



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

INJURY RESEARCH AND PREVENTION

Injury Surveillance and Prevention Fact Sheet

Despite mounting evidence that almost all injuries are preventable, injury prevention remains one of public health's most costly, tragic and under-recognized problems. Injuries are a leading cause of death and disability in both the United States and Louisiana, but they also result in physical and emotional suffering. In terms of cost, the medical care expenditures, lost income and loss of productivity result in billions of dollars lost each year in the state of Louisiana. In a cost analysis study in 2004, Louisiana estimated injury deaths to cost: \$26 million on medical care treatment; \$6 billion on quality of life lost. However, the nation's and Louisiana's current investment in injury prevention programs and research is not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.

The Office of Public Health, Injury Research & Prevention (IRP) Program staff is small in comparison to the scope of the problem but the work is multiplied by the number of stakeholders who depend upon injury data to develop interventions and prioritize their resources. The result of reducing staff or funding of this activity would result in the state's ability to provide data, develop and implement evidence based interventions to reduce the burden of injuries. If funding was to increase, the program could expand its surveillance and prevention efforts to reduce preventable injuries.

Objective

By June 30, 2011, the Injury Research & Prevention Program will reduce the health burden of injuries on families, communities and the State by collecting and analyzing data, developing prevention strategies, implementing interventions, providing education, raising awareness, affecting public policy, and performing ongoing evaluation.

Performance Indicators

1. Number of injury reports produced to support prevention programming, environmental changes and policies.
2. Number of awareness activities conducted to prevent injuries.
3. Number of persons receiving injury prevention training and technical assistance.

4. Number of evidence based injury prevention programs implemented.

Better Health

The OPH, IRP Program is committed to the health of Louisianans by creating an “Injury Free Louisiana.” The core components of IRP mirror a public health approach by:

- Determining the burden by collecting and analyzing injury data and developing a strategic plan of action
 - Injury Surveillance:** The epidemiology staff analyses injury data to identify the state’s injury priorities, risk factors, and trends. Reports are formulated and made available to injury prevention stakeholders to utilize in developing and implementing interventions and prevention programs. Examples of these reports include Injury Mortality, Hospital Inpatient Discharged, Traumatic Brain Injury and Child Death Review Panel Reports.
 - Injury Prevention Planning:** The Injury Community Planning Group (ICPG) developed the Louisiana Injury Prevention Plan which guides statewide injury prevention efforts. The ICPG identified four injury priorities for the state of Louisiana: motor vehicles (teen driving), falls (among older adults and children), poisoning and traumatic brain injuries.
 - Fall Prevention Planning:** Though a collaborative partnership among various state agencies and private/public organizations, Louisiana formed a Fall Prevention Coalition to address falls among older adults focusing in the areas of medication management, physical activity, vision, and environmental home safety.
- Conducting prevention interventions by designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions
 - Injury Surveillance:** The epidemiology staff assists in the monitoring and evaluating of injury intervention and prevention programs to assess effectiveness.
 - Fall Prevention:** The Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs and IRP will promote evidence based physical activity programs such as “Matter of Balance” to prevent falls among older adults.
- Providing technical support and training to stakeholders
 - Injury Prevention Training & Technical Support:** The injury prevention staff provides training and technical assistance to stakeholders on injury related topics, conducts an annual injury prevention conference, and provides support through resource materials, the injury website, fact sheets, and various injury public awareness events.

- Working in communities to affect public policy in making communities safer
Safe Communities America: The IRP program supports local communities in their designation process of becoming a Safe Community. The process includes a community injury assessment and mobilization of partnerships to improve the safety of the community. Currently, though a partnership with the National Safety Council-Metro, Hammond and Jefferson Parish is in the designation process.

Narrative

The health burden and impact of injuries on the state system is enormous. Injury research and prevention is intrinsically part of the government's responsibility for the health and welfare of the population. Therefore, the IRP program focuses on enhancing relationships at the federal, state, and local levels as well as building public/private partnerships to effectively prevent injuries and improve the health and safety of Louisiana citizens. This multifaceted approach is designed to improve public support and leverage resources to reduce injury deaths and hospitalizations in Louisiana.

Injury Surveillance: Conducting data analysis and producing injury reports allows the State and local communities planning efforts to identify priorities and develop strategies to prevent and reduce injuries.

Injury Prevention: Prevention activities contributes to health and public safety by allowing Louisianans to live and work in a place injury free and enable Louisianans to live a longer, productive and self-reliant life.

Fall Prevention: The prevention strategies addressing medication management, physical mobility, health and environmental safety will enable older Louisianans to thrive in their communities, maintain their standard of living, have fewer hospitals and inpatient hospital stays as the result of a fall related injury, and reduced medical cost associated with falls. These initiatives aid in reducing falls and fall risk factors among older adults by allowing them to age in place which will result in a reduction medical cost that may require government support or having to be cared for by family members.

Safe Communities America: The process for becoming a safe community is extensive and requires community support. The Safe Communities designation helps to raise public awareness about safety issues and concerns in the community and provides a forum for these issues to be addressed and resolved. Communities are also better prepared for emergencies and hazardous events such as natural disasters and chemical leaks/spills.

The IRP Program is supported by federal funding from the Prevent Health Block Grant and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Injury Core Surveillance Grant. Although some state programs are supported through state funding, the program does not receive general state funding.

Injuries account for **1 and every 10 deaths** in Louisiana. Unintentional deaths are the **4th** leading cause of death in Louisiana.

In 2005, injury was the leading cause of death for people ages 1-44 in Louisiana and claimed approximately 4,000 lives that year. From 2000 to 2005, Louisiana was among the states with the highest rate of unintentional motor vehicle, suffocation, drowning, and fire and burn deaths in the country. For the same years, Louisiana had the second highest homicide death rate; the third highest traumatic brain injury-related death rate; and the third highest firearm-related death rate in the country. In 2005, unintentional falls were the second leading cause of unintentional injury deaths among older adults. In 2005, 158 Louisianan children younger than 15 years old died from unintentional injuries. In addition, there were approximately 30,129 nonfatal injury related hospital inpatient discharges, of which unintentional falls were the leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations among older adults, accounting for 6,438 hospitalizations at a cost of approximately \$160 million.

Utilizing various reporting and tracking mechanisms, the program will monitor injury deaths and hospitalizations. These methods include:

Annual Injury Mortality Report, Annual Hospital Discharge Data Report Child Death Report, Traumatic Brain Injury Report,, Summary Reports of top 3 Injuries, Ad-hoc data requests, LA Health Report Card, Parish Profiles.

The program is mandated by federal and state laws to produce the following data reports:

Child Death Review Reporting: Louisiana Stature §40:4019 (1992)

Traumatic Brain Injury Reporting: Public Law 104-166 (1989)

Additional resources and evidence nationally to support injury prevention:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://cdc.gov/InjuryViolenceSafety/>
- Louisiana Injury Research & Prevention Program: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=221>
- State and Territorial Injury Directors Association: <http://www.stipda.org/>