

# Partnerships for Public Health Emergency Preparedness

## A Survey of U.S. Health and Human Services Region 10 Local Health Departments



Ashley Moore, MPH,<sup>1</sup> Betty Bekemeier, PhD, MPH,<sup>2</sup> Resham Patel, MPH,<sup>1</sup> Nicole A. Errett, PhD, MSPH<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Washington Center for Disaster Resilient Communities

<sup>2</sup>University of Washington School of Nursing

### BACKGROUND

By engaging with communities and partnering with community- and faith-based organizations, local health departments (LHDs) can: meet local needs, distribute resources equitably, and build trust before disasters occur.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Yet, there has been limited research on factors that contribute to LHDs' involvement in or prioritization of community partnerships for public health emergency preparedness (PHEP).

### OBJECTIVES

In response to these gaps, this research assesses U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington) LHD engagement activities and the internal and external contextual factors that influence these activities.

### METHODS

- > Developed a survey that assesses participant commitment to community partnerships via the Implementation Leadership Scale (ILS), as well as organizational community engagement activities, which we compiled into a Community Engagement Scale (CES) score.
- > Used linear regression to assess the association of state, jurisdiction size, participant experience, and LHD resources with respondents' commitment to community partnerships (i.e., ILS score) and organizational community engagement activities (i.e., CES score).

### RESULTS

- > Sample totaled 26 of 78 (33.3%) local health departments in HHS Region 10.
- > Over half (61.5%) of LHDs receive a majority of their funding from federal sources (e.g., CDC PHEP Cooperative Agreement).

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variable	N (%)
State	
Alaska	0 (0.0)
Idaho	3 (11.5)
Oregon	4 (15.4)
Washington	17 (70.8)
Jurisdiction size	
Small (<50k)	5 (19.2)
Medium (50k – 499k)	14 (53.9)
Large (500k+)	6 (23.1)
Conducts community engagement	16 (61.5)
Community engagement in plans	14 (53.9)
Mean PHEP experience (years)	4.9
Mean PHEP staff FTE	2.7

- > State and years of experience in PHEP are predictors for the ILS and CES scores.
- > ILS score predicts CES score.
- > For every additional year of experience in PHEP, there is a 0.9 point increase in ILS score ( $p < 0.05$ , 95% CI: 0.0, 1.7).
- > For every unit increase in ILS score, there is a 0.5 point increase in CES score ( $p = 0.005$ , 95% CI: 0.2, 0.8).

