

Oregon creating central, standardized database of population estimates



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CATEGORY: Enterprise Approach to Data Systems Modernization

The Oregon Health Authority built a centralized database housing all population estimate data to reduce duplicative work by epidemiologists to individually download, transform, and aggregate the data.

The “What”

Epidemiologists and analysts across Oregon Health Authority (OHA) use several population estimates to report rates in their analyses. Many analysts routinely perform the same tasks of retrieving updated data from the source and preparing those data for analysis. OHA created a structured query language (SQL) database to house these raw and processed population estimates. Analysts will be able to connect to this reference SQL database with a variety of tools (e.g., Excel, R, SAS, and Tableau).

The “So What”

By centralizing these data transformations and aggregations into a single shared resource, OHA aims to reduce duplicative work by analysts across the Public Health Division, freeing up time and resources for meaningful analysis and

interpretation, and better coordinating and synchronizing annual updates. Sharing methods across programs will prompt thoughtful discussion as to why analytic choices were made. It will also connect staff to additional datasets that may be of use in their work, including more granular geographic and demographic population estimates. This will help identify and address health disparities and support data justice in communities most affected by health disparities.

The “Now What”

OHA is expanding their testing to include more epidemiologists and analysts to ensure the database includes the data sources, transformations, and aggregations needed to support their work. As OHA further defines – and refines – the requirements, their goal is to standardize the work and make this resource available to all Public Health Division staff. They are working on solutions to add more metadata to the database so epidemiologists and analysts can make informed decisions about their data, as well as working to resolve firewall barriers to expand access to popular analytic tools like SAS. Once the database is launched, it will be a valuable reference when used in conjunction with OHA’s reportable condition data marts currently under development.

Key contributors to this project include Paige Snow, Data Visualization Informaticist; Juanita Heimann, Research Analyst IV; Mitch Ryan, Health Intelligence Interoperability Analyst; Michelle Barber, Informatics Manager.



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