

ACADEMIC CENTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- The health of America's communities hinges on the nation's public health workforce, which consists of physicians, nurses, environmental health scientists, health educators, laboratorians, and managers, as well as other professionals, first responders, and volunteers forming the public health frontline.
- Without preparation in core competencies of terrorism and emergency preparedness, the capacity of agencies and communities to respond to terrorism and other emergency health threats will be unpredictable.
- Strong collaboration and partnerships are required among federal, state and local agencies; educational institutions; and professional organizations to establish a systematic approach to education and training to ensure national preparedness and response.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In 2000, CDC established a national system of Academic Centers for Public Health Preparedness (A-CPHPs) to strengthen state and local workforce capacity to respond to terrorism and other global health threats. In just 3 years, the program has expanded to a \$25 million investment supporting 21 Academic Centers in 23 schools of public health that serve 46 states and link schools of public health with state, local, and regional health departments to support terrorism preparedness and to address public health infrastructure needs.

Examples of Program in Action

- More than 300 bioterrorism-related courses, seminars, workshops, and modules are available at www.asph.org/phpc.
- In Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh CPHP established year-long training for Regional Counter-Terrorism Task Forces in cross-agency planning and problem solving; the CPHP identifies and evaluates competency-based training to be used for preparing 52,000 frontline workers to serve as state-wide surge capacity for terrorism preparedness.
- In Georgia, over 1,000 public health workers are profiled in "G-TRAIN," a customized learning management system developed by the Emory University Center for Public Health and Preparedness Research. Data are available about computer access, learning preferences, competency needs, and topics of interest. The Georgia Division of Public Health and the Emory Center will design and implement state-wide terrorism training and monitor results with G-TRAIN.
- In California, the University of California Los Angeles Center for Public Health and Disasters trained 292 public health and emergency response personnel from seven county health agencies; 94% of participants rated this training extremely effective; results were validated by testing knowledge and performance gains.
- Team Epi-Aid at the University of North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness provided critical surge capacity during the public health response to hurricane Isabel.
- The University of Oklahoma College of Public Health's Southwest Center for Public Health Preparedness offers an academic certificate in public health preparedness to staff at the state health department.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Expand the A-CPHP Program to ensure nationwide coverage.
- Evaluate the impact of the national network of A-CPHP's public health workforce readiness.
- Build upon the accomplishments of the A-CPHPs to continue providing the nation with a competent and sustainable public health workforce.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

January 2004