Environmental Health

The Vermont Department of Health has a central office located in Burlington on the beautiful shores of Lake Champlain. The Environmental Health Section, a section of the Division of Health Surveillance, includes the following programs: Environmental Epidemiology; Toxicology and Risk Assessment; Food and Lodging; Lead and Asbestos; and Drinking Water. The fellow will be supervised by the Environmental Epidemiology Chief and the State Epidemiologist for Environmental and Occupational Health. The fellow will have the rare opportunity to develop comprehensive skills in environmental and occupational health in an environmentally-progressive state.

Vermont was recently awarded a multi-million dollar grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Environmental Public Health Tracking. The purpose of the funding is to integrate environmental and health data in order to enhance the environmental health epidemiologic capabilities and ultimately improve the health of Vermonters. The funding will enable datasets and organizations to be connected and a network of environmental health data to be built. Working with the environmental epidemiology section, the fellow will be able to be on the cutting edge of this exceptional initiative.

Day To Day Activities

1. The fellow will assist Vermont's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program with the following: building partnerships within and between the Health Department and federal and state agencies such as the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation; evaluating surveillance and health data systems; conducting epidemiologic studies; analyzing data and expanding the analytical capacity of the program; interpreting and translating study findings to guide public health policy; preparing and publishing epidemiological reports, policy briefs, special studies, annual reports; and participating on the Tracking advisory committee.

2. The fellow will: assist in the evaluation of poison control center data and data obtained from other syndromic surveillance systems, following-up on particular cases that may signify an emergency public health event. Other opportunities will include: conducting environmental health assessments around contaminated sites (including Brownfield sites); providing epidemiological support to Vermont's HAZMAT team, assessing the health status of members of the public who may have been exposed to a hazardous material incident; analyzing a number of untapped data sources, evaluating the relationship between certain environmental exposures (poor air quality) and selected health outcomes (asthma or other respiratory illness).

3. The fellow will: assist the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, the Asbestos and Lead Regulatory Program, and the Healthy Housing Initiative to address proposed legislation and provide support for data analysis and health education efforts.

4. The fellow will assist in the development of an occupational health surveillance system. Other opportunities include providing epidemiological support to Project Worksafe (the consultative arm of Vermont OSHA), including joining them on site visits of industries.

5. Working with the radiological health program, the fellow will enter and analyze environmental sampling data taken from sites surrounding the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. Vermont Yankee is one of the oldest operating nuclear power stations and presents a variety of opportunities to learn about the nuclear power industry as well as the relationship with the public health sector. Other opportunities with this program include: merging the environmental sampling data set with data sets on death certificates, birth certificates, and hospital discharges to analyze potential exposure/outcome relationships; and developing a field assessment tool to rapidly collect health data during an accident at the Vermont Yankee facility or other radiological or nuclear emergency.

6. Working with the food and lodging program the fellow will analyze 10 years of restaurant inspection data; assist in the development of a food recall protocol; investigate food-borne illness outbreaks; develop and conduct an investigation to characterize bed bug infestations; assist in the development of regulations to define sanitary lodging conditions; and perform site visits of restaurants and lodging establishments.

7. The fellow will also learn about a number of environmental health issues by participating in weekly technical assistance meetings where all current environmental and occupational health issues are discussed.

Potential Projects:

1. The fellow will assist Vermont's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program with the following: building partnerships within and between the Health Department and federal and state agencies such as the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation; evaluating surveillance and health data systems; conducting epidemiologic studies; analyzing data and expanding the analytical capacity of the program; interpreting and translating study findings to guide public health policy; preparing and publishing epidemiological reports, policy briefs, special studies, annual reports; and participating on the Tracking advisory committee.

2. The fellow will assist in the evaluation of poison control center data and data obtained from other syndromic surveillance systems, following-up on particular cases that may signify an emergency public health event. Other opportunities will include: conducting environmental health assessments around contaminated sites (including Brownfield sites); providing epidemiological support to Vermont's HAZMAT team, assessing the health status of members of the public who may have been exposed to a hazardous material incident; analyzing a number of untapped data sources, evaluating the relationship between certain environmental exposures (poor air quality) and selected health outcomes (asthma or other respiratory illness).

3. The fellow will assist the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, the Asbestos and Lead Regulatory Program, and the Healthy Housing Initiative to proposed legislation and provide support for data analysis and health education efforts.

4. The fellow will assist in the development of an occupational health surveillance system. Other opportunities include providing epidemiological support to Project Worksafe (the consultative arm of Vermont OSHA), including joining them on site visits of industries.

5. Working with the radiological health program, the fellow will enter and analyze environmental sampling data taken from sites surrounding the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant. Vermont Yankee is one of the oldest operating nuclear power stations and presents a variety of opportunities to learn about the nuclear power industry as well as the relationship with the public health sector. Other opportunities with this program include: merging the environmental sampling data set with data sets on death certificates, birth certificates, and hospital discharges to analyze potential exposure/outcome relationships; and developing a field assessment tool to rapidly collect health data during an accident at the Vermont Yankee facility or other radiological or nuclear emergency.

6. Working with the food and lodging program the fellow will analyze 10 years of restaurant inspection data; assist in the development of a food recall protocol; investigate food-borne illness outbreaks; develop and conduct an investigation to characterize bed bug infestations; assist in the development of regulations to define sanitary lodging conditions; and perform site visits of restaurants and lodging establishments.

7. The fellow will also learn about a number of environmental health issues by participating in weekly technical assistance meetings where all current environmental and occupational health issues are discussed.

Emergency Preparedness Role:

The Fellow can play as much or as little of a role in emergency preparedness as desired.

Assignment Location:	Burlington, Vermont
Primary Mentor:	Lori Cragin, PhD, MS
	Epidemiologist
Secondary Mentor:	Austin Sumner, MD, MPH
	State Epidemiologist, Environmental Health