

PHAST Measures for Food Safety

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that foodborne illness sickens one out of six Americans each year. Of these, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die.¹

Reducing illness through **better food safety practices** is a Healthy People 2020 goal.²



Little research exists on **public health activities and services** aimed at accomplishing this. Recent research links **greater public health department expenditures** on food safety inspections with **lower enteric disease levels**,³ but we need to know more.

A **lack of comparable data** on food safety inspections within and among states makes further investigation and evidence-based decision making difficult.²

Why We Need Standardized Measures

To support more research and evidence-based decision making among public health practitioners, PHAST recommends collecting data using these standardized measures for food protection:

1. Who is responsible for food safety inspections in your jurisdiction?



WHY: Knowing if services are shared across jurisdictions or between state and local agencies clarifies the data being presented for more accurate comparisons.

2. Number of food service establishments inspected for food safety during a 12-month period



WHY: When represented as a percentage of the total number of food service establishments required to be inspected under state and/or local law, this depicts the extent to which service has reached the community based on need, and can enable more accurate comparisons across jurisdictions.

3. Number of inspections of food service establishments, including repeat inspections



WHY: Combining inspection numbers and number of establishments in a jurisdiction with foodborne illness rate data to see if there is a relationship yields information to influence inspection policies that affect population health.

4. Number of full-time personnel devoted to retail food safety inspection



WHY: Staffing level can be combined with the total number of inspections to show differences in food safety staffing across local jurisdictions.

PHAST Measures and Data Dashboard

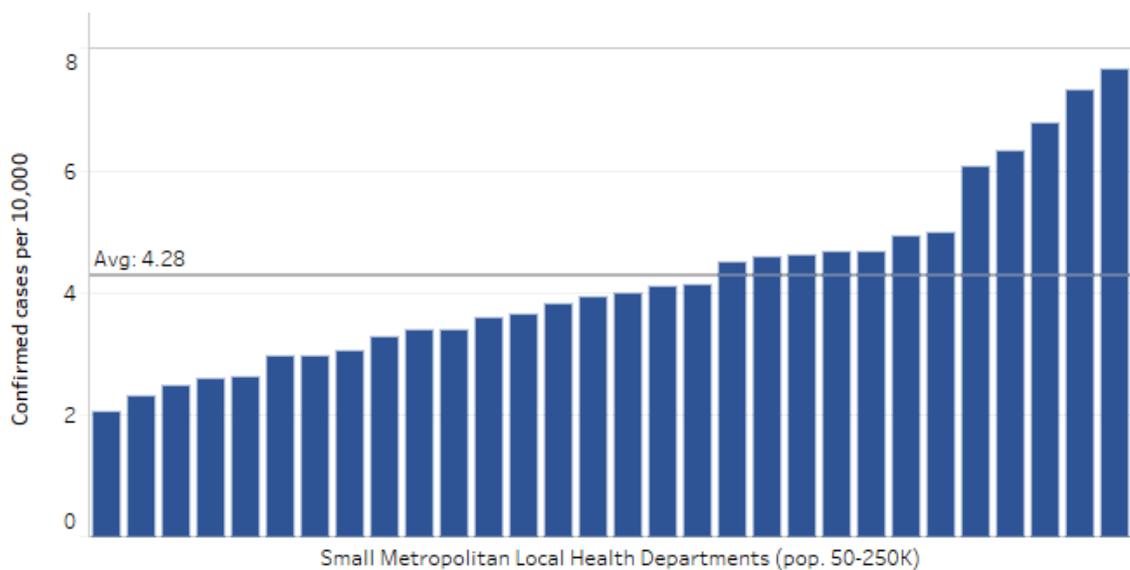
PHAST is developing a **data dashboard** that can illustrate how food safety activities are related to cases of enteric disease among state and local public health jurisdictions.



Public health practitioners can use data to understand how food inspections impact enteric disease within and across similar agencies.

Figure 1 shows an example of the kinds of data practitioners can gather from the data dashboard, comparing cases of enteric disease across local health departments in small metropolitan areas.

Figure 1.
Confirmed Cases of Enteric Disease, per 10,000 in 4 PHAST Measure States



Adopt the Measures and Share Data

PHAST has gathered data from four states so far, and—with your help—is extending this collection process to other states.



Adopt standard PHAST Measures for food safety in your agency, or submit your current food safety data as PHAST builds a comparable national database and visual data dashboard you can use.

To share your data or learn more, see the guidelines at phastdata.org/measures. To test the new data capture tool, contact Melinda Schultz at schulm5@uw.edu.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/estimates-overview.html>

² healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/food-safety

³ Bekemeier B, Yip M, Dunbar M, Whitman G, and Kwan-Gett T. 2015. Local Health Department Food Safety and Sanitation Expenditures and Reductions in Enteric Disease, 2000-2010. *American Journal of Public Health* 105(S2):e1-e8.