



Mission

Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) train front-line workers in state and local health departments, preparing them to protect American citizens in the event of a public health emergency – inclusive of infectious, environmental, occupational, and terrorist threats. Created in 2000 with CDC funding, the network of 27 centers located in graduate, accredited schools of public health has already reached hundreds of thousands of public health workers through applied training and targeted technical expertise aimed at protecting communities in real-world crises. The CPHP network of world-renowned preparedness experts, convened and coordinated by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), ensures a strong public health response is available across the nation when and where it is needed.

Importance

The fact that New Jersey is at the epicenter of so many recent public health challenges is no coincidence. Situated next to New York to the north and Pennsylvania and Delaware to the west, New Jersey is a major transportation hub, a corporate center and home to millions of people. The state's many chemical, petroleum, and other industrial facilities, including its three nuclear power plants, are vulnerable targets. Atlantic City and its casinos have over 30 million visitors a year. Our state's first responders, including its public health workforce, must stand ready to back up their city-based colleagues in New York and Philadelphia, as they did on 9/11/01 and the months that followed. In short, New Jersey is very vulnerable to all manner of public health emergencies, including terrorist attacks, industrial accidents, and weather-related disasters, yet only in recent years has the state undertaken significant efforts to become better prepared. September 11th and the anthrax letters were New Jersey's wake-up calls.

The latest survey available estimated New Jersey's state

and local public health workforce to total approximately 5,000 employees. The New Jersey Center for Public Health Preparedness (NJCPHP) understands how critical a well-coordinated and prepared public health workforce is to New Jersey's level of preparedness. The University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), as the state's only academic health center, along with its partners the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, has forged partnerships with key local public health, environmental health, healthcare, corporate, and non-profit partners to promote better public health, health care, and hospital preparedness. Our coordinated efforts help make valuable preparedness training and education a reality across the state.

Accomplishments

- *Develops and delivers targeted advanced-level trainings.* For example, in our Field Epidemiology Education Program, we enhance the skills of New Jersey's county-based epidemiologists, a critical part of the public health infrastructure, both during normal episodes (e.g., food-borne illness) as well as in times of crisis. This program has reached over 30 epidemiologists in monthly sessions every year, delivering over hundreds of contact hours of training in the last four years on the threats posed by biological weapons, food-borne illnesses, seasonal and pandemic influenza, and other infectious diseases.
- *Publishes and continues to more broadly disseminate "New Jersey Prepared Together," a quarterly newsletter, and "NJCPHP News PHlash: Preparedness News and Events," a bi-monthly e-mail.* These communications directly reach over 2,000 public health professionals across the state and country with important preparedness news, updated information on major developments in the field, and a listing of "all hazards" educational and training events across the state and region.
- *Co-leads in the development and delivery of a 40-hour Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Training Certificate Program,* which has reached over 5,000 public health, health care, and first responder professionals in New Jersey with comprehensive preparedness training in topics ranging from biological, chemical, and radiological agents to incident command and risk communication during an emergency.

- *Expands efforts to link the public health workforce with both the hospital systems of the state and with practicing physicians.* In particular, we are an integral part of the pandemic influenza preparedness effort launched a few months ago by the New Jersey Hospital Association, and, in a separate project with the association, will be conducting several regional exercises involving hospitals along with local and county health departments on a variety of preparedness topics. Similarly, for the second year in a row we will conduct a multi-issue session at the annual meeting of the Medical Society of New Jersey, as well as provide preparedness presentations at several regional seminars the Society conducts for its members across the state.
- *Carries out training on "dirty bombs" for volunteer firefighters, trains on the public health and mental health consequences of disasters to public health and school nurses, and provides Incident Command training to workers and front-line supervisors at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.* In a similar vein, NJCPHP provides advanced training on biological hazards and risks to under-trained employees of the state health department, "all hazards" education to first and second year medical students, and contributes significantly to the advanced seminar series conducted for occupational physicians now in their residency program at UMDNJ.
- *Helps organize and provides faculty for preparedness exercises, such as at the annual meeting of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.* Reports back from the officers of this organization indicated that the exercise was the best event ever held at their annual meetings.
- *Provides expert leadership (with Dr. Jeffrey Hammond serving as chair and Dr. Glenn Paulson serving as vice-chair) to the state health department's Health Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council.* Through this interface, the NJCPHP helps assure that academic preparedness expertise is readily available to serve the critical preparedness needs across the state.

Contact

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