



UPDATE

Report on Public Health Emergency Preparedness in Oregon



Southern Oregon public health, hospital, police, fire and other emergency response partner public information officers participate in Joint Information System/Joint Information Center training in Douglas County in January.



The two-day training included a full-day functional exercise of a joint information center (JIC).



Lead public information officer Marilyn Carter provides a briefing to key JIC staff during the exercise.

TopOff 4 Exercise Update

- Top Officials 4 (TopOff 4) is a major national emergency preparedness exercise that is intended to strengthen the nation's capacity for effective, coordinated action in response to terrorist threats and major disasters. It will take place in Portland, Guam and Phoenix in October 2007.
- Key Public Health Emergency Preparedness staff continue to work with U.S. Department of Homeland Security, State of Oregon and local government planning partners as we move closer to the TopOff exercise.
- These partners provided information on radiological planning efforts, including capabilities to respond to a radiological "dirty-bomb" explosion, during a planning seminar on Feb. 13 in Portland. This seminar mirrored the first of three national TopOff planning seminars that took place in Washington, D.C., in January.
- In early April, the second national planning seminar for TopOff will focus on public information. This topic will be mirrored at a local planning seminar in Portland in mid May.
- The third national planning seminar for TopOff will focus on mental and behavioral health issues related to a dirty bomb scenario.

Radiation Plan Orientations and Table-top Exercise Partner Meetings

- Five meetings are being held around the state to provide partners with an orientation to the state radiation plan and an opportunity to participate in a tabletop exercise based on a radiological emergency scenario.
- The goals of these meetings are to familiarize participants with their roles and responsibilities for responding to a radiological event, encourage participants to review and revise their local radiological

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plans, identify local partners and resources needed when responding to a radiological event, and to develop relationships with local partners before an event takes place.

- Meetings are scheduled to take place in Portland on April 10, Baker City on April 12, Coos Bay on May 11, Independence on May 18, and Bend on May 22.
- Those who will be participating in TopOff are encouraged to attend the Portland meeting. For more information, call Lynda Muriera at (971) 673-0570 or e-mail: Lynda.p.muriera@state.or.us.

New ESF-8 Policy Group

- A new group is being formed to advise on policies and planning regarding the full range of activities encompassed by the State Support Function/ Emergency Support Function 8 (SSF/ESF 8) section of the Oregon Emergency Response Plan. This support function covers preparedness and response for all public health and medical areas.
- The ESF 8 Policy Group will advise the State Public Health Director and the state's Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program to help ensure there is an overall policy and plan and that specific organizational emergency preparedness plans and activities are coordinated. The result will be a master plan that guides and prioritizes activities across all organizations to assure that Oregon's ESF 8 plan is comprehensive, coordinated and effective.
- The Public Health Division has the lead responsibility for protecting, preserving and promoting the health of all Oregonians. This includes responsibility for developing response capacity and control during public health emergencies. The division also has the responsibility for the public health and medical aspects of all-hazard incidents and in assisting local health departments, hospitals and healthcare systems in planning, response and community recovery efforts.

Oregon Medical Advisory Group

- At its February meeting, the Oregon Medical Advisory Group (MAG) continued refining the ethical framework for making decisions during an emergency. Discussion included identifying issues that need to be addressed and how the framework could be used for making decisions about allocation of scarce medical resources and altered standards of care.

- MAG members worked through three scenarios involving disasters to determine how the ethical framework could guide responses. The scenarios included pandemic influenza, a robust earthquake, and a significant chemical spill. Use of the scenarios highlighted the challenges in making real-time decisions that would be faced by hospital administrators, emergency room physicians, law enforcement, other healthcare providers, as well as the public.
- The scenarios emphasized that during large-scale emergencies, standards of care would begin to shift and would need to include “contextual triage” more akin to that provided on a battlefield. Moreover, survival of communities through continued operation of critical services such as electricity, water, law enforcement, and healthcare would become a priority. In this context, medical standards of care would need to shift from a focus on providing services to individuals as they present for care to supporting a strategy focused on survival of the community.
- The MAG now has links to its pages on the Oregon Public Health Emergency Preparedness Web site at: www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/preparedness. Meeting minutes, agendas and other information can be found on that site.

Memorandum of Understanding with Washington Department of Health

- Oregon Public Health Director Susan Allan, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., and Washington State Secretary of Health Mary Selecky recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Public Health Emergencies. The two states agreed to develop plans for how available emergency assistance capacity can be used to mitigate situations that may overwhelm the public health and health care resources of one or both

states through use of a regional planning approach, mutual assistance and collaboration.

