

# Data policy issues in the Tracking Network: A potpourri of conundrums?

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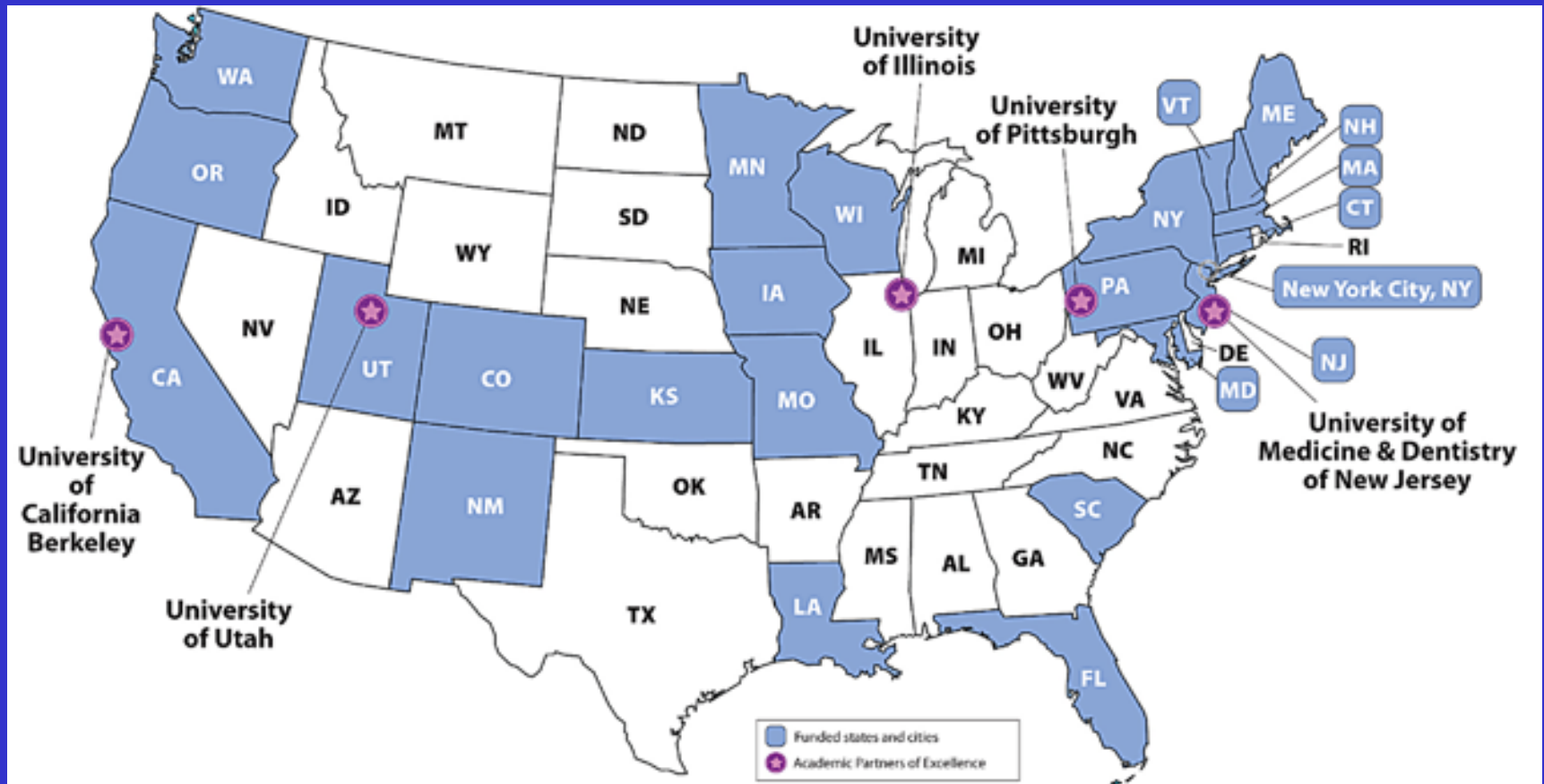
# Outline

- Suppression rules
- Aggregation and stratification
- Age-adjustment standards
- Rounding in display of annual averages

# Background

- 2003 *CDC/ATSDR Policy on Releasing and Sharing Data*
- 2005 CDC-CSTE Intergovernmental Data Release Guidelines Working Group (DRGWG) Report: *CDC-ATSDR Data Release Guidelines and Procedures for Re-release of State-Provided Data*

# National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network



# Tracking Network: Interactive data query systems

- CDC National Center for Environmental Health
  - Environmental Health Tracking Branch (EHTB)
  - Grantees: Health departments in 23 states and 1 city
- Workgroups
  - Standards & Network Development
  - Content
  - Program Marketing & Outreach
  - Geospatial

