

# Center Spotlight



a program of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health

*A quarterly newsletter highlighting NCCPHP activities and accomplishments*

**April - June 2007**

This past quarter, NCCPHP staff worked on a wide variety of projects ranging from a field epidemiology training program in the South Pacific to a pre-hurricane assessment in Carteret County, North Carolina. Particular highlights include successful implementation of another training module in the Field Epidemiology Training Program in Guatemala and this year's NC Epi Teams Conference, which was attended by more than 200 state and local health professionals.

We also began work on two new projects. The first project is a partnership with the General Communicable Disease Control Branch in the NC Division of Public Health to train local health department staff on North Carolina's new centralized system for disease reporting. The system, the NC Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS), will significantly improve the timeliness, reliability, and accuracy of reportable disease in North Carolina. The second project involves working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP) to support distance learning and collaboration among participants in their Management for International Public Health Course.

*---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director*

## Surveillance & Epidemiology

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

In early April, 10 Team Epi-Aid volunteers participated in a pre-hurricane assessment in Carteret County. Over the course of 3 days, student volunteers and local health department staff completed 251 interviews designed to assess county residents' readiness in the event of a major storm. Other activities this past quarter included a community health assessment in Orange County and an investigation of an *E. Coli* outbreak in Rowan County.

### Technical Assistance to North Carolina

NCCPHP continued working with state partners to meet the training needs of public health epidemiology teams across the state. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NC Epi Teams Training Conference held on May 17 was attended by 215 local and state public health workers. NCCPHP helped develop the agenda for the

## Publications

**MacDonald PDM**, Langley RL, Howell RJ. Erythema and conjunctivitis: investigation of an outbreak in a school gymnasium caused by unintentional exposure to ultraviolet radiation from metal halide lamps. *J Occup Environ Hyg.* 2007;4:46-9.

## Presentations

**Horney JA.** Drawing on universities and other resources in a disaster: building partnerships among local, state and academic public health in NC during emergencies. Paper presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> UCLA Conference on Public Health and Disasters; May 7-8, 2007; Los Angeles, CA.

## NCCPHP in the News

"Pandemic flu preparedness training." *North Carolina's PHRST Line Report.* 2007 April 4;5(1):6. Available at: <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/phpr/phrstline20070404.pdf>.

conference and also provided a pre-conference Epi Info training. Feedback from the conference has provided useful input for an ongoing project to develop a uniform statewide NC Epi Teams training curriculum.

NCCPHP also worked at the local county level this past quarter. We provided Epi Info technical support to Gaston County, conducted an Epi Info training in New Hanover County, and led a training on using GIS to conduct community assessments for participants from several Northeastern counties.

In another project with state partners, NCCPHP staff have begun working on a curriculum to help train local health department staff on the state's new centralized system for disease reporting. The NC Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS) will replace the previous paper-based reporting system.

Our pandemic influenza preparedness project staff continued to review pandemic flu plans submitted by local health departments. Feedback and comments were provided to 5 local health departments and another 5 health departments received final approval of their plans this quarter.

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## Training & Education

### Training Web Site

In the 2nd quarter of 2007, the NCCPHP Training Web Site had 2,809 newly completed trainings and 1,644 new registered users, for a total of 19,596 users. There were 11 new NCCPHP-developed trainings added to the site, for a total of 178 available NCCPHP trainings.

### FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

Two issues of FOCUS on Field Epidemiology were published this quarter: Volume 4 Issue 2 *Collecting Specimens in Outbreak Investigations* and Volume 4 Issue 3 *Laboratory Diagnosis: An Overview*. These issues are available on our FOCUS web page.

A new issue of FOCUS on Field Epidemiology was translated and published in Spanish. The newly-available Spanish issue is Volume 2, Issue 3: *Técnicas de Entrevista (Interviewing Techniques)*.

### Field Epidemiology Training Program, Guatemala

NCCPHP continued its partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Field Epidemiology Training Program in Central America and Panama. The goal is to develop curriculum for a 2-year training program for public health practitioners in Central America.

