

Northwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center - Overview

The Northwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (NWPERLC) builds on the experience, networks, and resources in addition to 10 successful years as a respected Center for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) to provide training, evaluation, and technical assistance to the state, local, and tribal public health agencies and organizations. Through networks and partnerships, emergency preparedness training activities strive to strengthen the capabilities of individual organizations and states. However, these key partnerships have the dual benefit of also encouraging collaboration and joint response capabilities within the region.

Partners

The Northwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center (NWPERLC) partners include the public health workforce of the state, local, and tribal public health agencies, and organizations within the six states of the Northwest region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming). NWPERLC designs training activities and competency-based educational tools, specifically requested by partners.

National Network of Learning Centers

The NWPERLC 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

NWPERLC activities include:

- Update and revise trainings to incorporate and respond to the public health emergency preparedness core competencies, principles of adult learning, and the emerging evidence base
- Develop and evaluate new core competency-based emergency preparedness training to address topics identified as emerging or of high priority
- Work on behalf of diverse populations and those with identified vulnerabilities for emergencies, including those that are Limited English Proficiency, frontier, or tribal; these communities are especially vulnerable in emergencies which underscores the importance of their inclusion and participation in public health emergency preparedness and response training



Key Accomplishments

- **Kansas Uses NWCPHP Epi Modules as an Affordable, Effective Way to Train Public Health Workforce**

Cuts to workforce training are often among the first cuts that states experience, despite the growing need to keep staff current on competencies and effective practices. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (DOHE) approached NWCPHP to align online epidemiology modules with the Council on Linkages' Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals. In this way, Kansas can more effectively and cohesively implement training for its public health workforce. Once competencies were identified, the partnership blossomed. In fall of 2011, the Kansas DOHE and the Association of Local Health Departments developed the Epidemiology in Practice training plan to meet preparedness deliverables. Module 1 included a self-assessment of five mandatory NWCPHP Epidemiology modules. For Module 2, the state held an in-person training (November 2011) during which participants practiced applying new skills to Kansas's public health law. Module 3, "Real World Events," was held during the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments mid-year meeting in June 2012. Kansas public health professionals have improved their skills in epidemiology and outbreak response as a result of the work done to align competencies and the high quality of NWCPHP's online trainings.

- **NWCPHP Facilitates Regional Emergency Preparedness Collaboration**

NWPERLC facilitated a five-month emergency preparedness assessment and planning effort. This effort aimed to develop state-specific strategies that address the new Public Health Emergency Preparedness Capabilities recently released by the CDC. At the end of the five month period, NWCPHP facilitated a meeting with representatives from all four states to discuss common strengths and concerns. These conversations pave the way for more collaboration among states, increasing opportunities for joint training and other cross-border sharing, and clarifying the potential for mutual aid.

As an example of this project's' impact, representatives from Oregon left the conference with a clear idea for framing their five-year strategic plan. Published in July 2011, the plan summarizes strategies that address the functions listed for each of the 15 PHEP capabilities and their functions; an indication of importance and a timeline are identified for each function. The public health and health care communities worked together to determine priorities, establish activities, and link each function to nationally established public health accreditation standards.

- **Continued Quality Planning for Tribal Emergency Preparedness Conference**

Since 2003, NWCPHP has led evaluations for the annual Tribal Emergency Preparedness Conference which brings together tribal, state, local, and federal agencies to collaborate and improve tribal emergency preparedness and response. The 2011 evaluation has been of particular importance in assessing the impact of a new, more interactive format for the meeting, and determining logistics of the 2012 conference. Changes made in 2011 were a success; evaluations showed that attendees enjoyed the new format—and 85% requested the same format be used in 2012 in addition to other improvements. The planning committee has examined these recommendations, and intends to translate these helpful suggestions to promote better interaction and relationship building for attendees.

Contact Information

University of Washington
Northwest Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center
1107 NE 45th Street, Ste. 400
Seattle, WA 98105
Tel: (206) 685-1130
Website: <http://www.nwcphp.org/>

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>.