



## 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 Illinois Public Health Preparedness Center (IPHPC), based at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) School of Public Health, collaborates with the states of Illinois and Indiana, the city of Chicago, and other neighboring partners to address the preparedness education and training needs of the public health workforce. IPHPC has developed comprehensive learning management systems and over 60 competency-based online courses that address core and bioterrorism competencies. The learning management systems link activities that assess, enhance, verify, and recognize competency in public health practice and preparedness. Collaborating with the UIC Center for the Advancement of Distance Education (CADE), IPHPC now emphasizes *enhancing and developing innovative education and training tools through the use of technology.*

## Accomplishments

- IPHPC developed and offers more than 60 competency-based, completely online courses that are continuously available, at no cost, and offered in a unique self-directed, instructor-led format. These courses enhance public health worker competencies at basic, cross-cutting and advanced levels in:
  - basic public health practice
  - community health assessment
  - public health law and policy development
  - program planning and evaluation
  - public health management
  - emergency preparedness and response
  - environmental health
  - applied epidemiology
  - infectious disease preparedness.
- Learners have successfully completed 2,676 courses and are currently registered in 4,000 courses. All courses offered by IPHPC are now 2004 SCORM-conformant with the release of the CADE Learning Content Management System. SCORM is a technical standard which defines how learning content is shared, sequenced and tracked. By becoming SCORM-conformant IPHPC is better able to share courses with all other SCORM-conformant systems that are offering online training which will result in a significant increase of our reach to learners within all these systems.
- IPHPC and CADE developed and maintain a Learning Management System (LMS) in which 27,000 public health workers are already registered from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and the city of Chicago. The LMS assesses competency-related training needs, registers learners for competency-based training courses, and tracks their training activities. These partners share training resources as well as create tailored training plans for individuals and organizations based on information gathered within the system. Through these efforts workers can access hundreds of courses developed by IPHPC and other CPHPs. New York will be joining the partners' group to add to the number of public health workers using and tracking their learning via the LMS.
- As a result of our LMS and course development activities with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), and stemming from the training requirements within

the City Readiness Initiative, CDPH requested that we become their dedicated staff to coordinate all their preparedness training needs. As part of this effort, our group has developed a *unique computer-based online mass dispensing simulation game for training public health workers and emergency responders working with CDPH in their roles in emergency dispensing centers*. The game has been pilot tested at CDPH and in Indiana and will soon be made available to our other LMS partners. We are seeking additional funding to make a generic dispensing simulation game available to all health departments across the country.

- Another product under development is a *mobile phone toolkit that will provide information and alert individuals in the event of an emergency*. The cell phone product will also be adaptable to numerous preparedness scenarios such as a pandemic flu outbreak.

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