

## South Central Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center - Overview

The South Central Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (SCPERLC) is a training center focused on providing preparedness and response training for the public health workforce. The Center was launched in 2010 to strengthen and improve the nation's public health, preparedness, and response capabilities. SCPERLC vision is a prepared public health workforce able to perform essential public health services and respond to natural disasters, infectious disease outbreaks, bioterrorism, and other public health emergencies. This initiative focuses on providing training and technical assistance to the public health workforce and other responder communities in partner states. With the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, SCPERLC provides a coherent framework for preparedness and emergency response training that: 1) improves knowledge, skills and abilities; 2) improves preparedness and response performance; and 3) results in improved training-related outcomes for the preparedness and emergency response workforce.



## Partners

SCPERLC is a collaborative partnership between the UAB School of Public Health and the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, whose mission is to improve the nation's public health preparedness and response capabilities by providing training and technical assistance to the public health workforce in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

As part of the South Central Public Health Partnership for Workforce Development, the SCPERLC collaborates formally with city, county, state and tribal health departments in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Each of the SCPERLC's partners has made a commitment to collaborative workforce development with preparedness training as a priority in their strategic plans. Partner organizations include:

Alabama Department of Public Health; Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' Office of Public Health; Mississippi State Department of Health; Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama; United South and Eastern Tribes Inc.; Jefferson County Department of Health (AL); Mobile County Health Department (AL); City of New Orleans Health Department (LA)

## National Network of Learning Centers

CRLC is part of a network of training centers, called 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 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

SCPERLC provides training opportunities tailored to the unique needs of the region through onsite courses, web-based courses, satellite broadcasts, conferences, and joint training activities. To remove any financial burdens, all training programs developed and delivered by the South Central Partnership are available free of charge.

**Online Courses:** The SCPERLC offers over 80 public health preparedness specific online courses, which are self-paced and offered at no cost to the user. Online courses are accessible 24/7 through our South Central Learning Management System (LMS), <http://www.southcentralpartnership.org/training>.

**In-Person Training:** The SCPERLC offers a number of in-person trainings and workshops throughout the region. Recent course offerings include: Pediatric Trauma and Disaster Care, Initial Medical Management of Radiation Injuries, Psychology of Decision Making for First Responders, Responder Health and Safety Awareness, and Mass Casualty Triage Incident Awareness.

**Exercises Design and Evaluation:** The SCPERLC is a recognized leader in developing, conducting, and evaluating discussion-based and operational exercises for our partner agencies. SCPERLC investigators follow Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) guidelines and methodology for exercise design and implementation.

**Satellite Broadcast programs:** The SCPERLC engages local, regional, and national subject matter experts to participate in nationally viewed satellite broadcasts, which address current topics in public health preparedness. These 90-minute broadcasts are developed in collaboration with the Alabama Public Health Training Network, a division of the Alabama Department of Public Health, who utilizes distance learning technologies to reach public health professionals throughout the country. Archived webcasts can be found: <http://www.southcentralpartnership.org/webcasts>.

**Technical Assistance:** Throughout every step of the training process (assessment, training development, implementation, and evaluation) the SCPERLC relies on input from practice-based partners to validate need and relevance for the technical assistance provided.



## Key Accomplishments



### SCPERLC Tribal Partnerships

The SCPERLC is currently working with the Alabama Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to educate Tribal leaders on the process of developing the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) plans for Tribal departments and agencies. Interactive workshops, led by SCPERLC faculty, familiarize Tribal department leaders with the most essential elements in an effective COOP. These elements include organizing and coordinating the planning process, identification of the department/agency's essential functions, and determining the appropriate suspension of operations during long-term disasters.

### Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP)

The creation of COOP by organizations is widely recognized as a key element of disaster preparedness and disaster response strategies. Although the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides guidance for the preparation of COOPs in the 2009 Continuity Guidance

Circular 1 (CGC1), interpretation of that guidance into an effective plan often lacks consistency and clarity. As a result, relatively inexperienced individuals who may be developing COOPs often do not completely understand COOP requirements or how to convert them into a practical plan. To address these issues, the South Central Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center developed a COOP template for State and Tribal government agencies in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. The template translates the policy prescriptions of CGC 1 into an easy-to-use instrument for efficiently developing a COOP while ensuring adherence to regulations across agencies and departments. The template not only facilitates continuity planning for government organizations, but is also applicable to a variety of private and public sector organizations, including businesses.

### Southeastern Regional Pediatric Disaster Response Surge Network

Due to the relatively small number of pediatric hospitals and related facilities, pediatric surge capacity in the Southeastern United States faces several barriers preventing its optimal performance. These limitations include insufficient public health resources, high rates of poverty, and a lack coordinated pediatric preparedness response strategies of public health, emergency responders, and pediatric providers. SCPERLC leads the collaboration of the Alabama Department of Health, Mississippi State Department of Health, and more than 70 agencies and health care institutions from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee in the maintenance, growth, and enhancement of the Southeastern Regional Pediatric Disaster Response Surge Network. This is a voluntary network dedicated to coordinating and improving pediatric preparedness response in the Southeastern United States. The explicit purpose of the Network is to provide regional pediatric surge capacity and resources in the event of large-scale emergencies or disasters that overwhelm local or state pediatric resources.

The work of the SCPERLC and the Southeastern Regional Pediatric Disaster Response Network has and will continue to significantly improve the communication, cooperation, and emergency response strategies of the participating organizations, agencies, and institutions. SCPERLC hopes to continue significantly improving the region's overall disaster preparedness.



## 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>.