

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### School of Public Health

#### 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

Established in 2002, the University of Minnesota Center for Public Health Preparedness (UMNCPHP or Center) works collaboratively with state and local health agencies in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin, other centers around the country, and university-based programs to improve the ability of the public health workforce to prepare for and respond to terrorism and other emerging public health threats.

Within the Minnesota region, public health agencies face many obstacles when they seek to train their workers. These obstacles include broad variations in agency size and staff coverage, geographical distance and shortage of travel funds, seasonal weather obstacles, and varying training needs. The Center reduces these obstacles by identifying training needs, providing innovative flexible training opportunities and scholarships, and offering on-site training when needed. Without the training provided by the Center to public health workforce, this region would be less prepared to respond to a variety of serious threats to

the population, such as infectious diseases, environmental catastrophes, and terrorist threats.

#### Accomplishments

- *Provides logistical infrastructure and support for the delivery of public health preparedness academic courses. To date, 66 courses offered, reaching 1,659 participants for a total of 28,232 hours of training. This includes 294 scholarships and tuition waivers awarded to support learners. Participants reported that, as a result of their training, they had reached over 729,000 fellow public health workers and citizens.*
- *Partners with the Leech Lake and White Earth Bands of the Ojibwe Nation in Minnesota, and the Minnesota Department of Health, to train representatives from all eleven tribal communities in the state. In the past year the Center conducted four specific trainings for 95 tribal public health and service workers in Incident Command, Personal Protection, and Bioterrorism Planning.*
- *Trains state and local public health personnel to design, implement and evaluate exercises that meet their needs and serves as evaluators for local public health exercises.*
- *Builds distance learning opportunities through web and tele-conferencing, free online training modules, and related resources. These resources have been accessed by 6,936 individuals in communities in the region and across the country. Topics include:*
  - The Off-Site Care Facility—An Alternate Care Site: A Primer for Volunteers
  - Protecting Our Food System from Intentional Attack
  - Mass Dispensing Sites
  - Mass Fatalities
  - Zoonoses
  - Decontamination
  - Surveillance, Isolation and Quarantine
  - Personal Protective Equipment
  - Contact Investigation
  - Disaster Mental Health
  - Special Populations
  - Incident Management System: the Public Health Role

- Application of Surveillance Principles to Food Safety
- BT/Emergency Readiness Competency Mapping

*Supports cross-border preparedness through cross-border roundtable discussions to identify common preparedness and response issues across jurisdictional boundaries. The three events brought together 324 participants from nine states and bordering Canadian Provinces. Participants said these discussions influenced planning and communication among agencies and across jurisdictions.*

## Testimonials

"I am currently the Education, Exercises and Planning supervisor at the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Emergency Preparedness... I thank the University [Center for Public Health Preparedness] for blazing the trail in meeting the distinctive needs of the current preparedness workforce. I believe I would not be in the position I am today if I had not had the opportunity to advance my knowledge in their uniquely structured program."

"I continue to use each of these courses in my daily life, my veterinary education, and my summer internship with USDA FSIS. Everything was applicable to my work. I was so amazed, and was given a new perspective of how the whole public health system worked..."

"I have reviewed and updated our plans [for crisis response]. I have trained staff on the topics I studied. These courses have made me understand what other training I need as well as [training needed by] other staff and partners in preparedness. We have addressed mental health needs more in our planning and training."

"It has helped me in everything I do related to emergency preparedness! [The training] gave me more knowledge about writing plans...about designing plan exercises... about working with the media and developing a media kit...about discussing mental health issues with local providers...about planning for emergencies with community leaders."

"I am the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for our county. On multiple occasions at our regional level, co-

workers look to me for direction and leadership based on the knowledge I received from the Public Health Institute. One area specifically helpful was the course I took the previous year on exercise design."

"I compiled data on resistant microbial infections and food safety risk assessment for military personnel deployed to the hurricane disaster areas. Positive outcomes were evident."

"I am applying what I learned [on preparedness and disaster training] in my work at the American Red Cross."

## Contact

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