

Center Spotlight



a program of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health

A quarterly newsletter highlighting NCCPHP activities and accomplishments

July-September 2006

This quarter, NCCPHP completed our curriculum development efforts to provide training materials for avian and pandemic influenza rapid response teams in Southeast Asia. For more information on our efforts, see the articles featured in the [ASPH Friday Letter](#) or the [UNC School of Public Health website](#). Now staff have begun work on a project with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists to develop a training curriculum for US public health responders.

NCCPHP's international work will continue with a grant from the CDC via ASPH to develop a curriculum in field epidemiology in Guatemala. Titled *Strengthening Field Epidemiology Practice in Central America Through Academic Partnership*, the project will be carried out in conjunction with national and international partners.

We are also very proud to announce that Jennifer Horney, NCCPHP Assistant Director was one of the recipients of the first *Service in Action* award established by the UNC Department of Health Policy and Administration. Jen was 1 of 13 recipients honored for significant contributions in community preparedness and disaster management and was recognized for her efforts following Hurricane Katrina. More about the award is available on the [department's website](#).

---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director

Surveillance & Epidemiology

Team Epi-Aid (SPH student volunteers to assist urgent public health response)

This quarter Team Epi-Aid sent 7 volunteers to conduct interviews at the Durham Gay Pride festival. In conjunction with the State Division of Public Health, volunteers conducted an HIV risk survey among men who have sex with men. Moreover, one student assisted with data analysis for an outbreak of *Salmonella* in Polk County and two others assisted with recruitment for a study assessing lead in Durham's municipal water supply. An introductory Epi-Info software training was conducted for Team Epi-Aid volunteers.

Publications

MacDonald PDM, Langley RL, Gerkin SR, **Torok MR**, MacCormack JN. Human and canine pulmonary blastomycosis, North Carolina, 2001-2002. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2006;12:1242-1244.

Pathela P, **Hajat A**, Schillinger J, Blank S, Sell R, Mostashari F. Discordance between sexual behavior and self-reported sexual identity: a population-based survey of New York City men. *Ann Intern Med.* 2006;145:416-425.

Presentations

Horney JA. Pandemic and what it means for the hazards and disasters community.

Horney JA. Rapid response project: public health utilization of handheld technology to conduct rapid needs assessments following outbreaks and disasters.

Both papers presented at the Natural Hazards Center Workshop, University of Colorado; July 9-12, 2006; Boulder, CO.

Technical Assistance to North Carolina

This quarter, NCCPHP worked with the Division of Public Health regarding epidemiology and surveillance activities and a new pandemic influenza planning project. NCCPHP staff met with the NC Disaster Response Network to plan for next year's activities, and met with Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams (PHRSTs) to discuss county-level surveillance reports for September and October. Final county-level surveillance reports for PHRST Regions 3, 4, 5 and 7 were completed in September.

In the past three months, NCCPHP has conducted Epi Info software trainings for public health staff in Harnett, Wayne, and 8 counties (Haywood, Cherokee, Caldwell, Madison, Henderson, Macon, Jackson and Buncombe) in the PHRST 6 region. In addition Epi-Info trainings were conducted for state consultants for the Office of Healthy Carolinians/Health Education. NCCPHP staff also provided training to Alamance County on outbreak exercises and Albemarle Regional Health District on general epidemiology.

Other assistance this quarter included technical assistance to Fort Bragg's Womack Army Medical Center on redesigning their tuberculosis screening database and supporting documentation.

Project 516

Project 516 is a partnership with PHRST 5 that provides funding and training for local health departments to acquire handheld computer and GIS technology that will enhance their work. This quarter, NCCPHP assisted with planning and evaluation for a mass field exercise in Charlotte. Staff co-trained and exercised 98 local health department personnel, state public health employees, PHRST members, and visiting public health professionals on GIS applications, provided technical assistance, and reviewed and reported on evaluation data for this exercise.

NCCPHP staff also directed and edited a promotional video to be produced by Mecklenburg County Public Health. In addition, staff are assisting Carteret County with a pre-hurricane survey similar to a rapid needs assessment, and are working on a rapid needs assessment methodology paper for a CDC working group at the request of our partner, PHRST 5.

Avian Influenza Rapid Response Team Training in Southeast Asia

Five NCCPHP staff traveled to Bangkok, Thailand on July 17-21 to present training on avian influenza and rapid response to 135 public health workers from 14 countries around the world. Staff members facilitated working groups where attendees applied what they learned to begin to develop plans to implement the training in their home countries. Although the program was designed for use by countries in Southeast Asia, attendees from Africa and Central America were also invited to participate in the training session due to widespread interest in the program. Afterwards, participants received copies of all course materials on CD-ROM for easy distribution of training materials in their home countries.

NCCPHP in the News

[UNC preparedness experts help train avian flu responders world-wide. ASPH Friday Letter 1424.](#) August 4, 2006.

[Mississippi releases Hurricane Katrina report conducted by North Carolina](#) [press release]. North Carolina Division of Public Health. August 3, 2006.

[NC Center for Public Health Preparedness adds researchers.](#) University of North Carolina SPH web site. August 1, 2006.

[UNC preparedness experts help train avian flu responders around the world.](#) University of North Carolina SPH web site. July 25, 2006.

[First "Service in Action" award recipients named](#) [press release]. UNC Department of Health Policy & Administration. August 23, 2006.

