

CDC provides funding and technical assistance to state and local health departments to build and strengthen their capabilities needed for rapid response to emerging threats as well as for routine public health activities.

Background

Public health works behind the scenes and on the front lines every day to save lives and safeguard communities from health threats.

These threats can include the following:

- Naturally occurring disease outbreaks, such as a measles outbreak in a college dormitory, a multistate outbreak due to contaminated food, or a global pandemic caused by a novel virus
- Natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, and ice storms
- Accidents such as chemical spills and explosions
- Intentional incidents such as biological, chemical, or nuclear terrorism

All these threats have potential for harming the public and affecting the economic and social well-being of our communities and nation.

Preparing adequately for public health threats requires continual and coordinated efforts that involve every level of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and individuals.

Supporting Preparedness and Response Across the Nation

Because of its unique abilities to detect and respond to infectious, occupational, or environmental threats, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plays a pivotal role in helping states prevent, detect, respond to, and rapidly recover from all types of public health threats.¹ CDC's work in preparedness builds upon decades of science developed to promote the public's health.

To enhance preparedness and response, CDC supports state and local public health systems so they are better able to fulfill their responsibilities for the public health and welfare of the people in their jurisdiction. State and local governments

are closest to those impacted by incidents and have always had the lead in response. During a response, states coordinate resources and capabilities throughout the state and obtain additional resources and capabilities from other states and the federal government.

Preparing states for threats. All detection and response to public health threats begins at the local level, and communities must have strong and flexible capabilities that can be tapped for quick response to whatever threats emerge. CDC provides funding and technical assistance to state and local health departments to build and strengthen their capabilities needed for rapid response to emerging threats as well as for routine public health activities. This support is provided through CDC's Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement.

Earlier this year, CDC established national standards² for public health preparedness to help state and local public health departments identify gaps, determine specific jurisdictional priorities, and develop plans for building and sustaining capabilities. This capabilities-based approach merges public health and emergency management capabilities and serves as a framework for addressing state and local preparedness priorities and achieving desired outcomes. This new framework includes 15 public health preparedness capabilities (see box on page 3) that align with the National Health Security Strategy³ and other national preparedness priorities. With this framework, public health departments now have evidence-informed guidance in developing annual and long-term plans to guide their preparedness strategies and investments. In addition to establishing national standards for public health preparedness, CDC has developed associated performance measures to demonstrate progress toward achieving these capabilities.

15 Public Health Preparedness Capabilities

CDC continues to work to better define what it means to be prepared for all threats. This year, CDC identified 15 public health preparedness capabilities as the basis for state and local public health preparedness. CDC has prioritized these into two tiers, with an emphasis on those (Tier 1) that provide a strong basic foundation for public health preparedness.

Biosurveillance

- Public Health Laboratory Testing (Tier 1)
- Public Health Surveillance and Epidemiological Investigation (Tier 1)

Community Resilience

- Community Preparedness (Tier 1)
- Community Recovery (Tier 2)

Countermeasures and Mitigation

- Medical Countermeasure Dispensing (Tier 1)
- Medical Materiel Management and Distribution (Tier 1)
- Non-pharmaceutical Interventions (Tier 2)
- Responder Safety and Health (Tier 1)

Incident Management

- Emergency Operations Coordination (Tier 1)

Information Management

- Emergency Public Information and Warning (Tier 1)
- Information Sharing (Tier 1)

Surge Management

- Fatality Management (Tier 2)
- Mass Care (Tier 2)
- Medical Surge (Tier 2)
- Volunteer Management (Tier 2)

Source: *Public Health Preparedness Capabilities: National Standards for State and Local Planning*. Available at www.cdc.gov/phpr/capabilities

Helping states respond to emergencies. When disaster strikes, CDC is also prepared to respond and support national, state, and local partners with additional resources. CDC's Emergency Operations Center serves as a round-the-clock command center to coordinate expertise for efficient information exchange with state partners, and to deploy CDC staff and equipment to the site of an emergency. CDC's Strategic National Stockpile also stands ready to deliver critical medicines and medical supplies to states when local supplies run out or are commercially unavailable.

Overview of federal response to emergencies. CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response leads the agency's preparedness and response activities by providing strategic direction, support, and coordination for activities across CDC as well as with local, state, tribal, national, territorial, and international public

health partners.⁴ The mission of this office is to strengthen and support the nation's health security to save lives and protect against public health threats. When public health is prepared, people's health is protected and communities are more resilient.

CDC's public health response activities are coordinated through the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, the principal advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on all matters related to bioterrorism and other public health emergencies. Lead federal responsibility for emergency response lies with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), whose National Response Framework established a single comprehensive structure for responding to all types of hazards.⁵ In addition, the DHS National Preparedness Guidelines provide the vision, capabilities, and priorities for national preparedness.

About This Update Report

CDC has now published four preparedness reports to demonstrate how federal investments are improving the nation's ability to respond to public health threats and emergencies.⁶ This report is an update to CDC's 2010 state-by-state report; it presents available data that demonstrate trends and document progress in two important preparedness activities, laboratory capabilities and response readiness planning. These data do not represent all preparedness activities occurring in states and localities. As other data become available, they will be included in future reports.

Fact sheets in this report present data on activities occurring from 2007 to 2010 in the 50 states and 4 localities (Chicago, Los Angeles County, the District of Columbia, and New York City) directly funded by CDC's PHEP cooperative agreement.

The report is organized as follows:

Key Findings and Moving Forward provides a summary of progress reported and a brief

overview of current challenges and plans to improve the impact and effectiveness of preparedness and response activities.

Section 1 presents an overview of progress and national-level data on the following:

- Laboratory activities critical for identifying and confirming health threats
- Response readiness planning activities related to the ability of a state or metropolitan statistical area to receive, stage, and store medical assets received from CDC's Strategic National Stockpile

Section 2 features fact sheets with data on laboratory and response readiness planning activities in the 50 PHEP-funded states and the 4 localities of Chicago, the District of Columbia, Los Angeles County, and New York City.

Appendices provide explanations of the fact sheet data points and their significance, and present technical assistance review scores for the Cities Readiness Initiative of CDC's Strategic National Stockpile.

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