

2011

Milestones & accomplishments



Population Data BC strives to ensure that researchers have timely access to data and training they need to address research questions on human health, well-being and development, and that research using these data informs policy-making and leads to healthier communities.

A great deal was achieved in 2011 thanks to the hard work of our staff and the collaborative efforts of our partners and stakeholders. We thank the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, BC Ministry of Health, BC Ministry of Education, BC Vital Statistics Agency, WorkSafeBC, BC Cancer Agency, UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), EduData Canada and the Office of Chief Information Officer of BC for their continued support.

This year the Ministry of Health made a significant commitment to BC's health research community: guaranteeing a total application to approval timeline of four months for eligible projects using Population Data BC holdings. Please see our website for details.

Achievements in 2011 include:

Data holdings

- Expanded data holdings with the BC Cancer Agency
- New firm level and noise exposure data became available from WorkSafeBC via Population Data BC
- HELP Middle Development Instrument (MDI) Data became available via Population Data BC
- We managed 47 data collections from 17 sources and upgraded our servers to 400 terabytes of storage
- New data agreement with the Integrated Cadastral Information Society (ICIS)
- Linkages approved between internal holdings and external data from Perinatal Services BC, BC Cardiac Services and the BC Centre for Disease Control

Data access

- Approval for our first-ever health-education data linkage
- First training dataset using BC Ministry of Health data authorized for use
- Expanded support services, including instant messaging to Researcher Liaisons and The Doctor Is In – offering methodological help to researchers from an administrative data expert
- We became part of the communication and data access process for PharmaNet data
- Launch of new custom built project tracking software to better track and manage projects

Education & training

- Launch of the Professional Specialization Certificate in Population Health Data Analysis with a cohort of 13 starting the first course, Working with Administrative Data, in September
- Workshops in Statistical Software Package R, Structural Equation Modeling and Bayesian Disease Mapping - Level II were delivered to capacity audiences from universities, health authorities, government ministries and other health organizations
- Customized workshops in Competing Risk Analysis and Introduction for Statistics were developed and delivered in partnership with other organizations

Support

- Expansion of the membership of our Governance Oversight Committee to include Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer

Systems & security

- Expansion of the Secure Research Environment including extra high-performance machines, Linux, and the capacity to submit batch jobs
- Moved to a new, disk-based backup system

General

- New Research in Action section of website including case studies, video presentations, project listings and related publications

2012 Look out for ...

- February Conference and Workshops on Population Health Data Analysis: From Infrastructure to Innovation
- Access to ICIS data
- Expanded WorkSafeBC data
- Development of online Data Access Request Form
- Launch of MetaData Central, a web-based documentation system that will include data dictionaries, linkage rates, and download links for geospatial data and more
- Formalized policy on Student access and waivers
- Availability of additional training data sets, under specified access conditions