

## Southwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center - Overview



The Southwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (SWPERLC) was designed to provide quality training and education based on core-competencies to state, local, and tribal public health workforce and authorities. The SWPERLC assesses broad public health workforce needs and identifies gaps in maximization of available resources. Moreover, the center provides targeted curriculums to address specific needs and gaps through modifying, adapting, and utilizing existing materials and resources. Training takes place through various modalities including the classroom, online, distance education, teleconferencing, and digital media. In addition, the SWPERLC responds to specific training requests presented by partnering agencies.

## Partners

SWPERLC aims to enhance public health system competency, capacity, and public health workers' willingness to effectively respond to emergencies. SWPERLC partners include the public health workforce of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma City-County Health Department, Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition, Cheyenne-Arapaho Nation (Canadian County), and Citizen Potawatomie Nation.

## National Network of Learning Centers

SWPERLC 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

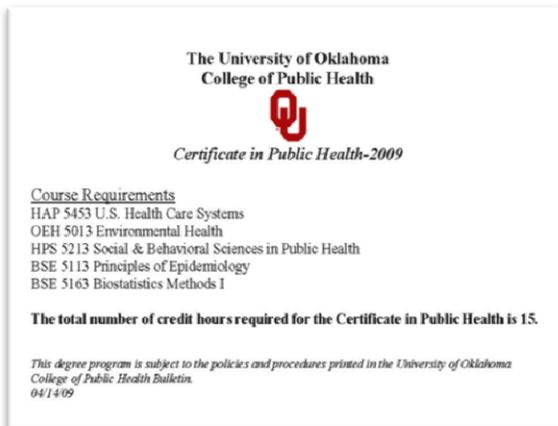
After conducting assessments of the emergency response training needs of partners, SWPERLC has designed face-to-face or train-the-trainer courses focused on several areas, including:

- Continuity of Operations
- First Responder Emergency Management
- Critical Incident Stress Management & Debriefing
- Foot & Mouth Workshop & Exercise
- First Responder training for Community Health Representatives
- Community Emergency Response Team training
- Risk Communication
- Leadership in Emergencies
- Facilitations Skills Workshops



# Key Accomplishments

## University of Oklahoma Certificate of Public Health



### Problem

There are over 3,000 public health employees in Oklahoma. While more than half (54%) of these employees have completed a BA or BS, fewer than 10% of the workforce has any formal training in public health. In short, there are a large number of individual workforce members currently employed who have many years of experience, but no formal public health education.

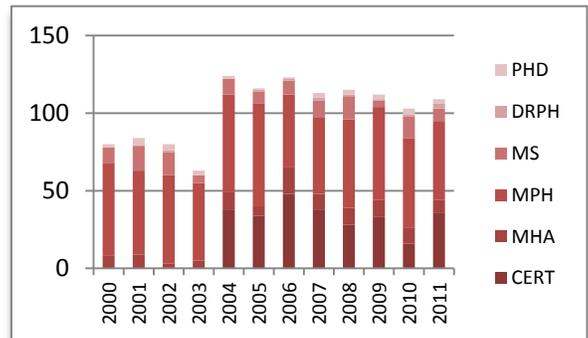
### Solution

The Certificate in Public Health was developed to target this potential discrepancy in the public health workforce. The Oklahoma State Commissioner of Health as well as the Directors of the two City-County health departments in the state approached the College of Public Health and proposed a program that would assist in filling the gap between

experience and formal public health training. Applicants are required to have a bachelor's degree and eligible for admission to the College of Public Health as a professional Master of Public Health student. A certified student takes six core courses, one each in Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Environmental Health, Health Promotion Science, Health Administration and Policy, and Public Health Preparedness and Practice. Upon successful completion of all six courses, the student receives certification and eligibility to continue the MPH with no further admission requirements.

### Results

Since 2005, of the 297 individuals completing the Certificate in Public Health, 269 have gone on to complete a Masters of Public Health, and two have completed a Doctorate in Public Health. Not surprisingly, students who receive Certificates in Public Health have a significantly higher GPA compared to those who did not complete the program. Modified over the years to maintain a relatable currency, the Certificate program remains an important element in sustaining and strengthening Oklahoma's public health workforce. Funding for the Southwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center has allowed for an increased number of students receiving Certificates in Public Health.



## 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](mailto:perlcprogram@cdc.gov) or visit our website at <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/perlc.htm>.