

Introduction to Legal Epidemiology

Facilitator's Guide



This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement Numbers NU38OT000307 and NU38OT000141 awarded to ChangeLab Solutions and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the US Department of Health and Human Services.

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Who Should Use Our Facilitator's Guides?

Our facilitator's guides are intended for anyone who needs to provide training to public health practitioners about our legal system and its role in improving population outcomes. Public health practitioners may include health department staff, public health lawyers, public health nurses, public health educators, public health advocates, and public health faculty and students in graduate and undergraduate programs. To access facilitator's guides for our other trainings, visit publichealthlawacademy.org.

Training Overview

About This Training

Why does the life expectancy in two neighboring counties differ? How does raising the minimum wage affect health? How do you assess the effectiveness of a newly adopted law aimed at preventing traumatic brain injury in youth? Is there an approach to answer all of these questions? The answer is yes: legal epidemiology!

Legal epidemiology provides a scientific approach to studying the impact and effectiveness of laws on health. The goal of this training is to introduce learners to the discipline of legal epidemiology. The training incorporates examples from the field to explain how law affects health, to describe basic legal epidemiology principles, and to help apply these concepts in practice.

Target Audience

This training was developed for public health lawyers, policy analysts, epidemiologists, public health practitioners, researchers, and students.

Learning Objectives

- Articulate how law affects health
- Define and describe basic legal epidemiology principles
- Apply legal epidemiology to your current practice

Materials

- Facilitator's Guide: This document can be adapted to provide a training that is customized for your audience.
- Slide Presentation & Script: The slides and script are separate files that can be modified to reflect your audience, training content, and speakers.
- Facilitator's Checklist: The checklist is a separate file that will help you prepare to deliver any training offered by the [Public Health Law Academy](http://www.publichealthlawacademy.org).

Equipment

- Laptop computer
- Projector

Instructions for Facilitators

Before you start, we recommend that you download the [Facilitator's Checklist](#), which is intended to help you prepare to deliver any training offered by the [Public Health Law Academy](#). In this section, we have identified options for tailoring this training, [Introduction to Legal Epidemiology](#), for your audience and venue.

Prepare for the Presentation

As the facilitator, you should first go through the materials to familiarize yourself with the content. We recommend that you watch the entire [Introduction to Legal Epidemiology](#) training. Once you are familiar with it, you can modify the content and length to suit your audience, available time, and venue.

Before Starting the Presentation

We suggest that you have participants complete the pre-training survey included in this guide on page 17. When paired with the post-training survey, the pre-training survey will provide information about the quality of the session. If you are not giving the presentation in person, you can distribute the surveys electronically.

During the Presentation

Depending on the length and format of your presentation, you should determine whether to allow the audience to ask questions during the training or save questions until the end. Our sample agenda suggests allowing 10 minutes at the end of the presentation for closing remarks and general questions. However, this time can be adjusted to suit the needs of the presentation setting and your audience.

Additionally, we suggest having participants complete the short interactive activity “Ready, Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology” at the end of the presentation. This approach will allow participants to apply what they have learned to a topic they are interested in studying. We have provided instructions, the worksheet, and sample answers for this activity on pages 11-15.

After the Presentation

When the presentation is complete, participants should fill out the post-training survey on pages 18-19.

Finally, we are interested in your experience with using this curriculum. Please let us know if you have any questions or feedback on how to improve these materials at PHLAcademy@changelabsolutions.org.

Training Agenda

Pre-Training Survey

5 minutes*

Objective

- Have participants complete the pre-training survey

Resource

- Pre-training survey (p. 17 of this guide)
-

Introduction & Presentation Overview

5 minutes*

Objectives

- Introduce the presentation topic and presenter(s)
- Provide any necessary disclaimers and introductory comments
- Describe the four competencies at a high level
- Provide a roadmap for the rest of the presentation

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 1-5)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statements 1, 2, 3, & 4
-

How Does Law Affect Health?

5 minutes*

Objectives

- Introduce the Health Impact Pyramid and explain the different types of public health interventions
- Using an example, describe how law affects health

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 6-15)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statement 1

Law as a Natural Experiment

5 minutes*

Objectives

- Explain how the health effects of variations in laws between jurisdictions and over time can be seen as the results of a natural experiment that evaluates the laws' effectiveness
- Describe some of the opportunities and challenges inherent in the "natural experiment" approach

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 16-25)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statement 1

What Is Legal Epidemiology?

10 minutes*

Objectives

- Describe what we mean by *law* in the context of legal epidemiology
- Define *legal epidemiology*
- List the foundational principles of legal epidemiology
- Describe the three basic elements of legal epidemiology
- Discuss possible composition of a legal epidemiology team

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 26-33)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statements 1 & 2

A Transdisciplinary Model

5 minutes*

Objectives

- Explain where legal epidemiology fits within a transdisciplinary model of public health law
- List and describe the Five Essential Public Health Services

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 34-37)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statement 2

Why Use Legal Epidemiology?

5 minutes*

Objective

- Discuss the reasons for using legal epidemiology

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 38-42)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statement 2

Legal Epidemiology in Practice

5 minutes*

Objectives

- Explain some applications of legal epidemiology
- Define *legal mapping*
- Differentiate legal epidemiology and public health law practice

Resource

- Slide presentation (slides 43-48)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statements 1 & 2

Putting Legal Epidemiology into Practice

10 minutes*

Objective

- Explain the methodology for putting legal epidemiology into practice

Resources

- Slide presentation (slides 49-55)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statements 1, 2, 3, & 4

Interactive Exercise

25 minutes*

Objective

- Have participants break into small groups of 2-4 people.
- Pass out the worksheet “Ready, Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology”
- Have participants complete the interactive exercise

Resources

- Slide presentation (slide 56)
- Interactive exercise handout (pp. 12-13 of this guide)

Legal Epidemiology Competencies for Public Health Practitioners Addressed

- [The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model](#), Competency Statements 1, 2, 3, & 4

Wrap-up & Discussion

10 minutes*

Objectives

- Summarize the topics discussed in this presentation and provide concluding remarks
- Allow participants to ask general questions
- Have participants complete the post-training survey

Resources

- Slide presentation (slides 57-59)
- Post-training survey (pp. 18-19 of this guide)

* All times are approximate; total training time is about 90 minutes.

Additional Resources

As you prepare to tailor content from [Introduction to Legal Epidemiology](#), we recommend familiarizing yourself with the resources listed in this section. These resources informed the development of the content found in this training and can provide background information as you prepare to tailor the content of your presentation. Finally, as questions from audience members arise during and after the training, you can refer them to these resources for additional information.

Organizations

CDC, Public Health Law Program

cdc.gov/phlp

The Public Health Law Program — part of the CDC's Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support — works to improve the health of the public by developing law-related tools and providing legal technical assistance to public health practitioners and policymakers.

ChangeLab Solutions

changelabsolutions.org

ChangeLab Solutions is a national organization whose mission is to create healthier communities for all through equitable laws and policies. Our multidisciplinary team of public health lawyers, policy analysts, planners, and other professionals works with state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments, other government agencies, public health organizations, and anchor institutions to create thriving communities.

Policy Surveillance Program

LawAtlas.org and phlr.org

The Policy Surveillance Program of the Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University uses a scientific method known as *policy surveillance* to conduct legal mapping. The Policy Surveillance Program's [Learning Library](#) contains eight training modules that teach skills and competencies needed to complete policy surveillance and legal mapping projects.

Background Reading & References

For additional information on the concepts discussed in this training, see the following resources:

- Burris S, Ashe M, Blanke D, et al. Better health faster: the 5 essential public health law services. *Public Health Rep.* 2016;131(6):747-753. doi:10.1177/0033354916667496. journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0033354916667496.
- Burris S, Ashe M, Levin D, Penn M, Larkin M. A transdisciplinary approach to public health law: the emerging practice of legal epidemiology. *Annu Rev Public Health.* 2016;37:135-148. doi:10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032315-021841. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5703193/#:~:text=A%20transdisciplinary%20model%20of%20public,of%20law%20in%20public%20health.
- Burris S, Hitchcock L, Ibrahim J, Penn M, Ramanathan T. Policy surveillance: a vital public health practice comes of age. *J Health Polit Policy Law.* 2016;41(6):1151-1173. doi:10.1215/03616878-3665931.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Legal Epidemiology Competency Model Version 1.0. 2018. cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/resources/legalepimodel/index.html#appendix.
- Ramanathan T, Hulkower R, Holbrook J, Penn M. Legal epidemiology: the science of law. *J Law Med Ethics.* 2017;45(1_suppl):69-72. doi:10.1177/1073110517703329. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5690565/.
- Tremper C, Thomas S, Wagenaar AC. Measuring law for evaluation research. *Eval Rev.* 2010;34(3):242-266. doi:10.1177/0193841X10370018.

Interactive Exercise

Ready Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology

Expected duration: 25 minutes total at the end of the presentation

Instructions for Facilitators

This activity will give participants the opportunity to apply the six steps for putting legal epidemiology into practice (slides 49-56) to a real-world example.

- Have participants break into small groups of 2-4 people.
- Pass out the worksheet “Ready, Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology” (pp. 12-13).
- Instruct each group to identify a public health topic that can be studied by using legal epidemiology.
- Once group members have identified a topic, they should discuss and complete the worksheet, which contains additional guidance and prompts.
- A worksheet with sample answers (using distracted driving as an example) is provided on pages 14-15. The sample worksheet can be used to answer questions that arise during the activity.

Introduction to Legal Epidemiology Worksheet

Ready Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology

Instructions: Working in small groups, choose a topic that can be studied by using legal epidemiology and then answer the following questions:

1. Engage: Identify a public health topic that can be studied by using legal epidemiology.

What is one public health topic that can be studied through legal epidemiology? Who would you engage and what information would you use to select this topic?

2. Research: Discuss possible gaps in research on this public health topic.

What are the research gaps on the topic you selected? How would you determine what the research gaps are?

3. Study: Discuss what types of laws could be collected to help you understand how jurisdictions are using laws to address this issue.

