

TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

New and emerging health risks associated with mass trauma events and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) agents are increasing matters of concern. Consequently, the role of our public health system is changing to include new areas of concern, such as public health law, forensic epidemiology, and national security.

This expansion has reshaped public health practice, and requires public health preparation for and response to emergencies in a more effective, efficient, and coordinated way. While embracing this new role, public health's cardinal responsibility remains the same—to protect people's health. CDC is committed to enhancing preparedness and emergency response expertise. Core competencies, such as detection; investigation and response; control, containment and recovery; laboratory science; and research have driven past successes and will now provide the foundation for renewed efforts to protect the public from ever changing health threats.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

The list below highlights several of CDC's accomplishments in this emerging area and demonstrates the growing success of its terrorism preparedness and response program.

- Enrolled 25 new laboratories into the national Laboratory Response Network, bringing the total to 121.
- Continued to manage the State and Local Preparedness Cooperative Agreement and provided updated guidance to all 62 grantees.
- Successfully maintained the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) with 12-hour push packages, ensuring onsite delivery within 12 hours.
- Administered the Select Agent Program, resulting in 332 entities being registered, 211 inspections completed, 131 select agent transfers tracked, and the publication of an interim Final Rule, amending the applicability requirements to allow provisional registration certificates.
- Established an agency-wide public health strategy for terrorism preparedness and response.
- Increased the availability of respirators certified against CBRN agents for first responders based on rigorous laboratory tests, evaluation of product specifications, and assessment of the manufacturer's quality control procedures.
- Issued criteria for testing/certifying CBRN Escape Respirators intended to reduce toxic exposures in the workplace.
- Participated in exercises such as TopOff2, Global Mercury, and Unified Defense 2003 to improve coordinated emergency response.
- Supported state and local public health departments' preparedness capabilities such that 95% of grantees indicate that round the clock systems are in place to activate response plans; 100% identified a state-wide Director of Bioterrorism; and 87% developed plans to receive and manage the SNS.
- Posted over 1,200 notifications on reports of outbreaks on the *Epidemic Information Exchange (Epi-X)*, CDC's nationwide secure communications system. *Epi-X* connects more than 1,800 public health officials, fills requests for epidemiologic assistance, and announces terrorist threats or acts.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC is committed to strengthening the nation's public health system. CDC will continue providing technical assistance to states, improving laboratory capacity to detect biological and chemical agents, detecting emerging threats through a local/national data collection system, developing personal protective equipment technologies, and ensuring health information reaches all clinicians through a comprehensive network of satellite and other communication capacities.