Tracking collects, integrates, and standardizes noninfectious disease and environmental data from national, state, and local partners. Tracking has more than 450 environmental health measures and more than 2 billion rows of data. To make these data accessible, usable, and actionable, it uses powerful online data visualization tools such as:

Data Explorer: Users can create customizable maps, charts, and tables on a variety of health and environmental topics (Figure 2). These data visualizations show patterns over time and/or within a geographical area that can be used when messaging environmental health trends and emerging issues.

Info by Location: Users can create a cus-

A s an environmental health professional, you undoubtedly spend a lot of time communicating. Do people you're communicating with understand your main message? Putting your main message first, supporting it visually, and keeping your audience in mind can help you improve your department's communications to the public and other audiences.

Put the Most Important Message First

What action do you want people to take as a result of reading your material? The clearer and more direct you can be about this action at the beginning, the better.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Clear Communication Index is a research-based tool to help you develop and assess communication materials (CDC, 2019). It emphasizes putting your message up front and supporting it visually, such as with larger font or bolded text and a related image. Our Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net) uses it to develop plain language summaries of food safety research ndings. Putting the main message rst highlights the key recommended actions for food safety programs and the retail food industry (Figure 1).

Why is it so important to get to the point? People don't read when online, they scan (Nielsen Norman Group, 1997). If your main message is a punchline at the end, readers are unlikely to notice it. Getting to the point also shows respect for your readers' time.

Support Your Message With Related and Compelling Visuals

Data visualization techniques and tools are a great way to add compelling visuals to your work. Hearing the buzz about data visualization but not sure what it is or how to use it? CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking) can help!

FIGURE 1

Environmental Health Specialists Network (EHS-Net) Plain Language Summary Leads With Most Important Message

FIGURE 2

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network's Data Explorer Tool Offers Customizable Maps and Health and Environmental Data Visualizations
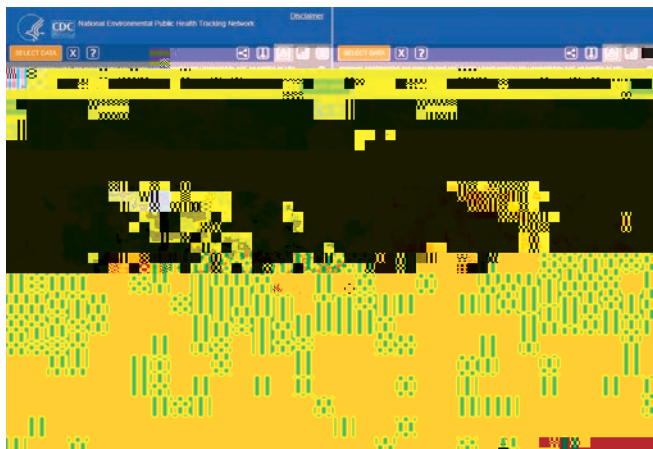

FIGURE 3

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network's Info by Location Tool Provides Health and Environmental Data by County in an Infographic Format

Radon Communication Toolkit Offers Customizable Infographics in Response to Audience Feedback

Radon Communication Toolkit can be used to increase awareness of the dangers of radon exposure and smoking. The toolkit was built on materials developed by eight states. These states used Tracking data to bring awareness to the health hazards of radon and smoking through visualization, targeted communication messages, and Radon Awareness Month outreach. CDC tested the draft toolkit with several states and learned that a customizable format would increase the toolkit's use and value.

We designed the toolkit with environmental public health professionals and health educators in mind. It helps them

create a framework for targeted communication activities and

focus messages for specific audiences.

The toolkit includes a fact sheet, press release, shareable images, infographics, and social media content all in one place. The materials can be used as is or customized for specific audiences. Users can add quotes, change regional information, update contact information, and use alternate main messages or branding to highlight a particular radon awareness event (Figure 4). State health departments can use the toolkit to develop statewide radon initiatives, organize local community events, or build social media campaigns.

* > ; D < 4   K # D < 1 4 A