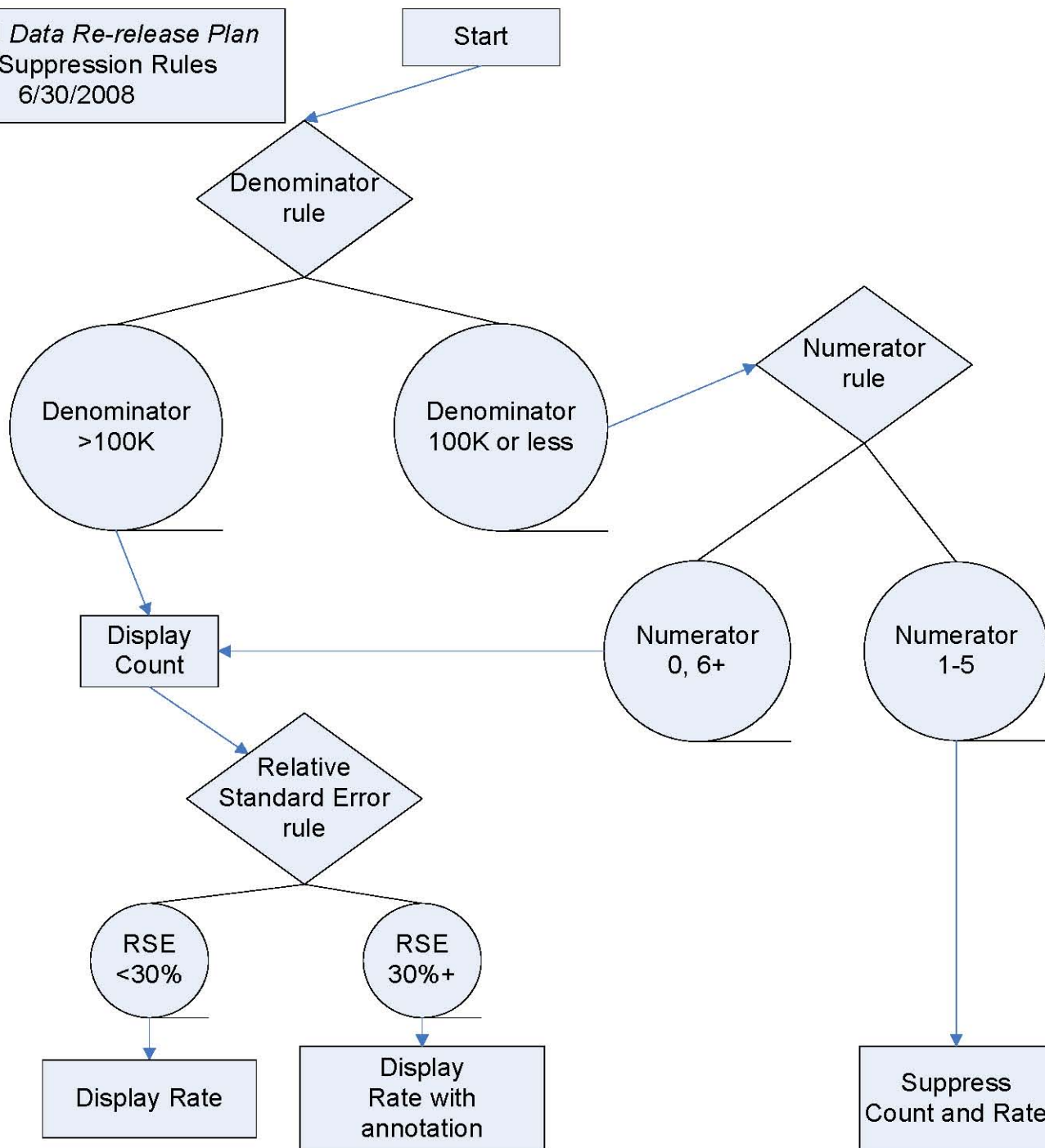
# Technical documents

- *National Network Implementation Plan, 2006*
- *NEPHTN Data Re-release Plan, 2008*
- *Tracking Grantee Portal Standards and Recommendations, 2009*
- *Technical Network Implementation Plan, 2010*
- *CDC Standards for Nationally Consistent Data and Measures within EPHTN, 2011*

# Suppression rules

- Denominator implementation
- Numerator threshold

NEPHTN *Data Re-release Plan*  
V2.5 Suppression Rules  
6/30/2008





# Suppression rules denominator implementation

- EHTB procedure for national portal
  - First assess the total county population size
  - If less than 100,000, only then apply the numerator suppression rule
- Problem: if the selected stratum is less than 100,000, no numerator suppression is applied

# Suppression rules numerator threshold

- The 2008 *NEPHTN Data Re-Release Plan* called for a numerator threshold of 6
- Subsequent MOU between EHTB and NCI/NPCR established a numerator rule of 16 for cancer data
- NCHS-NAPHSIS agreement in mid-2011 established a numerator rule of 10 for vital statistics data

# Aggregation and stratification

- Aggregation/disaggregation of geographic, temporal and other stratification parameters
- Aggregation of counties into multi-county regions

# Aggregation/disaggregation of stratification parameters

- Where Tracking Network measures focus on person data with small numbers, the Network can limit disaggregation using static rules, such as to not allow county-level data or not allow single-year data
- The operational rules of a portal can further limit disaggregation using dynamic rules, such as to not allow a query to disaggregate on two parameters simultaneously
  - “a measure might only be viewed by race or age but not by race and age at the same time”

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# Aggregation of counties into multi-county regions

- The Cancer Team first proposed use of state-designated Multi-County Regions (MCR) in mid-2011
- Criteria for MCR formation are under discussion in the Vital Statistics Data Team
  - MCR should have over 500,000 total population
  - If single county has over 500K, then OK to not combine with other counties

# Age-adjustment standards

- The Tracking Network does not specify the number of age groups to be used for age-adjustment
  - EHTB has used the 18-strata population standard across the national portal
  - except for cancer which follows the 19-strata SEER/NPCR standard
- NAPHSIS and NCHS recommend use of 11 strata for age-adjustment of mortality data

# Rounding in display of annual averages

- The national portal rounds the results of calculations of a multi-year annual average to a whole number
- Alternatively, a case count displayed as a number in a table or chart or map hover/pop-up could be shown as a whole number only if it is an actual count, and be shown rounded to the nearest tenth if it is not



# Data policy issues in the Tracking Network

Conundrums?

OR

Problems to be solved?

# Acknowledgements

- Colleagues in the Tracking Network: too numerous to count
- Disclaimer: The information presented here represents the personal views of the author, and does not constitute official positions of WTN or Washington State Department of Health.