

# Health DATA Newsletter

Spring 2002



Data, Advocacy, Technical Assistance • Turning Knowledge Into ACTION

## Q&A

### Q: How can I find health data on the Internet?

**A:** The Internet has become a readily used source of information for many consumers, including those seeking health information. According to a report from the United States Department of Commerce, 54% of Americans accessed the Internet in September of 2001, up from just 33% in 1998. According to the same report 35% of those surveyed had gone online to find health information.

With the number of websites available via the Internet, finding the information you need can be both time consuming and frustrating. However, in a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers note that, "the likelihood of finding the information one needs, on the topic of one's choice, will depend on where one starts." Search engines can provide most web users with an excellent place to start. According to that report, some of the search engines, which yielded the greatest number of useful hits, included:

#### *In English*

Google - [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Yahoo - [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

Northern Light - [www.northernlight.com](http://www.northernlight.com)

#### *En Español*

Quepasa - [www.quepasa.com](http://www.quepasa.com)

Te Respondo - [sl.terespondo.com](http://sl.terespondo.com)

Yahoo - [espanol.yahoo.com](http://espanol.yahoo.com)

Due to the fact that most web sites are not peer reviewed, it is particularly important that you scrutinize both the organization or individual who posts the information as well as the data itself. Consider the goals and mission of those who post information on the web and remember to ask yourself, "Am I comfortable making a claim based on this information?" One way to avoid the pitfalls of using information from unfamiliar web sites is to access data provided by Government sites. These sites are generally considered reliable and are a widely used source of data and information. To get started, you may consider:

- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - [www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov)  
DHHS provides an easy-to-navigate pull-down menu of health topics that link users to a plethora of data sources.
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) - [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)  
HRSA provides data on a variety of health issues including HIV/AIDS, child and maternal health, and health care providers as well as state-level data derived from federal reports.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
CDC provides links to a variety of data sources, including the National Center on Health Statistics, a clearinghouse of public health data and statistics.

#### References:

Berland, Gretchen K., et. al. Health Information on the Internet. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 285, no. 20 (2001): Pp. 2612-2621.

United States Department of Commerce. *A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding their Use of the Internet*. Retrieved on April 12, 2002 at [www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/dn/anationonline2.pdf](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/dn/anationonline2.pdf).

For an updated workshop schedule, articles on current health topics, and additional resources, sign up for the monthly Health DATA list serve at [listserv.ph.ucla.edu/mailman/listinfo/healthdata](mailto:listserv.ph.ucla.edu/mailman/listinfo/healthdata).

## Free Workshops for Community-Based Organizations

*We have experienced a strong interest in Health DATA Workshops. Workshops are free to community-based organizations in Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and are currently being scheduled for June and July.*

*Health DATA Workshops are a public service of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and are supported through a grant from The California Endowment.*

*Contact us if you are interested in hosting or participating in one of the following Health DATA workshops:*

### INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH DATA

### PERFORMING A COMMUNITY-BASED ASSESSMENT

### MEDIA ADVOCACY TO ADVANCE PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

## Health DATA Internet Picks

County Health Departments can be an ideal source of information and data for community based organizations, particularly if you are looking for local public health data. You can start by visiting the websites listed below and following the suggested links.

Los Angeles County  
Department of Health Services  
[www.lapublichealth.org](http://www.lapublichealth.org)  
*Follow Data and Reports Link*

County of San Bernadino  
Department of Public Health  
[www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/pubhlth](http://www.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/pubhlth)  
*Follow Publications Link*

Riverside County  
Department of Public Health  
[www.rivcoph.org](http://www.rivcoph.org)  
*Follow Health Statistics Link*

**For additional Internet resources and our upcoming workshop schedule, visit our web site at [www.healthdata.ucla.edu](http://www.healthdata.ucla.edu)**

PLEASE POST

## Contact Information

**Peggy Toy, MA**  
peggytoy@ucla.edu  
Program Director

**Bryce C. Lowery, MS**  
loweryb@ucla.edu  
Assistant Program Director

### The Health DATA Program

Phone: 310-794-0983

E-mail: [hdp@ucla.edu](mailto:hdp@ucla.edu)

Web site: [www.healthdata.ucla.edu](http://www.healthdata.ucla.edu)

### UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

10911 Weyburn Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Phone: 310-794-0909

FAX: 310-794-2686

Web site: [www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu](http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu)

# The Health DATA Program

Since 1997, the Health DATA Program has trained and provided technical assistance to a range of community, service, and advocacy organizations.

Health DATA Workshops have helped participants improve their capacity to find, understand, and present credible data in their program and policy development work — whether it is to get a specific issue on the agenda, raise public awareness, or advocate for public policies that benefit their communities.

Please share this information. This newsletter can be easily posted on a bulletin board or in a common space at your office, so that others can also gain from the tips and resources provided.

Contact our staff if you have questions about the services we offer or if you would like to discuss hosting a Health DATA Workshop.

*Established in 1994, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research conducts research on national, state, and local health policy issues, provides public service to policy makers and community leaders, and offers educational opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.*

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**The Health DATA Program**  
UCLA Center for Health Policy Research  
10911 Weyburn Avenue, Suite #300  
Los Angeles, California 90024

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