Figure 2. ILS score predicts CES score

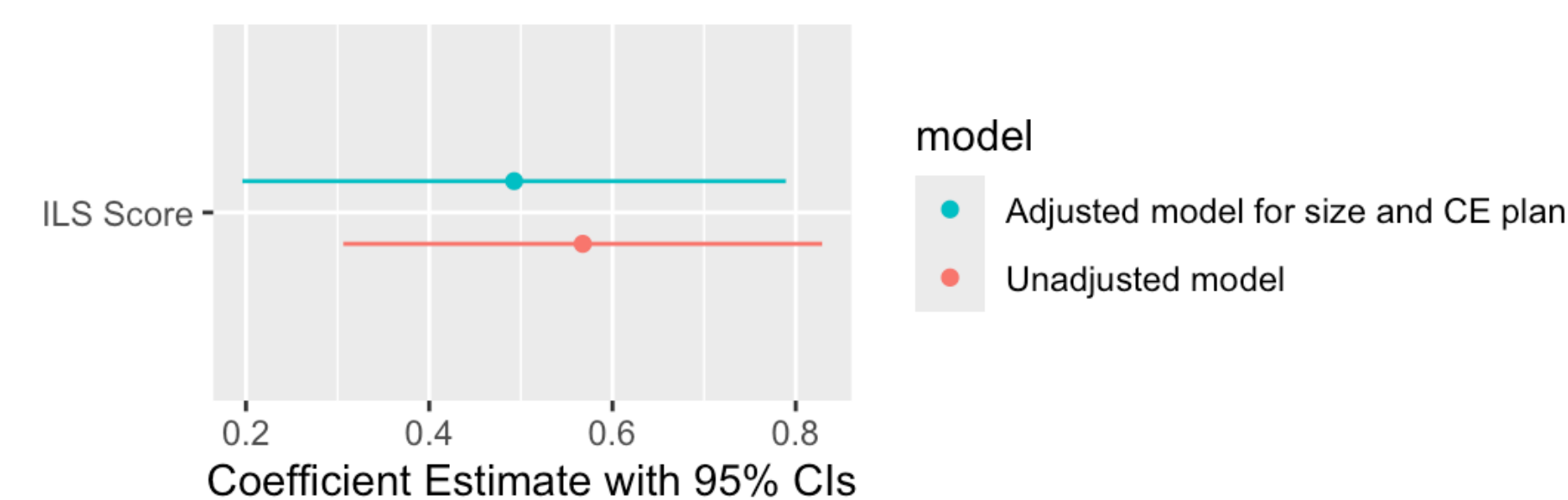
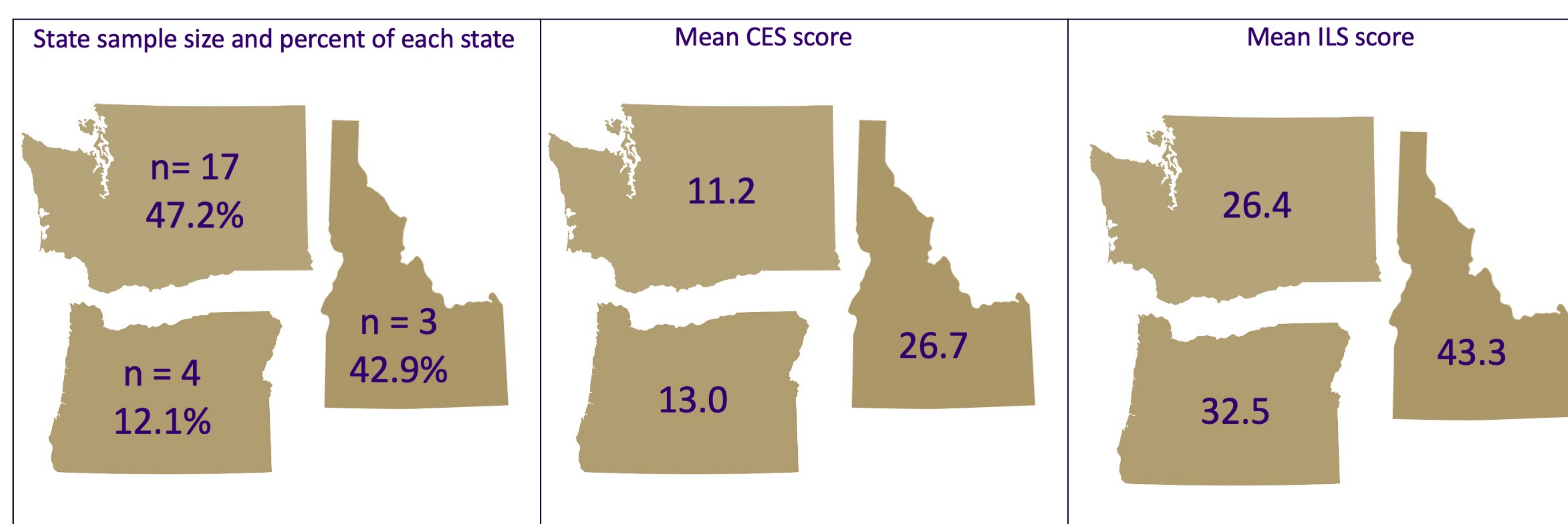


Figure 1. Highest representation from Washington; highest scores from Idaho



### CONCLUSIONS

- > Participant experience and LHD state are associated with community engagement activities and commitment to partnerships in PHEP.
- > Adequate early career training, transference of institutional knowledge, and shifts in organizational culture might better prepare PHEP practitioners for community partnerships.
- > Additional research is needed to uncover the drivers of state-level differences in community partnerships for PHEP.

### SUMMARY

- > Surveyed 26 LHDs in Region 10
- > Measured LHD PHEP community engagement activities and commitment to PHEP partnerships
- > Idaho had the highest community engagement and commitment scores
- > Years of experience in PHEP plays a role in commitment to PHEP partnerships
- > Commitment to partnerships is associated with engagement activities
- > Recommend early career training and embedding PHEP partnership principles into organizational culture

### References

- <sup>1</sup>Harrald JR. Agility and Discipline: Critical Success Factors for Disaster Response. *Ann Am Acad Pol Soc Sci.* 2006;604(1):256-272. doi:10.1177/0002716205285404
- <sup>2</sup>Delannon N, Raufflet E, Baba S. Corporate community engagement strategies and organizational arrangements: a multiple case study in Canada. *Journal of Cleaner Production.* 2016;129:714-723. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.03.047

