood-spot, quality-control materials to monitor and help assure quality screening program operations for newborns in **New Hampshire**. The importance of accurate screening tests for genetic metabolic diseases cannot be overestimated. Testing of blood spots collected from newborns is mandated by law in almost every state to promote early intervention that can prevent mental retardation, severe illness, and premature death.

### Preventing Health Effects that Result from Environmental Hazards

NCEH promotes safe environmental public health practices to minimize exposure to environmental hazards and prevent adverse health effects. Following is an example of such activities that NCEH conducted or supported in **New Hampshire**.

- **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**—The **New Hampshire Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (NH CLPPP)** has received NCEH funding since 1992. In 2001, the program screened 13,508 children for lead poisoning. The number of children under age 6 years with elevated blood lead levels has decreased from 502 in 1997 to 391 in 2001. These decreases in blood lead levels are due to state program efforts funded in part by NCEH. NH CLPPP is using NCEH funds to develop and implement a statewide childhood lead poisoning elimination plan; to implement and evaluate its targeted screening plan; to maintain and enhance its childhood blood lead surveillance system and case management plan; and to increase primary prevention activities and strategic partnerships.

### Resources

NCEH develops materials that public health professionals, medical-care providers, emergency responders, decision makers, and the public can use to identify and track environmental hazards that threaten human health and to prevent or mitigate exposure to those hazards. NCEH's resources cover a range of environmental public health issues, including air pollution and respiratory health (e.g., asthma, carbon monoxide poisoning, and mold exposures), bio-monitoring to determine whether selected chemicals in the environment get into people and how much, childhood lead poisoning, emergency preparedness for and response to chemicals and radiation, environmental health services, environmental public health tracking, international emergency and refugee health, laboratory sciences as applied to environmental health, radiation studies, safe disposal of chemical weapons, specific health studies, vessel sanitation, and veterans' health.

For more information about NCEH programs, activities, and publications as well as other resources, contact the NCEH Health Line toll-free at 1-888-232-6789, e-mail [NCEHinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:NCEHinfo@cdc.gov), or visit the NCEH Web site at [www.cdc.gov/nceh](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh).