

Dear Colleagues,

When the tragedies of the September 11, 2001 and the subsequent anthrax attacks occurred, we collectively realized that the United States was underprepared to respond to events of this magnitude. Many lives were lost, and for a time, the nation stood gripped with fear about what might happen next. But what did happen was nothing short of heroic. Responders and citizens alike offered their best to save lives and prevent further harm. Government stepped up too, investing in critical infrastructure and seeking innovative ways to prepare the country against future emergencies. As a nation, we committed ourselves to preventing events of this scale from ever happening again, and to saving more lives if they did.

More than 10 years later, we continue our efforts to reduce the harm caused by public health threats. Communications among responders and agencies has improved. We have found more effective ways to enable collaboration and share resources. And we have strengthened and expanded local, state, and regional capabilities so that responders everywhere have better access to what they need.

The 2014 Ebola outbreak and the first confirmed cases in the United States underscore the importance of continuing efforts to strengthen our systems to respond to public health emergencies. CDC, along with other U.S. government agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), and domestic and international partners, is taking active steps to respond to the rapidly changing situation in West Africa and to protect our nation's health security. We can expect that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa will require our long term involvement; our partnerships with state and local public health departments will be essential to preparing our nation for the potential of future cases.

This report describes how CDC and its partners work together to improve our nation's health security. It also demonstrates Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) awardees' progress in preparing for major responses.

CDC remains committed to saving lives by supporting state and local public health departments and using resources to achieve the greatest benefit. As threats evolve, we continue to strive toward more innovation, increased efficiency, and greater resiliency to meet and overcome those threats.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen C. Redd, MD
RADM, USPHS
Director
Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention