



# COLORADO TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT



## METHODS

Key informant interviews assessed the training needs of public health personnel in Colorado in the area of foodborne disease surveillance and outbreak response. The interview guide included questions about the informant's position, including foodborne and enteric disease outbreaks investigated in the past year by the informant and their team. Interviews were transcribed by hand and summarized in an Excel spreadsheet. Qualitative data were analyzed using a basic qualitative inductive approach (i.e. reading, coding displaying, reducing, and interpreting).

## INFORMANTS

Thirty informants were interviewed in-person ( $n=9$ ) or by phone ( $n=21$ ) by a team member of the CoE between March and May of 2013. The 14 epidemiologists, 9 environmental health specialists and 7 public health nurses held positions ranging from entry level to senior managerial. Eighteen

informants were based in urban counties, 15 were based in rural counties while 3 regional epidemiologists covered both. Together the 30 informants represented 50 of the 64 counties in Colorado. All of them investigated at least one foodborne or enteric disease outbreak in 2012, and reported receiving some form of training in foodborne disease surveillance and outbreak response.

## RESULTS

### RANKING OF TRAINING NEEDS

Environmental Assessments

73%

Legal Issues in Surveillance & Outbreak Investigations

73%

Interviewing Skills

63%

## INFORMANT INSIGHT

"There are [many] good trainings, but [they are] not always available or [easy to find when needed]. To have something you can [quickly] pull up to get information or a training would be great."

- Environmental Health Specialist

"[We send] out staff here at CDPHE really on a case by case basis, [we don't have] much funding to send staff out to external trainings."

- Epidemiologist

"[I wish] CDPHE's training were more in-depth, [they are] too basic for us."

- Environmental Health Specialist



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## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN TRAININGS

### Funding



1

### Time Commitment



2

### Travel



3

## PREFERENCE FOR TRAINING MODALITIES

### Team Training



As opposed to individual learning because outbreak investigations rely on group work

### In-person



Online trainings are more feasible, however, due to limited time & resources



## INFORMANT INSIGHT CHALLENGES WITH OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION WORK

"Communication is always a big deal, particularly if it's multi-jurisdictional [outbreak]. Knowing who the players are and finding out who you need to talk to about product, distribution, and industry."

- Environmental Health Specialist

"How to deal with those difficult people, upset people, managers at facilities, so maybe some conflict resolution training."

- Epidemiologist

"A lot of the challenge is making ourselves understood by the people who are affected in outbreak investigations and the reason behind the guidance that we give. People sometimes think we are giving them unnecessary grief."

- Regional Epidemiologist

## TRAINING PREFERENCES

### Rural & Smaller Health Departments

Staff often had less experience investigating outbreaks and emphasized more basic trainings such as "Overview of investigating outbreaks", "Interviewing skills" and "Foodborne Disease Surveillance".

### Urban & Larger Health Departments

Staff investigated more outbreaks and emphasized specialized trainings.

### Training Needs Differed by Occupation

i.e. among regional epidemiologists, environmental health specialists and public health nurses