

CDPH's New Open Data Portal Improves Transparency and Access to Data

Date: 8/8/2014

Number: 14-070

Contact: Anita Gore (916) 440-7259

SACRAMENTO

The California Department of Public Health today launched its [Open Data Portal](#), which will allow user-friendly access to the data it collects about important public health issues. This data can be used to craft solutions to public health concerns while providing more transparency in government.

The Portal, which is accessible from the CDPH website, provides the public with a single point-of-entry to data sources that can be used for reporting, creating Web tools and mobile applications (apps), and other uses.

"Transparency and giving people access to information is so important to democracy," said Diana Dooley, secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency. "This is the beginning of a very ambitious effort to open portals on information that people want and need. This is an important step toward our goal of making California the healthiest state."

"Data tells us a story, and can identify strengths and areas for improvement," said Dr. Ron Chapman, CDPH director and state health officer. "By making data easier to obtain, the story can be told and can lead to solutions that improve the lives of the people in California."

The first sets of data tables to be launched include birth profiles, popular baby names, poverty rates, the location of vendors who accept vouchers from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, health care facilities data, and surveillance for West Nile virus and asthma. Eventually, data from other state departments within the California Health and Human Services Agency will be included.

While much of this data is currently available on the CDPH website, the Open Data Portal will improve access, so researchers, policy makers, technology experts and others can, for example, use the data to create mobile applications (apps) to solve local challenges.

"With the availability of technology, including mobile apps on smart phones, the Portal is truly putting data in the hands of the people," added Dr. Chapman. "We really encourage the public, researchers and those in the technology community to look at how this data and their skills can be combined to solve challenging public health needs."

"The launch of the state of California data portal promises benefits for policymakers, consumers, the media, and anyone else who wants to leverage health data to inform decision making," said Andy Krackov, senior program officer at the California HealthCare Foundation, which is funding the Open Data Portal Project. "The California HealthCare Foundation looks forward to supporting the state's work by encouraging use of the Portal and creation of innovative tools to harness these data."

Protecting individual privacy is a high priority for CDPH. All data is reviewed prior to being made available through the Portal or the CDPH website. In some instances, only aggregated data will be allowed, or data may be grouped in larger regions rather than by county, city or ZIP code.

Prior to its launch, CDPH tested the Portal with state partners, researchers, selected local health officers, technology experts and members of the public.