



The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) represents more than 7,000 governmental, private, academic, and uniformed services sector environmental health professionals in the U.S., its territories, and internationally. NEHA is the profession's strongest advocate for excellence in the practice of environmental health as it delivers on its mission to build, sustain, and empower an effective environmental health workforce.

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In 2017, there were 841 foodborne illness outbreaks reported in the U.S., including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico, which resulted in 14,481 illnesses, 827 hospitalizations, 20 deaths, and 14 food recalls. Among the illnesses and outbreaks for which a single location was identified, 44% and 64%, respectively, were attributed to foods prepared in a restaurant setting (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017).

The rise in expenditure on foods eaten away from the home and the significant proportion of foodborne illnesses attributed to restaurants have highlighted the importance of food establishment inspections. Current inspection practices and methods of disclosure vary widely across jurisdictions in the U.S., which presents unique challenges to evaluating program effectiveness. A recent study conducted by the National Network of Public Health Institutes, Dining Safety Alliance, investigators at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, and NEHA found that agencies that disclose inspection results at the point of service reported 55% fewer average numbers of outbreaks compared to those using online only disclosure (Kim et al., 2021).

*The National Environmental Health Association, National Network of Public Health Institutes, Dining Safety Alliance, and investigators at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health recommend the following action agenda for federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governmental agencies:*

Mandate the posting of inspection results at the point of service. This recommendation is a potentially effective public policy that fosters transparency, population health, and informed consumer choice at point of service.

Paragraph 8 304.11 (K) of the Food and Drug Administration 2017 *Food Code* supports the

premise of transparency (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017). Disclosure of health department inspection results at the point of service (i.e., at the food establishment) eliminates a barrier to using inspection data in the decision making process as it does not require the added task of using technological resources to check a website. Further, results summarized by a score or grade enable easier interpretation by consumers than by narrative formats.



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