Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response

Division of Emergency Operations

Role in Public Health Preparedness and Response

When a disaster occurs, CDC must respond effectively and support international, national, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector public health emergency response partners. The Division of Emergency Operations (DEO) is responsible for the overall coordination of CDC's emergency management program prior to and during public health emergencies. This includes:

- Operating the CDC Emergency Operations Center for monitoring and coordinating response activities
- Developing response plans, training, conducting exercises, and evaluating CDC's ability to respond following an exercise or a real incident

Operating a Command Center for Monitoring and Coordinating Emergency Response

A critical component of CDC's work during an incident is to coordinate response activities and provide resources to state and local public health departments. DEO manages CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which serves as the command center for monitoring and coordinating CDC's emergency response to public health threats in the United States and abroad. Staffed around the clock, the EOC serves as CDC's central point of contact for reporting public health threats and supports the HHS Secretary's Operations Center. The EOC organizes CDC scientific experts in one location during an emergency response to analyze, validate, and efficiently exchange information as well as connect with public health emergency response partners. In addition, during public health emergencies, DEO manages requests for field and Incident Management System (IMS) staffing. To accomplish this task, DEO coordinates with CIO Emergency Coordinators, Incident Management staff, and CDC leadership to ensure all required staffing functions are identified and filled. Also, DEO maintains staffing reports and statistical data for each event.

To support state and local efforts during an emergency response, DEO coordinates the deployment of CDC staff and the procurement and management of all equipment and supplies that CDC subject matter experts may need during their deployment. Since its inception in September 2001, the EOC has responded to more than 50 public health threats, including hurricanes, food borne disease outbreaks, Hurricane Irene, polio eradication, a mulitstate H7N9 outbreak, and MERS-CoV.

Planning, Training, Exercising, and Evaluating to Improve Preparedness

DEO is continually working to enhance CDC's emergency management program for all-hazard incidents.

Planning. DEO leads the development of CDC's all-hazards plans that describe the roles and responsibilities of different CDC offices, centers, and institutes during an emergency. CDC has an all-hazards base plan that outlines core roles and responsibilities for all types of responses, as well as plans for specific scenarios (e.g., hurricanes or anthrax incidents). DEO also develops specific agency public health emergency plans tailored to public health emergency responses (e.g., H7N9 and polio).

CDC Public Health Responses

2003
Columbia Space Shuttle Disaster; SARS; Monkey Pox; Northeast Blackout; Hurricane Isabel; Influenza; California Wildfires; Ricin; Tularemia; Anthrax; BSE (Mad Cow Disease)

2004
Influenza Vaccine Shortage; Guam Typhoon; Ricin Domestic Response; G8 Summit; Summer Olympics; Democratic National Convention; Republican National Convention; Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jean; West Nile Virus; Tsunami

2005
Marburg Virus; Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma

2006
Tropical Storm Ernesto; Mumps; E.coli

2007
XDR/MDR TB; Hurricane Dean

2008
Satellite intercept; Salmonella and E. coli outbreaks; Hurricane Dolly; Tropical Storm Edouard; Hurricanes Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike

2009
Salmonella typhimurium outbreak; Presidential Inauguration, H1N1 Influenza

2010
NH Anthrax; Haiti Earthquake; Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill; Haiti Cholera Outbreak

2011
Japan Earthquake and Tsunami; Hurricane Irene

2012
Polio; Meningitis Outbreak; Hurricane Sandy

2013
H7N9; MERS-CoV

Accomplishments

Building the capacity to coordinate CDC's preparedness and emergency response activities prior to and during public health emergencies is a continuous process of planning, training, exercising, and evaluating to improve emergency response. Recent key accomplishments (2011) to support CDC's efforts for monitoring and coordinating emergency response include:

- Activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to a Level 2 response in support of the PanFlu Functional Exercise to assess CDC's preparedness and operational capability and to identify future PanFlu improvement planning and preparedness activities.

- As the CDC point-of-contact for state and local officials, the EOC staff triaged 19,758 calls of which:
  - 4,397 were from clinicians, registered nurses, and state and local health departments
  - 8,986 were from other federal or non-government organizations that were reported to state health departments
  - 6,148 were from the public, with the majority of these calls being referred to state health departments

- Supported 10 international requests for assistance: four were requests for information from WHO, PAHO, and other Ministries of Health, and the EOC facilitated six potential Public Health Emergency of International Concern events.

- Coordinated the distribution of 2000 emergency communication responses.

- Coordinated emergency deployment of 412 CDC staff for domestic and international public health emergency responses or outbreak investigation activities.

- Supported 1,377 CDC staff traveling on routine travel and emergency deploy-ments with over 3,008 pieces of deployment equipment.

- Coordinated over 83 shipments of critical supplies and equipment to deployers and field teams preparing for or engaged in domestic and international public health missions. This included shipment of materials to support Dengue, Ebola, Meningitis, and Polio Outbreak response operations, as well as a variety of domestic Epi-Aid deployments.

Training. CDC prepares its subject matter experts by educating them on various guidance documents including the National Response Framework, the Incident Command System (ICS), and CDC Emergency Operations Center functions. DEO participates in preparedness training and also manages the National Planners Course, a program of instruction designed to provide CDC sta a comprehensive overview and understanding of the use of the Federal Planning and Development Process.

Exercising and Evaluating. CDC conducts exercises to verify and validate the agency's ability to respond rapidly and effictively to public health threats and emergencies. RecentCDC Public Health Preparedness and Response Exercises have ranged from the national level non-lethal cyber attack exercise to CDC-sponsored Natural Disaster and Pandemic Influenza Exercises. To improve CDC's response capabilities, DEO also provides the agency with an after action evaluation capability that assesses CDC capabilities during public health emergency responses during exercises.

Emergency Risk Communications. CDC's emergency communication for all-hazards preparedness and response involves ensuring timely, consistent, targeted, and actionable information reaches the public and stakeholders during emergencies. There is also a need for agency-wide emergency risk communication planning and preparedness activities through selected channels that deliver national emergency and terrorism-related messages to the public (i.e., CDC's Emergency Preparedness and Response Website, Health Alert Network, Epi-X,Clinician Outreach and Communica-tion Activity Registry, non-governmental organizations and government partner channels, and professional list-servs.

For more information about CDC's emergency preparedness and response activities, go to www.cdc.gov/phpr.

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