

## **Title: Foodborne Disease Outbreak Response: Assessing the Legal Framework for Interagency Sharing of Information**

**Principal Investigator:** Kerry Wyss, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

**Center of Excellence:** Food Protection and Defense Institute (FPDI) (Emeritus)

**COE Lead/Co-Lead Institution:** University of Minnesota

**Project Start Date:** 07/2014

**Project Completion Date:** 12/2016

**Project Status:** Complete

**Research Theme:** Information Sharing

**Participating State(s):** Minnesota, Virginia

**Amount Awarded to Date:** \$169,026

**Award Number:** 2010-ST-061-FD0001

**Abstract:** Foodborne illness is a serious public health issue. Through this project, ASTHO sought to improve our understanding of the legal and institutional framework impacting the sharing of information during a foodborne disease outbreak. As part of our legal research, we created an appendix of state laws and regulations relating to state and territorial health agency authority to protect non-public information from public disclosure. In addition, ASTHO used a survey and qualitative research methods to obtain extensive information from the states and District of Columbia to deepen our understanding of state practices with regards to information sharing between food regulatory agencies and the state authority to protect non-public information from public disclosure. ASTHO drew three major findings with regard to information sharing between federal and state agencies: 1) federal, state and local partnerships are important; 2) information sharing agreements can be limited; and 3) state food defense programs face challenges. Based upon our findings, ASTHO recommends promoting the development and participation of state agencies on joint taskforces or advisory councils; promoting information flow by getting key state food safety staff commissioned and hold a national security clearance; developing and sharing with federal agencies a directory of state food safety officials that are allowed to receive confidential food safety and defense information; developing internal communication plans for handling confidential food safety and defense information; and strengthening relationships with local law enforcement.

**Project Type:** Research

**End User Engagement:**

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- DHS U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- Food and Drug Administration
- State and Local Food and Agriculture Labs
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Executive Summary (2017):** Foodborne illness is a serious public health issue. Through this project, ASTHO sought to improve our understanding of the legal and institutional framework impacting the sharing of information during a foodborne disease outbreak. As part of our legal research, we created an appendix of state laws and regulations relating to state and territorial health agency authority to protect non-public information from public disclosure. In addition, ASTHO used a survey and qualitative research methods to obtain extensive information from the states and District of Columbia to deepen our understanding of state practices with regards to information sharing between food regulatory agencies and the state authority to protect non-public information from public disclosure. ASTHO drew three

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