



## 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 15,000 employees of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), along with thousands of workers among its preparedness and response partners, have immense needs for high-quality, competency-based preparedness training. The Florida Center for Public Health Preparedness (Florida Center or Center) training programs are specifically designed to support Florida's efforts to comply with the National Incident Management System and its asset typing requirements. The Center staff work closely with FDOH subject matter experts to develop and deliver programs that meet the highest priority needs identified by Department of Health advisors. The training is supported by a powerful, custom-designed learner management system that allows FDOH officials and designees to access the participant database immediately, from any computer, anywhere, during times of crises. [Selected Department of Health officials can directly access the trainee database to identify employees and their contact information by training, by county, and by region.](#)

The Center's training in the areas of field epidemiology, crisis leadership, and disaster behavioral health has received excellent evaluation results from participants. The Center receives numerous requests for additional trainings in the public and private sector, but most cannot be met with the Center's existing resources. To date, over 900 participants have been trained in the Center's field epidemiology training program, 142 participants have been trained in the Center's crisis leadership training program, and 1,124 have completed all requirements in the Center's four, on site, disaster behavioral health training programs. These numbers do not include: over 100 participants in the Governor's Annual Hurricane Conference; 143 FDOH staff members trained in laboratory preparedness; over 2,000 trainees who completed the distance learning courses without formally registering for credit; and unknown others who watch the Center's teleconferences.

## Accomplishments

- *Individuals who complete the Center's epidemiology training courses are qualified for service on NIMS compliant epidemiology strike teams.* Similarly, completion of the Center's disaster behavioral health and advanced crisis leadership courses are required for membership on the Florida Department of Health's NIMS-compliant Special Needs Shelter staffing teams.
- *At the request of the Florida Department of Health, Center staff work with the regional coordinators for Special Needs Shelters to develop a unique disaster behavioral health course that will be required for all Department staff who work in special needs shelters.*
- *The Center director has been an active participant in the Florida Crisis Consortium, an inter-agency, inter-organization body whose responsibility includes developing Florida's NIMS-compliant disaster behavioral response plan and the standards for the disaster behavioral health strike teams.* The Center's trainings have been recognized as meeting some of the standards for eligibility to serve on the strike teams.
- *The Center was invited to provide a disaster behavioral health training as part of the 2005 and 2006 Governor's Hurricane Conference, an annual conference devoted to hurricane preparedness and response.*

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- The Center responded to the Department of Health's request for a *special training in the Jacksonville area just prior to Super Bowl XXXIX (2005)* to strengthen its epidemiologic capability to respond should a terrorist or other crisis occur. The training prepared 40 additional responders.
- FDOH officials called Center staff one day after Hurricane Charley's destruction in 2004 to request a roster of Department employees who had participated in the Center's disaster behavioral health trainings. *The Center's learner management system allowed Center staff to deliver the critical information within 48 hours via electronic file.* The Department also requested and received 1,500 copies of the Center's Compassion Fatigue audio CD for distribution to the responders to help them care for themselves. Similar requests occurred during the 2005 hurricane season.
- The FDOH has created NIMS-compliant asset typing for its central office, regional, and 67 county health department public information officers (PIOs). As a result of the demonstrated value of the Center's *Compassion Fatigue* audio CD in the 2004 hurricane response, it is now a part of the PIO "go kits" that are used in all events.
- A center expert was deployed to Houston at the request of the University of Texas at Houston (Texas) preparedness center to *assist in the evacuee data collection effort following Hurricane Katrina.* His contribution to the linking of PDAs and real time surveillance reduced the manpower requirements for collection and reporting by 50% according to the Texas center director.
- A center consultant used our center's training material to *deliver children's behavioral health first aid training to school counselors and shelter workers in Lafayette, LA following Hurricane Katrina.* The same consultant used our training material to deliver children's behavioral health first aid training to mental health workers/volunteers in Sri Lanka following the tsunamis.
- Evaluations of each of the programs (field epidemiology, crisis leadership, disaster behavioral health) have found that the participants have reported the training to be of exceptional value in their responses to the Florida hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 and in the deployment of Florida Department of Health employees to Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina