



*Bridging the Public Health Community*

## 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 University of South Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness (USC-CPHP) improves the readiness of the public health workforce, key community stakeholders, and communities in South Carolina and nearby states by facilitating systems change at the individual, organizational, inter-organizational, and community levels. The Center's method for systems change includes: (1) individual and team-based training and education, (2) planning partnerships, (3) communication and dissemination, and (4) evaluation and translational applications. The USC-CPHP also works to broker creative solutions to stakeholder problems, often relying upon relationships developed through its extensive collaborative network.

The Center is making a real difference by:

- *Providing opportunities* for public health stakeholders and their community partners to work together as teams, building long-lasting relationships that become the bedrock of local emergency response capacity.

- *Contributing to public health workforce development* by increasing knowledge of public health emergency issues among the current and future workforce.
- *Translating academic knowledge and evidence-based information into community-friendly tools* aligned with the **National Response Plan**, thereby increasing the likelihood of quality preparedness outcomes.
- *Leveraging funding* among health and preparedness entities to maximize resources, fill gaps, and reduce duplication of efforts.
- *Spearheading collaborative partnerships with emergency preparedness stakeholders* at all levels, and, thus is viewed as an indispensable partner for emergency preparedness.

The USC-CPHP has evidence that its projects stimulate systems change. For example, during a Coastal Bioterrorism Workshop, Steering Committee members were briefed by the US Coast Guard Commander on **Project SeaHawk**, an intelligence-sharing initiative for the port of Charleston under the auspices of the US Department of Justice. During the discussion, the contributions of public health to enhance port safety became evident. Through proper channels, the Regional Public Health Director was invited to permanently join Project SeaHawk. This system change has strengthened the relationships and the infrastructure protecting the port of Charleston.

## Accomplishments

### (1) Individual and Team-based Training and Education

The Center's first priority is serving the needs of participants to increase their everyday knowledge and skills, while facilitating relationship building. For example:

- **The Coastal Workshop** is an annual two-day event that combines a high-stakes scenario format with a low-stress, problem solving atmosphere to help Coastal area stakeholders candidly troubleshoot potentially catastrophic events. To date, 241 stakeholders have participated.
- **The Academy for Public Health Emergency Preparedness** annually convenes and trains multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary teams from across the state over a period of six months. The Academy's unique training approach includes: a systematic project planning process, team-building activities, presentations by content experts, and provision of technical assistance. To date, 320

participants successfully graduated from the Academy.

- **The Dean's Faculty Scholars** project offers incentives for USC Arnold School of Public Health faculty to develop, pilot test, and incorporate emergency preparedness educational modules into existing graduate courses. To date, five faculty have developed modules that are being incorporated into 12 public health courses.
- **The Amateur (Ham) Radio Operators' Training** provides training and licensing opportunities for new operators statewide. This year, training will be offered by satellite broadcast using the facilities of the state public health department. To date, 89 Ham radio operators have been licensed and stand ready to ensure continuing communication for hospitals and healthcare facilities during an emergency.
- **"Ethics and Public Health in an Age of Terrorism"** is a 12-module curriculum designed to prepare public health students and practitioners for the ethical dilemmas that may arise as a result of terrorist attacks, emerging infectious diseases, and man-made or natural disasters. To date, over 1,500 health professionals have been exposed to information from the course through satellite broadcasts and presentations at conferences and national meetings.
- **"Nurses Roles in Mass Casualty Events"** training is offered regionally across the state to better prepare nurses to provide care following mass casualty incidents in their communities. To date, 566 nurses have been trained.

## **(2) Planning Partnerships**

The Center's second priority is brokering and growing partnerships among state and local preparedness stakeholders to strengthen development and delivery of Center activities. For example:

- The **USC Ham Radio Coordinating Committee** (UHCC) was established as a response to the South Carolina Emergency Management Division's request that the USC-CPHP collaborate with the state Amateur Radio Emergency Services. The purpose of the collaboration is to facilitate statewide recognition and acceptance of Ham radio as a critical partner in redundant communications systems to support public health and healthcare.

- **The State Department of Public Health and USC-CPHP Coordinating Committee** combines the practice and academia expertise to develop, implement, and evaluate every aspect of the Academy.

- The USC-CPHP collaborated with a broad array of experts to develop the 12-module **Ethics and Public Health in an Age of Terrorism** curriculum.

## **(3) Communication and Dissemination**

The Center's third priority is to share products and to convey lessons learned and best practices to stakeholders. For example:

- The USC-CPHP distributed 200,000 English and 50,000 Spanish copies of **The Pocket Guide to Emergency Preparedness** throughout the state.

## **(4) Evaluation and Translational Application**

The Center's fourth priority is ensuring continuous quality improvement and achievement of positive outcomes through in-depth evaluation. In addition, evidence-based innovations are infused into practice.

For example:

- The USC-CPHP adapted the evidence-based **"Getting to Outcomes"** planning process for use by local emergency preparedness stakeholders by aligning it with the **National Response Plan** and capabilities planning system.

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