



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 health of America's communities hinges on the expertise of the national public health workforce, an estimated 500,000 physicians, nurses, environmentalists, health educators, laboratorians, managers and others who work on the front lines of public health. It is estimated that up to 80% of these currently employed public health workers lack formal training in public health. The Northwest Center for Public Health Preparedness (Northwest CPHP or NWCPHP) at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine (UW) fills this training gap by serving as a leader in providing preparedness curricula and other learning resources to state and local health professionals in a six-state region covering: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

In 2000, NWCPHP created a Regional Network Steering Committee (RNSC) with representatives from these six partner states to act as a sounding board and planning group for regional training activities and to provide a forum for creating a regional strategy for public health

workforce development. In October 2003, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB), which represents 43 tribes in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, became a formal member of the RNSC.

Accomplishments

- The Northwest CPHP **provides real time Web-conferencing services** and trains regional partners on how to use the system for preparedness planning and training. We conduct live, monthly, one-hour, sessions on various public health preparedness subjects in a *Hot Topics in Preparedness series*. Each state and tribal partner has designated a number of "seats" (computer connections) and is responsible for coordinating registration for participants in their area. These monthly sessions offer a forum to provide "just-in-time learning" for topics such as: public health emergency response, approaching public health competencies, business continuity planning, and emergency plan implementation procedures for all-hazards preparedness and response. Web conferencing fills a vital training gap in this region of vast distances and smaller outlining populations who are unable to travel many miles for face-to-face training. Recent evaluation data reveal that managers report they are better able to prepare staff with the targeted and timely content delivered through web conferences.
- Training needs assessments with participants in partner states have consistently indicated that preparedness-related epidemiology training were sorely lacking throughout the region. To address this need, the Northwest CPHP has **developed four, one-hour, self-paced, online courses in epidemiology** including: "Basic Infectious Disease Concepts in Epidemiology," "Introduction to Public Health Surveillance," "Introduction to Outbreak Investigation," and "Data Interpretation for Public Health Professionals." Each module runs approximately one hour and includes audio narration by faculty content experts, interactive exercises, a post-course assessment, and a course satisfaction evaluation. The Northwest CPHP is also developing two additional modules to round out the online epidemiology series, including "Data Interpretation" (part two) and a thirty-minute "Basic Introduction to Epidemiology." These modules will be completed by August 31, 2007.

- The Northwest CPHP **provides faculty experts to develop and deliver preparedness training and technical assistance throughout the region.** The demand for these types of activities remains high. Recent examples include:
 - *Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercise* CD-Rom, which was developed for a University of Washington preparedness exercise drill. This exercise has been disseminated to universities, community colleges, health departments, and organizations to modify and use in their own preparedness exercises across the country.
 - Three-part web-conferencing series on *Workforce Resiliency*. This series focuses on preventing and/or managing concerns related to responding to public health disasters, as well as both organizational and individual stress management approaches. This training series also focuses on various coping strategies for dealing with increased work-related stressors associated with disasters.
 - NWCPHP faculty Andy Stergachis, Randal Beaton, and Bryant Karras, along with other UW faculty, and in collaboration with Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHS&KC), have published an article evaluating a mass dispensing exercise. The article, "Evaluation of a Mass Dispensing Exercise in a Cities Readiness Initiative setting," published in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, discusses a model for community-based mass dispensing of antibiotics. The evaluation was part of a collaboration between UW and PHS&KC, now in its fourth year.
- The Northwest CPHP has assisted NPAIHB in **providing annual Tribal Preparedness Regional Conferences** since 2004. These conferences provide a forum for tribal health leaders to collaborate and discuss preparedness issues such as public health law, pandemic flu preparedness, and mass pharmaceutical dispensing, with state and local health officials. Evaluation results demonstrate that conference participants report a better understanding of their roles in preparedness and an enhanced ability to network to reach preparedness objectives.
- The NWCPHP faculty **created epidemiology competencies for public health workers** throughout the country. Public health trainers can download the entire set from the NWCPHP Web site or click on each competency to view a list of sub-competencies and objectives. This Web site contains an indexed, searchable repository of instructional materials that trainers can use for public health education and training. The Public Health Epidemiology materials include a set of competencies, as well as case studies, teaching strategies, a glossary, and a list of resources. These competencies have been used by learners and instructors across the country to develop competency-based training to prepare the public health workforce.

Contact

Jack Thompson
Tel: (206) 616-1061
Email: jackt@u.washington.edu
<http://www.nwcphp.org/>