What kinds of legal data — national, tribal, state, local, and/or territorial laws — need to be collected? What features of those laws would you want to study?

4. Evaluate: Discuss what types of evaluation data could be overlaid on the legal data you intend to collect.

What kinds of data could you use to analyze the public health implications of the legal data you intend to collect?

5. Intervene: Discuss what types of interventions would be appropriate based on the evaluation of your legal data.

Whom might you present this evidence to? What types of policy levers would be effective in achieving the desired outcome?

6. Stay ahead: Anticipate what kinds of legal interventions or issues related to this topic might arise in the future.

What kinds of obstacles (eg, related to enforcement, funding, or implementation) might occur after a law is adopted? How might these potential obstacles inform your approach to your legal epidemiology study?

Introduction to Legal Epidemiology Worksheet with Sample Answers

Ready Set, Practice: Applying the Six Steps of Legal Epidemiology

Instructions: Working in small groups, choose a topic that can be studied by using legal epidemiology and then answer the following questions:

1. Engage: Identify a public health topic that can be studied by using legal epidemiology.

What is one public health topic that can be studied through legal epidemiology? Who would you engage and what information would you use to select this topic?

Sample answer: Distracted driving is a public health problem. We would work with communities to confirm that this is an issue of concern as well as with experts in the law, epidemiology, and behavioral science to identify key issues related to this topic.

2. Research: Discuss possible gaps in research on this public health topic.

What are the research gaps on the topic you selected? How would you determine what the research gaps are?

Sample answer: There are no data that compare state laws on distracted driving over time.

3. Study: Discuss what types of laws could be collected to help you understand how jurisdictions are using laws to address this issue.

What kinds of legal data — national, tribal, state, local, and/or territorial laws — need to be collected? What features of those laws would you want to study?

Sample answer: We would collect state-level statutes and regulations to compare how different jurisdictions are addressing distracted driving. As part of the collection of this legal data, we would want to identify which states have a law related to distracted driving, how they define distracted driving, and what the penalties are for distracted driving.

4. Evaluate: Discuss what types of evaluation data could be overlaid on the legal data you intend to collect.

What kinds of data could you use to analyze the public health implications of the legal data you intend to collect?

Sample answer: Department of transportation crash statistics could be collected and then compared with the legal data on state laws collected in question 3.

5. Intervene: Discuss what types of interventions would be appropriate based on the evaluation of your legal data.

Whom might you present this evidence to? What types of policy levers would be effective in achieving the desired outcome?

Sample answer: Once the most effective policies are identified, the research can be presented in a legal dataset, presentations, white paper, peer-reviewed journal article, and/or fact sheets. The results could be shared with residents, key stakeholders, and state decisionmakers who might use the findings to update state statutes or regulations.

6. Stay ahead: Anticipate what kinds of legal interventions or issues related to this topic might arise in the future.

What kinds of obstacles (eg, related to enforcement, funding, or implementation) might occur after a law is adopted? How might these potential obstacles inform your approach to your legal epidemiology study?

Sample answer: There might not be a budget for public service announcements or signage to let people know about new legal requirements. A law might result in unintended consequences like inequitable enforcement of the law against people of color or fees that inequitably affect people with low income.

Pre- and Post-Training Surveys

Instructions for Facilitators

- Pages 17-19 contain two sample surveys (pre- and post-training evaluation tools) that you can use to gather feedback on the content and quality of your presentation.*
- Depending on the format of your presentation (in person or online), you may provide hard copies of the survey at the presentation or make the survey available electronically.

* Before asking participants to complete the pre- and post-training surveys, please note that the Paperwork Reduction Act has specific requirements for federal agencies in regard to collection and housing of data. You may need permission from the Office of Management and Budget if you are collecting information from 10 or more members of the public.

Introduction to Legal Epidemiology: Pre-Training Survey

Thank you for completing the following survey!

Learning Objectives

Please indicate your current confidence level for each of the following learning objectives:

1. I can explain how law affects health.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident

2. I can define and describe basic legal epidemiology principles.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident

3. I can apply legal epidemiology in practice.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident

Additional Feedback

4. What questions do you have about legal epidemiology?

Thank you for your feedback!

Introduction to Legal Epidemiology: Post-Training Survey

Thank you for completing the following survey!

Learning Objectives

As a result of attending the session **Introduction to Legal Epidemiology**, please indicate your current confidence level for each of the following learning objectives of the course:

1. I can explain how law affects health.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident
2. I can define and describe basic legal epidemiology principles.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident
3. I can apply legal epidemiology in practice.
 - a. Not confident
 - b. Somewhat confident
 - c. Confident
 - d. Very confident

Overall Impression

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about the session **Introduction to Legal Epidemiology**:

4. How would you rate the overall session?
 - a. Poor
 - b. Fair
 - c. Good
 - d. Very good
 - e. Excellent
5. I would recommend this session to others.
 - a. Disagree
 - b. Somewhat disagree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Somewhat agree
 - e. Agree

Additional Feedback

6. What was the most valuable part of the session?

7. How could this session have been improved?

8. What topics would you like to see addressed in future sessions on public health law?

Thank you for your feedback!