Training & Education

This quarter, NCCPHP began working with Duplin County Health Department to provide low literacy educational materials on influenza. We also completed a new mental health preparedness training curriculum featuring a video and participant workbook and held meetings with PHRST 1 about piloting the training curriculum.

NCCPHP staff attended a kick-off meeting in Guatemala City on August 1-3 to start a curriculum development project for the field epidemiology training program in Central America. Partners for this project include the CDC's Coordinating Office for Global Health, Guatemala's Ministry of Public Health, and the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

Training Web Site

In the third quarter of 2006, the NCCPHP Training Web Site had 3,461 newly completed trainings and 1,970 new registered users, for a total of 13,923 users. There were 7 new NCCPHP developed trainings added to the site.

FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

A new issue of FOCUS on Field Epidemiology was published this quarter. "Case-Control Studies for Outbreak Investigations" covers the basics of conducting a case-control study in an outbreak situation and discusses case selection and how to measure the association between an exposure and the occurrence of a disease (odds ratio).

Preparedness Training Series

Enrollment in NCCPHP's 2006 Preparedness Training Series reached 721 participants by the end of September. A survey of enrolled participants was sent out to identify improvements to be made for the upcoming year. The series highlights a different preparedness-related event and pair of featured trainings each month.

Online Certificate in Field Epidemiology

NCCPHP enrolled 52 students in the Fall 2006 cohort. Sixty students will complete the certificate in December 2006.

Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation Training Course

In partnership with the General Communicable Disease Control Branch at the NC Division of Public Health, NCCPHP provided technical support for a new session of the 15-week *Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation* training course. A total of 45 public health staff from 31 North Carolina counties are enrolled in the fall 2006 course.

Mental Health Preparedness Training Curriculum

At the request of the Tennessee Department of Health, NCCPHP developed an introductory training program designed for local health department staff and community volunteers to build awareness of the psychosocial consequences of

disasters. The self-paced or small group training can be completed in approximately 3.5 hours using the program video (in DVD or VHS format) and the participant workbook, including five learning activities. These materials will be distributed to local health departments across Tennessee this fall. In addition, NCCPHP staff are working on plans to pilot the curriculum in the PHRST 1 region of North Carolina.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Training for North Carolina Local Health Departments

In conjunction with the General Communicable Disease Control Branch in the NC Division of Public Health, NCCPHP has developed a short online course about pandemic influenza preparedness to be offered to NC local health departments. The course is designed to increase knowledge and build skills relevant to the essential and unique elements of an influenza pandemic response at the local level. Registration for the pilot course totals 46 people from 43 different North Carolina health departments. The course will be repeated in Spring 2007.

Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness

In September NCCPHP began its 2006-07 Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness by hosting an online symposium titled "Pandemic & Avian Flu: An Introduction." Consisting of two separate series held on a bi-monthly basis on the third Thursday of each month, one series will focus on pandemic influenza planning activities and the other series will focus on innovative preparedness projects at local public health agencies. Each symposium is broadcast in a "webinar" presentation format with audiovisuals delivered via a combination of phone and computer technology. More information about the series is available on the [NCCPHP Symposium Series](#) page.

Lifelong Learning

NCCPHP is collaborating with the North Carolina Institute for Public Health on their Public Health Academy project. This quarter, NCCPHP staff worked on a Workforce Development Task Force document and provided data from our Workforce Development System about health directors across the state to assist in the planning process. The Academy will provide training and support for local health department employees across North Carolina in public health and leadership topics.

NCCPHP staff have provided training and assistance to Yadkin and Buncombe counties on various issues related to lifelong learning and the online workforce development system (WDS).

Project Public Health Ready

NCCPHP assisted the 25 northeastern North Carolina counties in the PHRST 1 region to apply for Project Public Health Ready certification. NCCPHP staff completed data analysis and reporting for the regional assessment instrument available to all PHRST 1 counties, and assisted with completion of the application process. Final documents were submitted to NAACHO in mid-September.

Work with Partner States

This quarter, assistance to partner states included the following activities:

Georgia:

NCCPHP exhibited at Georgia's annual Public Health Association meeting September 5-8, distributing NCCPHP marketing materials and answering questions about NCCPHP activities.

Mississippi:

We presented the Mississippi Department of Health After Action Report methods and results to public health, emergency medicine, emergency medical services personnel, and met with RAND corporation health division to discuss after action report and preparedness measures.

Tennessee:

NCCPHP staff facilitated 2 stakeholders' meetings on pandemic influenza for the Nashville-Davidson Metro Public Health Department on July 21, and August 30. A total of 180 business, school and faith leaders attended the meetings.

Job aids featuring instructions for collecting biological samples were printed and delivered to the Tennessee Department of Health Laboratory Service. These pocket guides were distributed to all staff at the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency and the Tennessee Department of Health.

West Virginia:

NCCPHP is assisting with implementation of West Virginia's Statewide Training Plan with a pilot near Morgantown, including contact with the Bureau for Public Health regarding current plans for hosting training for local health officers and a web conference to discuss implementation steps and measures. Staff also discussed a plan for sustaining the implementation effort after August 31 with the Bureau for Public Health and the state nursing director.

NCCPHP also exhibited at West Virginia's annual Public Health Association meeting September 23 & 24, distributing NCCPHP marketing materials and answering questions about NCCPHP activities.

This publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement U90/CCU424255-03 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent official views of the CDC.

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*Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to
"improve the capacity of the public health workforce
to prepare for and respond to terrorism and other emerging public health threats."*