



AN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING STORY

NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS: USING HEAT-RELATED INJURY DATA TO INFORM OUTREACH EFFORTS

Grant County, Wisconsin

THE PROBLEM

After reviewing their [County Environmental Health Profile](#), Grant County Health Department (GCHD) staff noticed their rate of heat-related emergency room visits was two times greater than the Wisconsin average. As an aging, rural county of 51,000 people, GCHD staff knew their communities were at risk for heat-related injury. To decide how to best address the issue, GCHD staff dug into the data.

WHAT GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT DID

Initially, GCHD staff expected heat-related ER visits in their communities would be among older adults—who often live alone, do not have air conditioning, and might have other health issues. However, after reviewing medical record data, they learned most cases of heat-related injury were among men 30-45 years old. Activities men were doing at the time of their heat-related injuries also tended to be leisure-related: golfing, mowing the grass, etc.

Cases also tended to happen on milder days—those where temperatures were in the 80s, not the 90-100 degree days staff expected. Armed with this new information, GCHD staff tailored additional messaging and outreach efforts to this population.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

Grant County residents are very interested in this topic, which was especially evident after GCHD staff completed [a radio interview](#) about their project and received many calls from the public. GCHD staff continue to raise awareness about the typical factors that can lead to heat-related injury, but the new data, messaging, and outreach efforts help them reach a new population that might not see heat as a problem.

Have a question about your heat-related emergency room data?

We can help!

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WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH TRACKING PROGRAM
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