



**HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Center for Public Health Preparedness

## 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

Since its launch in July 2002, the Harvard School of Public Health CPHP (HSPH-CPHP) has addressed the challenge of preparing Maine and Massachusetts for bioterrorism and other emerging threats. HSPH-CPHP strives to achieve this mission through ongoing, rigorous consideration of the following questions: What are the best practices for achieving preparedness? How do we reach a diverse public health workforce? How do we measure preparedness? How do we ensure a unified response? How do we promote equity in preparedness?

To this end, HSPH-CPHP is organizationally structured to respond to these questions through projects in five core areas: the *Scientific Core* applies expert clinical knowledge and field experience to determine the best methods for promoting preparedness; the *Training Core* works with community-based partners to assess training needs and deliver role-specific, competency-based courses and trainings; the *Evaluation Core* strives to provide objective, quantitative measures of effectiveness that demonstrate

the accomplishment of identified goals, impact, and outcome changes at the individual, agency and community levels; the *Connectivity Core* is devoted to assessing and improving connectivity at the national, state, and local level; and, the *Rural Preparedness Core* has initiated research to identify strategies available to state agencies to overcome the unique challenges faced in rural areas and those affecting special populations.

Housed within the Division of Public Health Practice at Harvard School of Public Health, HSPH-CPHP serves as an integrating and convening body, uniting public health academics and professionals for productive, practice-based discussions of emerging issues in preparedness.

## Accomplishments

- Reached over 33,500 members of the public health workforce including physicians, nurses, EMTs and other first-responders with multi-faceted emergency preparedness training activities since 2002. Participant satisfaction evaluations from many of the trainings have shown that participants are overall very satisfied with the level of training offered by HSPH-CPHP and agree that often the trainings have met a demonstrated need. The HSPH-CPHP has a long-standing history of close, working relationships with public health partners at the local, state and regional level, and all training activities are planned in coordination with these partners.
- Conducted 24 tabletop, functional and full scale exercises, reaching over 2,900 public health, health care and public safety professionals. All exercises are planned in collaboration with our local and state partners, and designed to address the specific structure and need of each community. Exercises serve as an opportunity for participants to evaluate plans, clarify roles and responsibilities, foster inter-agency relationships and practice risk communication to the public. Following each exercise, HSPH-CPHP prepares an after action report including specific recommendations for improvement, and communities are encouraged to use this feedback to make concrete improvements to local emergency preparedness plans and protocols.
- Developed over 60 products that use a variety of techniques to address the most important topics in

emergency preparedness. These include: videos, web casts, PowerPoint presentations, satellite broadcasts, toolkits, checklists, curricula, train-the-trainer modules, evaluation instruments.

- *Published eighteen articles in peer-reviewed journals, two books, and a book review.* Currently seven articles are in progress and on target for submission to peer-reviewed journals. HSPH-CPHP strives to advance the evidence base of public health preparedness by evaluation public health practices with academic rigor.
- *Analyzed survey data from 341 towns and cities* provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) as part of the Massachusetts Public Health Preparedness Town and City Survey Project which offered MDPH a second lens to analyze local preparedness-related issues as related to population size, regional performance, planning, educational needs, and the overall distribution of resources.
- *Created an online assessment survey instrument* for Region 4B (including 28 cities and towns in Massachusetts) and the towns of Amherst, Needham and Wellesley through the National Association of County and City Health Officials Project Public Health Ready Initiative. The results from this survey were summarized and used to develop a region-wide training plan for the region.
- *Co-sponsored three initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable populations* and to encourage local public health, health care providers, and community-based organizations to incorporate these populations into their emergency plans. A follow-up report is under development with concrete policy recommendations on how to reach and target vulnerable populations.
- *Created two online trainings* using the Angel Learning Management System. The first course encompasses a training program for prospective Boston Medical Reserve Corps volunteers and is geared towards orienting volunteers to their role in the event of a disaster. The second course targeted individuals directly responsible for community emergency planning and was created to introduce Massachusetts statewide Continuity of Operations (CoOP) and Continuity of Government (CoG) planning.
- *Created Emergency Preparedness Monthly*, a Maine-

specific online newsletter providing information on current emergency preparedness training initiatives and relevant resources. The newsletter currently reaches over 2,000 subscribers.

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