Montana Public Health Data Request Process

Scope

This process is for anyone interested in accessing public health data in Montana. Many questions can be answered through publicly available data on our website. However, if the statistics you are interested in are not already available online, requests for custom analysis or for access to the raw data can be made by following this process. Data requests can be made for the following datasets:

- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Hospital Discharge Data (inpatient and emergency department visits)
- Syndromic Surveillance (ESSENCE)
- Vital Statistics (Birth, Death, Fetal Death, and Abortion)
- Montana Central Tumor Registry (Cancer Registry)
- Immunization Registry (ImMTrax)
- National Healthcare Safety Network (Healthcare-Associated Infections)
- Montana Infections Disease Information System (MIDIS)
  - Reports: help with building and running reports in MIDIS
  - Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)
  - Heavy Metals (such as lead poisoning)
  - Healthcare Facility Outbreaks
  - Multidrug-resistant organisms
  - Other infectious diseases

The data sets may include Protected Health Information (PHI), or personal identifying information of the person or institution named in the surveillance data. It is the policy of the Public Health and Safety Division that the release of surveillance data must balance the public's right to know with an individual's right to privacy as stated in the Constitution of the State of Montana, Article II, Sections 9 and 10. As a result, data must follow the Guidelines for the Release of Public Health Data in order to safeguard the confidentiality of the person or institution named in the data.

Process

1) Complete the access request using the Internal Access Request Form for State employees, and the External Access Request Form for members of the public. Those who work for the State of Montana may use the "State login" and use their regular network username and password. External users must use the "Citizen login" and create an account here.
2) You may request analysis or raw data. Select "Data analysis" if you want custom analysis to get summary statistics. Select "Data pull" if you want to request the raw data for your own analysis.
3) Be sure to select the most specific category available. For example, if you are interested in statistics about gonorrhea infections, select "STD data" and NOT "other infectious diseases". You must complete a different request form for each dataset.
4) Once your request is submitted, you will get an email verifying your request.

5) If you are requesting custom analysis, the data stewards of the requested datasets will review your request and get started on the analysis. They may reach out to you directly if they have any questions about your request or if you have requested statistics that are not available.

6) If you are requesting access to the raw data, the appropriate data steward will reach out to you with any additional forms that may need to be completed. Examples of additional documentation that may be required include study protocol, analysis plan, and an IRB determination letter. Additionally, access to raw data requires a data use agreement to be signed.

7) Users who are approved for access to a raw dataset will receive the data through the [State of Montana File Transfer Site](#). The same account can be used to login to the transfer site as was used to login to the access request form.