Environmental health is the science and practice of preventing human injury and illness and promoting well-being by identifying and limiting exposures to harmful physical, chemical, and biological agents in air, water, soil, food, and other environmental sources. Local, state, and federal agencies collect environmental health (EH) data that may not always be routinely analyzed or used to inform public health initiatives, especially at smaller local-level agencies. EH data comes from inspections, complaint investigations, and community interactions. While large EH departments have the ability to transition from data collection systems to informatics systems, most small and medium-sized EH departments are lacking the tools and resources needed to meaningfully use their data (e.g., funding, trained personnel, a working model, an interoperable system, etc.).

Identifying barriers and models for adopting informatics in environmental health was identified as a necessary step toward better connecting and informing environmental public health programs and initiatives.

### METHODS

A group of 16 experts representing software technology firms, local and state EH departments, and federal agencies convened in January 2016 to discuss the EH field’s needs to successfully adopt informatics. The meeting was guided by three, key questions:

1. What EH problem(s) are we trying to solve?
2. What knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) do EH departments need to solve the problem(s)?
3. What is a professional association’s, in this case NEHA’s, role in solving the problem?

The meeting was led by an impartial facilitator.

### RESULTS

There is a significant disparity in how data is collected and used at the local, state and federal level. There is a need for increased training around informatics and data use at the local level. There is a need for the identification of “best practices” around software vendor selection at the local level.

Partnerships between EH agencies, software technology firms, and a professional association, like NEHA, could equip EH specialists and departments with the tools needed to adopt informatics and provide meaningful EH data to inform public health initiatives.

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