Module 2 of the 8-module course was held June 25-29, 2007, at the University de Valle in Guatemala City, Guatemala. Clinicians and epidemiologists from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic met to participate in a training on topics including evaluation of surveillance systems, outbreak investigations, and writing outbreak reports for publication in public health bulletins.

*(News, continued)*

"Center partners with CDC and CSTE for avian influenza training course." *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. May 2007.

Team Epi-Aid volunteers conducting a pre-hurricane assessment in Carteret County were featured on WNCT Channel 9 Greenville on April 13, 2007.

Participants will return to Guatemala City for further training 3 times per year, with the remainder of their training occurring in their home countries with the help of local tutors who have graduated from the program.

### **Field Epidemiology Training, Fiji**

NCCPHP is working with the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific to provide basic field epidemiology training for public health practitioners in Fiji. Curriculum development is currently underway on topics that include basic surveillance and outbreak investigation. Training materials are being developed to cover regionally-important diseases such as dengue, cholera, typhoid, and measles.

### **CDC Sustainable Management Development Program Project**

In June NCCPHP began working with the CDC's Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP) to support distance-based training and collaboration networks for graduates of their Management for International Public Health (MIPH) Course. The project objective is to develop a training Web site to allow MIPH course participants and graduates to continue to communicate and collaborate on key management, capacity building, course curriculum, and teaching tools after they have returned to their home countries.

### **Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness**

NCCPHP continued its 2006-07 Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness by hosting 3 online symposia, titled "Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations," "Pandemic Influenza: Preparing Your Outpatient Center and Staff," and "Community and Public Health Response to an Influenza Outbreak Involving School Closure."

Each symposium is broadcast in a "webinar" presentation format with audiovisuals delivered via a combination of phone and computer technology. Archived versions of these presentations and information about upcoming events in the series are available on the NCCPHP Symposium Series page.

### **NACCHO Advanced Practice Centers**

In April and May, NCCPHP staff hosted a series of 4 webinars that provided a brief overview of each of the 8 trainings that were presented by the NACCHO Advanced Practice Centers (APCs) at the annual training conference in February. Topics included community preparedness strategies, regional collaboration approaches, workforce preparedness resources, and urban and rural disaster planning tools. A total of 189 persons attended the live and archived sessions.

### **PETS Act Training for NC Department of Agriculture**

NCCPHP worked with the NC Department of Agriculture to host a series of 4 training webinars on the issue of managing pets during emergency situations. A federal law now requires counties to have plans in place to help pets and their owners during emergency evacuations. Almost 100 people attended the live sessions, and an additional 56 people listened to the archived versions. Participants were from community-based organizations, local health departments, private businesses, and emergency management agencies.

## Lifelong Learning

NCCPHP staff provided training and assistance to Cleveland, Harnett, Davidson, and New Hanover counties on various issues related to lifelong learning and the online workforce development system.

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## Work with Partner States

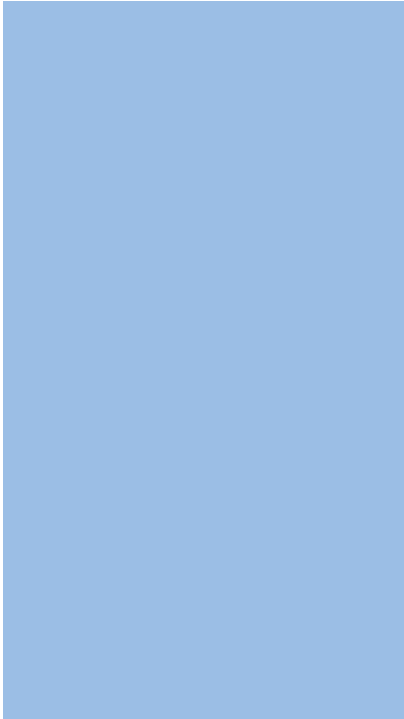
This quarter, assistance to partner states included the following activities:

**Virginia:**

NCCPHP staff conducted 4 Epi Info trainings for the Virginia Department of Public Health in May and June.

**West Virginia:**

NCCPHP continued our efforts to assist the WV Bureau for Public Health in planning a statewide conference for physicians serving as local health officers.



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