

SMALL CITY, BIG RESPONSE-ABILITY

The City of Nashua, New Hampshire, and the Greater Nashua Public Health Region (population of 206,000), activated six times in 2012, making it the busiest year for Incident Response Team (IRT) activations in recent history.¹ Incidents ranging from extreme heat to “Snowtober” (a record-breaking October snowstorm) to West Nile and Hepatitis C outbreaks stretched the public health system. However, Nashua’s Division of Public Health was ready and able to respond. The six IRT activations in 2012 included activating their EOC four times, establishing temporary shelters stocked with PHEP-funded supplies for two responses, incorporating a PHEP media advisory group into its preparedness infrastructure, and coordinating closely with hospitals and doctors. Nashua’s IRT activation for “Snowtober” was their largest ever, including housing their largest shelter population to date. A major factor in the city’s successful response to a myriad of emergencies was their PHEP planning, which fostered cohesion among public health, emergency preparedness, and clinical healthcare sectors.



¹ Activations include a variety of activities such as initiating a preliminary assessment team, developing incident objectives and an Incident Action Plan, activating the incident management structure, and deploying personnel. Activations normally include opening the EOC.