



Developing and Applying a Descriptive Framework For Analyzing Food Safety Resources

Project Overview

Background

Public resources are spent on food safety by at least a dozen federal agencies, as well as thousands of agencies at the state and local level, all across the food system's farm-to-table spectrum. The National Academy of Sciences and the Government Accountability Office have called for these resources to be allocated in ways most likely to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness. The inherent difficulty of such risk-based resource allocation is heightened by the lack of a framework that: (1) can be used to describe food safety expenditures in terms that are relevant to assessing their potential public health impact, and (2) can be applied consistently to the budgets of all federal, state and local food safety agencies.

Project Approach and Goals

This is a research project to develop and apply a descriptive framework for analyzing food safety resource allocation from a public health perspective. In consultation with food safety experts and federal, state and local government officials, the project staff will collect data on government food safety resources and expenditures, devise a framework for describing the allocation of those resources, and apply the framework comprehensively to federal expenditures and on a pilot basis to selected state and local agencies. The specific goals of the project are to:

1. Develop a feasible framework for organizing government food safety expenditures into functional categories that enable the evaluation of resource allocation from a public health perspective.
2. Apply the framework at the federal level to describe how food safety resources are currently allocated across these public health-oriented categories and recent trends in expenditures, including federal allocations to state and local agencies.
3. Apply the framework to selected states and localities to assess its feasibility and usefulness for that purpose.
4. Produce a tool that can be used on an ongoing basis to improve risk-based resource allocation in government food safety programs.

Collaborating Organizations

This project is being conducted under the auspices of the Food Safety Research Consortium (www.rff.org/fsrc), with the lead institution being The George Washington University School of

Public Health and Health Services (GWU) and the principal investigator being Research Professor Michael Taylor. Other collaborating organizations include:

- Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO),
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO),
- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO),
- Emerging Pathogens Institute at the University of Florida (UF/EPI).

Timeline and Report

Collection of budget information and development of the descriptive framework will be completed by October 2008, with analysis of the data and application of the framework to follow, and a report on the results to be issued by March 2009.

Funding

The project is funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Changes in Health Care Financing and Organization Initiative.

Contact Information

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May 19, 2008