

Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center at the Harvard School of Public Health (H-PERLC)

Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center at the Harvard School of Public Health – Overview

The Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center at the Harvard School of Public Health (H-PERLC) is a training center focused on providing preparedness and response training for the public health workforce. The mission of H-PERLC is to improve the nation's public health preparedness and response capabilities during emergencies. These emergencies may be deliberate, accidental, or natural. By uniting HSPH faculty and professionals, H-PERLC facilitates practice-based discussions of emerging preparedness issues. Faculty and staff work with state, local, territorial, and tribal public health authorities in New England to develop and deliver training and education. Methods include classroom instruction, seminars, web-based courses, satellite broadcasts, and hands-on experiences. H-PERLC is hosted in the Harvard School of Public Health Division of Policy Translation and Leadership Development, and is part of an integrated system of preparedness activities.

Partners

In collaboration with NACCHO, NALBOH, and ASTHO the H-PERLC will target public health practice professionals within the state, county, district, and local health departments in New England's diverse and generally decentralized local public health infrastructure.

National Network of Learning Centers

H-PERLC is part of a network of training centers, called the Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Centers (PERLC), which is funded by the CDC. The PERLC serve in a national capacity to meet the preparedness and response training and education needs of the US public health workforce. The PERLC provide competency-based training to state, local, and tribal public health authorities within defined service areas. In doing so, PERLC provide specialized training, education, and resources, in addition to exercising consultations for partners on request. PERLC are acknowledged for their unique capacity to adapt and tailor preparedness training to meet stakeholder requirements. The PERLC are established within the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited schools of public health and serve as an important national resource to meet the requirements of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA), Sec. 304 (d).

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror07/PAHPAPublicLaw.pdf>

Key Activities

H-PERLC supplements its core competency programs with experiential learning activities and practical tools. The Center places particular emphasis on the development and use of:

- Exercises
- Practical Case Studies
- Interactive Symposia
- Speakers' Series
- Toolkits
- Planning Guides



The Center's resources and toolkits help to:

- **Strengthen system readiness** by implementing specially designed competency-based programs
- **Increase capacity at the state and local levels** for all-hazard preparedness and emergency public health response through development of strong partnerships
- **Develop a solid network of programs** available across New England with a rigorous scientific base to enhance the region's preparedness and emergency response capacity

H-PERLC rigorously evaluates all newly developed training materials, exercises, cases, and other tools to ensure improvement of effective planning and emergency response capabilities in the public health workforce.



Key Accomplishments



During the past years the H-PERLC has provided technical assistance to multiple state and local health departments in the application of quantitative and qualitative methods in emergency preparedness. Our faculty and staff's background in biostatistics, surveillance, and social epidemiology has provided the H-PERLC team with the unique expertise to apply analytical methods in emergency preparedness. By collaborating with the Connecticut Department of Public Health the H-PERLC has engaged in the development of a statewide Hazard Vulnerability Analysis with a public health focus. Results of this process will inform planning efforts at the state level by providing information to develop and improve programs to enhance disaster preparedness and response. Many other collaborations have taken place with

NACCHO and other local and state health departments leading to the analysis of preparedness outcomes, administrative barriers as well as exercise performance.

H-PERLC Core Competency Curriculum Committee (CC) has been responsible for adopting, adapting, and creating the standards for the curriculum framework. As a result of this effort the following online courses have been developed and recorded in the competency areas of: Plan for and Improve Practice, Model Leadership, and Communicate and Manage Information:

1. Emergency Planning for Local Public Health, by Dorothy Bernard MPH with focus on the development of emergency plans
2. Using Exercises to Enhance and Measure Preparedness, with Paul D. Biddinger, MD FACEP on participation in improving an organization's capacities
3. Review of Current Doctrine Regarding After Action Reporting, with Paul D. Biddinger, MD FACEP on participation in improving the organization's capacities
4. Case study: The Great Springfield Tornado, with Robert Hassett, MPH on collaboration with organizations and agencies with complementary legal authority)
5. A Decade of Lessons Learned Post 9/11, HSPH Forum event (solve problems under emergency conditions)
6. Integrating and Engaging Racially and Ethnically Diverse Communities in Public Health Preparedness and Response, by Dennis Andrulis, PhD MPH (demonstrate respect for all persons and cultures)
7. What Did We Learn From the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic About Public Health Emergency Preparedness Systems?, Part 1, by Michael A. Stoto, PhD (manage information related to an emergency)
8. What Did We Learn From the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic About Public Health Emergency Preparedness Systems?, Part 2, by Michael A. Stoto, PhD (participate in improving the organization's capacities [including, but not limited to programs, plans, policies, laws, and workforce training])
9. Public Communication of Risk in 21st Century: Promises and Challenges, by K. Viswanath, PhD (use principles of crisis and risk communication)

Contact Information

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CDC Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Centers (PERLC)

For more information about the PERLC program please email us at perlcprogram@cdc.gov or visit our website at <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/perlc.htm>.