- This MOU strengthens our close working relationship with the Washington Department of Health and supports the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Assistance (PNEMA) compact that was signed more than 10 years ago.
- Public Health Division staff will continue to work with the Washington Department of Health and our other PNEMA partners to strength our ESF#8 response capabilities.

Joint Information System/Joint Information Center Training and Exercises

- Two-day Joint Information System/Joint Information Center (JIC) workshops and JIC functional exercises sponsored by the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program are being held regionally around the state this winter and spring. Workshops have already taken place in McMinnville, Roseburg and Salem. Workshops are scheduled for April in Oregon City and Bend, and for June in Pendleton. With the exception of the Salem workshop, the functional exercises are based on a pandemic influenza scenario.
- In preparation for TopOff 4, the Salem JIC exercise, which was tailored for state agency public information officers, was based on a dirty bomb scenario. It was co-sponsored by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and Oregon Emergency Management.

Tribal Preparedness Funding

- Oregon’s Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program is making funding available for tribal health agencies to develop and implement tribal public health preparedness programs and activities. Funding is provided through a

combination of all-hazards and pandemic influenza funding streams from the federal Cooperative Agreement for Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism between the state and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The state's goal is to issue grant contracts by the end of March 2007.

- While the state intends to continue to offer tribal preparedness funding in future budget periods, no commitments can be made or anticipated due to the fluctuating guidance and funding levels at the federal level.

Cross-Border Surge Capacity Workshop

- Staff from the preparedness program participated in the quarterly conference call with members of the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Assistance (PNEMA) Compact, of which Oregon is a signatory member. The focus of the call was on cross-border surge issues facing British Columbia and Washington State as we move closer to the 2010 Olympics that will be held in Vancouver, B.C.
- Preparedness staff participated in a Cross-Border Public Health Communication Conference Call on March 9. Included in the call were discussion of pandemic influenza communication efforts, coordinated messaging and an overview of the upcoming annual Cross-Border Workshop scheduled for May 15 and 16, in Victoria, B.C.

Avian Influenza Rapid Response Training

- Emilio DeBess, D.V.M, M.P.V.M., State Public Health Division veterinarian, Colin Gillin, D.V.M, State Wildlife veterinarian, and Barbara Progulske, D.V.M., M.P.H., Communicable Disease Preparedness epidemiologist/veterinarian, attended the Avian Influenza Rapid Response

Training, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) in Denver on Feb. 6-8. Representatives from state departments of health, agriculture and wildlife from 20 western states were present. Topics covered included surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) among animals and humans, response to an HPAI outbreak in domestic poultry, management of suspect and confirmed human HPAI cases during a poultry outbreak, infection control and personal protective equipment, and laboratory diagnostics.

- The Public Health Division will work with our state and federal partners to identify planning gaps and target trainings on these topics in Oregon.

Pandemic Influenza and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Presentations

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Harryman provided an overview of the state's current planning effort to senior managers from PGE.
- Paul Lewis, M.D., conducted several presentations during the months of January, February and March 2007. Topics included: Community Containment of Pandemic Influenza, at the Local Health Officers Annual Meeting; information on Public Health Emergency Preparedness, for students at the OHSU School of Medicine; Modeling Pandemic Vaccine Prioritization, at the Portland Epidemiology Forum; annual, avian and pandemic influenza for laboratory workers and managers, during a meeting at the Rogue Valley Medical Center; and influenza, at the Northwest Occupational and Environmental Annual Winter Conference.
- In March, Immunization Program staff gave a presentation on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness to the Multnomah Chapter of the Oregon

Society of Medical Assistants.

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Senior Planner Nan Newell, Ph.D., recently provided presentations to several groups. She spoke to state agency human resource and safety managers regarding Pandemic Influenza and Planning during a meeting at SAIF in January. She spoke on the same topic to managers of long-term care facilities during the Oregon Health Care Association meeting in January. In February she gave two talks on Public Health Preparedness for nursing students at the University of Portland.

2007 Public Health Preparedness Summit

- A number of state and local staff attended the 2007 Public Health Preparedness Summit, Feb. 19-23, in Washington, D.C. The summit provided participants with a broad range of tools, techniques and resources to address challenges in preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.
- Session tracks included Partnering for Preparedness, Pandemic Influenza, Preparedness Planning, Laboratory Preparedness and Response, Surveillance and Epidemiology, Strategic National Stockpile, Communicating in a Crisis, Evaluating Preparedness and Response, Continuing Education, Training and Workforce Development; Legal Aspects of Preparedness; Skills-Building; Technology; and Environmental Health.

Radiological Tabletop Exercises

- Harryman recently participated in the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) tabletop exercise to increase readiness efforts related to state and federal roles and responsibilities responding to radiological incidents.
- Newell and Public Health Division Radiological Emergency Response

Manager Danny Loomis served on the planning committee for PortSTEP, a radiological dirty bomb tabletop exercise affecting the Port of Portland and river traffic, to be held in April.

School Closure Tabletop

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo, Ph.D., State Public Health Director Susan Allan, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., along with other representatives from the Oregon Department of Education, Public Health Division, Governor's Office, Oregon Emergency Management, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and Oregon School Boards Association will participate in a school closure tabletop exercise in early May.
- The exercise will involve facilitated discussion of planning, response, decision-making, roles and responsibilities, and lines of communication necessary for closing schools in the context of an influenza pandemic or other communicable disease outbreak. Participants will begin to identify a means for community containment guidelines for determining and implementing school closure.

Disaster Behavioral Health Training

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness staff members Bob Costa, Allan Visnick, Pat Westling, Teresa McGivern and Laurel Hughes attended the "Disaster Behavioral Health: All-Hazards Training" on Feb. 1 and 2, at Portland State University. HRSA Region 1 hosted the training. It featured Brian Flynn from the Center for Study of Traumatic Stress. Flynn is former assistant U.S. Surgeon General and Rear Admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service (retired). The training also featured Jim Shultz, director of the Center for Disaster Epidemiology and Emergency Preparedness at the University of Miami, Florida and co-

director of the Miami Center for Public Health Preparedness.

- Participants came away with a wealth of resources on disaster behavioral health concepts and applications, responder resiliency and survivor support.

Oregon Laboratory Response to Pandemic Influenza: Orientation & Tabletop Conferences

- The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL)-Laboratory Response Network (LRN) for Public Health Preparedness is presenting five tabletop conferences around the state this winter and spring. The trainings feature Paul Lewis, M.D., Oregon Public Health Division medical epidemiologist; Chris Biggs, M.S., Oregon Public Health Laboratory Virology Manager; Teresa McGivern, M.T.; and Terry Crandall, M.T.; LRN staff.
- The goal of the training is to ensure clinical lab technicians, hospital infection control coordinators, emergency department staff and others have the knowledge and tools they need to detect, properly transport and test potential novel influenza virus samples prior to a potential pandemic outbreak.
- The first session took place in February at the Rogue Valley Medical Center in Medford. The March session was at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center in Portland. April sessions are scheduled at the Warm Springs Tribal Museum, and in Baker City. The final session will take place in May during the Oregon Medical Technologist Conference in Newport.

Annual Oregon Public Health Conference

- Approximately 45 people attended the third annual Oregon Public Health Conference on Feb. 6-8 in Portland. The conference was co-sponsored by the Oregon Public Health Division, Public Health Emergency Preparedness

program and the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine. This year's conference featured three different tracks—Epidemiology for Public Health Workers, Managing Public Health Projects: the Human Side of Organizational Management, and Emergency Preparedness.

- During the conference, Bill Riley, M.S.W., DHS vulnerable populations project manager; Pat Westling, R.N.-C, M.S.N., Public Health Division Maternal and Child Health emergency preparedness manager; Connie Saldana, B.S., M.S., emergency preparedness coordinator for the DHS Seniors and People with Disabilities program; and Laurel Hughes, Psy.D., emergency response planner with DHS Addictions and Mental Health, presented a day-long workshop on vulnerable populations, including a tabletop exercise.

Oregon ALERT Immunization Registry Needs Assessment

- The Public Health Division Immunization Program recently completed a needs assessment to explore the possibility of using the Oregon ALERT vaccine immunization registry for tracking and managing vaccines, antibiotics and antiviral medications during a public health emergency. For the assessment, 50 immunization partners described their usual inventory practices, how they document vaccinations and what their capacity would be for transferring data to the ALERT Immunization Registry during a public health emergency.

Pharmaceutical Preparedness and Mass Dispensing

- Staff from the Strategic National Stockpile and Cities Readiness Initiative programs recently co-taught a course on Pharmaceutical Preparedness and Mass

Dispensing, with Andy Stergachis, Ph.D., R.Ph., with the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice.

