Timeline

The Geospatial Research Analysis, and Services Program (GRASP) has a long-standing role in providing geospatial support to public health partners. Learn more about some of these key milestones in the timeline below.

1989

The program from which GRASP eventually evolved was initiated by ATSDR in 1989 to enable ATSDR scientists to use mapping and geospatial analysis to better understand issues specific to health concerns at hazardous waste sites.

1994

ATSDR produced the GIS Introductory Map, a map designed to help scientists examine chemical exposures occurring in and around hazardous waste sites across the US, and directed it to be included in all ATSDR Public Health Assessments (PHA).

1998

Partnered with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) to create the Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke–the first CDC interactive atlas of surveillance data patterns and trends.

2001

CDC entered an era of using GIS in the response to public health emergencies with the World Trade Center response and USPS Anthrax response. This work led to the request for ATSDR to set up GIS within the Secretary's Command Center and the CDC Emergency Operations Center, and established GRASP as a permanent entity in the EOC structure.

2003

Established partnership with CDC WONDER to support and integrate mapping directly into the online database for public health data analysis.

2007

Partnered with [the precursor to] the Office of Environmental Health and Emergency Management (OEHEM) to create the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) to understand population vulnerability.

2006

Conducted a spatial analysis for ATSDR to investigate a cancer cluster of Polycythemia Vera (PV) in Pennsylvania.

2011

Started supporting CDC's polio eradication efforts with geospatial work in more than twenty countries to date, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and Somalia.

2009

Partnered with the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) to build a GIS visualization module into the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network, which provides data and information on the environment, exposures, health effects, and population characteristics.

Collaborated with the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) during the H1N1 flu outbreak to create maps using NCIRD flu data. This led to a partnership to develop FluView Interactive to enhance mapping to integrate into routine flu surveillance.

2012

Expanded the single ATSDR GIS Introductory Map to become a series, which expanded the ability of scientists to visualize, analyze, and characterize exposure conditions proximal to hazardous waste sites.

2016

Provided geospatial support in Puerto Rico during the Zika virus response with the development of interactive maps to communicate CDC recommendations.

2015

Established the Geospatial Epidemiology and Applied Research Unit in GRASP to advance place-based research efforts at the CDC/ATSDR. Using novel applications of geospatial methodologies, GEAR scientists provide leadership in the exploration of Geospatial Determinants of Health (GDOH).

2017

Recruited an EIS officer who spearheaded the investigation of activity space efforts and engaged in National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) research on stress biomarkers and the beta GRASP Environmental Burden Index (EBI).

2018

Partnered with the NCEH Vessel Sanitation Program to provide geospatial support in their cruise ship investigations to prevent and control the introduction, transmission, and spread of gastrointestinal illnesses on cruise ships.

Led an effort in collaboration with the Geography and Geospatial Sciences Working Group (GeoSWG)to reimagine CDC/ATSDR GIS Day as the Place & Health Conference. The new Place & Health Conference attracts public health scientists from across the nation and serve as a home work at the intersection of place and health to be discussed.

2019

Co-hosted the Borno GIS Summit in Atlanta as part of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) for public and private partners to plan and prioritize future GIS work supporting polio eradication in Nigeria and surrounding areas.

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