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# **Georgia Southern Collaborates with UNCG to Examine Strategies of an LHD to Build and Use Information Systems**

October 18, 2016



Public health informatics is a critical component of operations and foundational capacity of a local health department (LHD). The objective of this case study was to describe the process and outcomes of a small LHD's strategy to build and use information systems. The case study is based on a review of documents and semi-structured interviews with key informants in the Pomperaug District Health Department. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed.

The case study suggests that small LHDs can use a low-resource, incremental strategy to build information systems for improving departmental effectiveness and efficiency. Specifically, we suggest that the elements for this department's success were simple information systems, clear vision, consistent leadership, and the involvement, training, and support of staff.

The study titled "[An Iterative, Low-Cost Strategy to Building Information Systems Allows a Small Jurisdiction Local Health Department to Increase Efficiencies and Expand Services](#)," was published online ahead of print in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*.

Dr. Gulzar Shah, Associate Dean for Research at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was the Principal Investigator (PI) for the project and the co-author of the manuscript. Dr. Kay A. Lovelace, Department of Public Health Education at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) was the lead author.

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# Georgia Southern Partners to Examine E-Waste Management in the United States

October 18, 2016



Electronic waste (e-waste) generation is increasing worldwide, and its management becomes a significant challenge because of the many toxicants present in electronic devices. The U.S. is a major producer of e-waste, although its management practice and policy regulation are not sufficient to meet the challenge.

We reviewed e-waste generation, current management practices and trends, policy challenges, potential health impact, and toxicant exposure prevention in the U.S. A large amount of toxic metals, flame retardants, and other persistent organic pollutants exist in e-waste or can be released from the disposal of e-waste (e.g., landfill, incineration, recycling). Landfill is still a major method used to dispose of obsolete electronic devices, and only about half of the states have initiated a landfill ban for e-waste. Recycling of e-waste is an increasing trend in the past few years. There is potential, however, for workers to be exposed to a mixture of toxicants in e-waste and these exposures should be

curtailed.

Perspectives and recommendations are provided regarding managing e-waste in the U.S. to protect public health, including enacting federal legislation, discontinuing landfill disposal, protecting workers in recycling facilities from toxicant exposure, reducing toxicant release into the environment, and raising awareness of this growing environmental health issue among the public.

"[E-Waste Management in the United States and Public Health Implications](#)," was published in the October Issue of the Journal of Environmental Health.

Dr. William A. Mase, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was one of the co-authors.

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# ***Georgia Southern Partnered on a Study to Examine Challenges and Innovations in Surveying the Governmental Public Health Workforce***

October 18, 2016



Surveying governmental public health practitioners is a critical means of collecting data about public health organizations, their staff, and their partners.

A greater focus on evidence-based practices, practice-based systems research, and evaluation has resulted in practitioners consistently receiving requests to participate in myriad surveys. This can result in a substantial survey burden for practitioners and declining response rates for researchers. This is potentially damaging to practitioners and researchers as well as the field of public health more broadly.

This study is built on recent developments in survey research, especially issues highly relevant for public health practice. The authors also proposed a process by which researchers can engage with practitioners and practitioner groups on research questions of mutual interest.

[“Challenges and Innovations in Surveying the Governmental Public Health Workforce,”](#) was published online ahead of print in the American Journal of Public Health.

At the time of writing, Jonathon P. Leider was and Brian C. Castrucci is with the de Beaumont Foundation, Bethesda, MD. Gulzar Shah is with the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro. Nikki Rider was with the National Network of Public Health Institutes, New Orleans, LA. Angela Beck is with the School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Jenine Harris and Ross C. Brownson are with the Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Katie Sellers was with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Arlington, VA. Danielle Varda is with the University of Colorado, Denver. Jiali Ye is with the National Association of County and City Health Officials, Washington, DC. Paul C. Erwin is with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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# Georgia Southern Examines Control of the Public Health IT Physical Infrastructure

October 18, 2016



*Kelley Chester*

Based on a nationally representative survey of 324 local health departments (LHDs), this study examined the current status of LHDs' control of informatics infrastructure (vs. control by the state health agency, city/county information technology (IT) department, or someone else). The 2015 Informatics Capacity and Needs Assessment Survey was conducted by Dr. Gulzar Shah, Associate Dean for Research at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, on behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

The study shows that majority of the control of the LHD informatics infrastructure resides in external entities rather than LHDs. IT system security had the least amount of LHD control, with only 12.8% within each LHD program and 21.4% within a central department of the LHD. Similar patterns existed for control of data quality, with 13.9% within each LHD program and 20.3% within a central department of the LHD. The type of governance structure of the LHD was significantly associated with the control of infrastructure. Despite improvements in IT infrastructure in public health, there is still much that can be done to improve the adoption of IT in local health departments, by better understanding the impact of governance and control structures of IT physical infrastructure. Additional research is needed to determine best practices in IT governance and control of IT physical infrastructure for public health. The study titled "[Control of the Public Health IT Physical Infrastructure: Findings From the 2015 Informatics Capacity and Needs Assessment Survey](#)," was published online ahead of print in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*.

Dr. Kelley Chester, Principal at C3 Informatics, LLC and alumni of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University (JPHCOPH) was the lead author and Dr. Gulzar Shah, Associate Dean for Research at JPHCOPH was one of the co-authors.

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