Chemical Terrorism Preparedness

- Oregon State Public Health Laboratory Chemical Terrorism Coordinator Eric Clark, M.S., C.C.H.O., C.H.M.M., will chair the CDC's National Level-3 Laboratory Workgroup Committee for Best Practices. Committee members are assigned specific topics and write up formal guidance documents for Level-3 best practices.
- The goal is to produce a complete best practices manual that covers the spectrum of readiness topics and make it available to all chemical terrorism coordinators. The Oregon Laboratory Response Network's secure website serves as the national Level-3 committee's central document repository and can be accessed by all committee members.
- The CDC has recognized Oregon as a forerunner in Level-3 Chemical Terrorism Laboratory preparedness.

Integration of Human Patient Simulators into Disaster/Emergency Medicine Training

- Several representatives from HRSA Region 3 recently spoke at a Medical Education Technologies, Inc., conference on the integration of so-called "high-fidelity simulation" (use of human patient mannequins) into disaster/emergency medicine training.
- Umpqua Community College/Mercy Medical Center and McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center received funding through a HRSA Region 3 grant to purchase and implement the use of high-fidelity Emergency Care Simulators. They replicate a number of different scenarios, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) events, so the learner can practice caring for the "patient". Both sites

have integrated the simulation technology with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and staff for continuing education.

Metro Regional Emergency Preparedness Planning Group

- The Portland-metro Regional Emergency Preparedness Planning group meets monthly to help ensure coordination among multiple county health departments and response jurisdictions. The group includes representatives from the Urban Area Strategic Initiative (UASI), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Hospital Preparedness Organization (HPO), and the Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) area, including Clark County, Wash.
- During a recent meeting, the group heard from Kathie Griffith, representing the Coalition of Community Health Clinics. During a public health emergency, community health clinics may be able to help support medical surge, and also help prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed, by dealing with their own patients.
- The HRSA HPO recently completed a strategic planning process to balance the competing requirements of various grants. Top priorities are to solidify the regional coordination and governance, continue development of a regional communication plan, and integrate all the surge plans (hospital, ambulatory, and public health) into one regional plan that is integrated with county plans.

Multnomah County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Community Engagement

- Multnomah County staff members have recently provided community-based briefings, trainings, and outreach for the Northwest Parrish Nurses, the Woodstock Branch of the Multnomah County Library, the county chapter of the Oregon Risk Managers Association, the Woodstock Neighborhood Association and 2006

African American Wellness Village.

- Over the last several months the staff has briefed the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, participated in their yearly luncheon, and briefed the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs. Additionally, in January, the county held a focus group with owners of local medium-sized businesses to customize public health communications and preparedness checklists for this audience.

Disaster Preparedness Training for Child Care Professionals

- Seventy certified childcare providers participated in two emergency planning workshops in Josephine and Jackson counties on Feb. 23. Jackson and Josephine county public health preparedness, The Job Council, Oregon HRSA Region 5, and Southern Oregon Head Start sponsored the workshops.
- During the interactive workshops, individual childcare providers put together written emergency/disaster plans. Each participant received a Red Cross mini-pack first aid kit and a binder with customized childcare planning templates, a family emergency plan for home childcare providers, sample check lists, a 72-hour-kit list, and wallet cards for parents with emergency information.

New Medical Reserve Corps in HRSA Region 2

- The U.S. Surgeon General recently recognized Yamhill County and Oregon HRSA Region 2 as established Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) Units. Polk and Marion counties, and Samaritan Health Services sent letters of support for the Regional MRC.

New Public Health Emergency Preparedness Staff

- PHEP has hired two experienced, globe trotting public health professionals as

limited-duration planners to focus on pandemic antiviral distribution and community containment. Michael Kubler, M.S., recently retired as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy where he was involved in public health and emergency response in Hawaii, East Timor, Palau and Iceland. Julie Plagenhoef, M.P.H., comes to the staff from the Virginia State Department of Health where she worked on influenza surveillance. Previously she worked in Mauritania as a Peace Corp volunteer.

- Sudhir Oberoi has been hired as the new Food Defense and Environmental Health Emergency Preparedness Specialist. Oberoi comes to the staff from the Miami-Dade County Health Department in Florida with an extensive background in emergency preparedness.
- Patricia Westling, R.N.-C, M.S.N., from the Office of Family Health, is the new Maternal and Child Health emergency preparedness manager. She was formerly Women’s and Perinatal Health Section Manager in the Office of Family Health.



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