

Center Spotlight



a program of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health

A quarterly newsletter highlighting NCCPHP activities and accomplishments

January-March 2007

NCCPHP began the new year with a variety of training efforts for partners across the globe! We completed the prototype of the first module of the Field Epidemiology Training Program in Guatemala, began work on a new epidemiology training curriculum for the World Health Organization in Fiji, and facilitated 3 Rapid Response trainings at sites across the US as part of our avian influenza curriculum development for the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

We also released a new resource for trainers, "I is for Investigation," which goes through the steps of conducting an outbreak investigation. This CD-ROM and facilitator's guide is a follow-up to the introductory "E is for Epi" training resource released in 2006. Copies of "I is for Investigation" were circulated to public health professionals across the US and other countries.

Looking ahead to future projects, we are very pleased to once again co-sponsor this year's annual NC School Nurse Conference special session on disaster preparedness. We are also beginning to work on a new project for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revising their forensic epidemiology and public health emergency law curricula.

---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director

Surveillance & Epidemiology

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

Team Epi-Aid co-sponsored a spring break service trip to Biloxi, Mississippi, to continue last year's assistance with recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Volunteers from the UNC Schools of Nursing, Public Health, and Social Work, as well as community partners, worked with the Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response in "Camp Biloxi." The group provided health services, social services, home repair, and community clean up around the Biloxi and Pearlinton areas.

While in Mississippi, 3 Team Epi-Aid students collected information to create a map of the actual locations of residents' homes matched to their supposed street addresses, and merged this map with health and social services needs identified by other student teams. This product was delivered to the Mississippi Department of Health regional office and the Pearlinton Recovery Center to

Publications

Davis MV, MacDonald PDM, Cline JS, Baker EL. Evaluation of Public Health Response to Hurricanes Finds North Carolina Better Prepared for Public Health Emergencies. *Public Health Rep.* 2007;122:17-26.

Horney JA, MacDonald PDM. Academic Public Health Community Responds to Hurricanes: A History of the University of North Carolina School of Public Health Response and New Infrastructure, 1999-2006. *Public Health Rep.* March-April 2007;122:270-276.

NCCPHP in the News

"Preparedness Center continues work with Pan Flu and GIS" *Impact: a quarterly newsletter.* The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. February 2007.

aid future volunteers in efforts to locate and meet the needs of hurricane-displaced residents.

Technical Assistance to North Carolina

This quarter, NCCPHP continued its work with developing the NC Epi Teams training curriculum. We provided training on the basics of outbreak investigations to the Wayne County Epi Team, and planned for the annual NC Epi Teams Training Conference in conjunction with the North Carolina Institute for Public Health and state partners. NCCPHP also conducted a regional Epi Info software training for public health professionals in Asheville and provided Epi Info technical support to Rowan County.

NCCPHP staff continued reviewing plans, visiting counties, and providing technical assistance to local health departments around pandemic influenza planning. This included a Pandemic Influenza Planning Workshop conducted on March 1 with attendees from 28 local health departments and 2 PHRST team members, and development of a "best practices" plan excerpt document for assisting local planners. As of the March 31 deadline, 83 local health departments (97%) had submitted pandemic influenza plans. NCCPHP provided feedback on more than 65 plans, approved 43 plans, and collaborated with the NC Division of Public Health to officially approve 10 plans.

Training & Education

Training Web Site

In the 1st quarter of 2007, the NCCPHP Training Web Site had 3,789 newly completed trainings and 2,146 new registered users, for a total of 17,952 users. There were 4 new NCCPHP-developed trainings added to the site, for a total of 167 available NCCPHP trainings. Efforts are underway to reorganize the site to make it easier to navigate and locate trainings.

FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

The final two issues of Volume 3 and the first issue of Volume 4 of FOCUS on Field Epidemiology were published this quarter. All 3 issues center on data analysis from the basic steps of descriptive data analysis through simple and more advanced statistical tests. The data analysis issues are available on our FOCUS web page.

A new issue of FOCUS on Field Epidemiology was also translated and published in Spanish. The newly available Spanish issue is Volume 2, Issue 2: "Developing a Questionnaire" ("Desarrollo de un Cuestionario").

Field Epidemiology Training Program, Guatemala

NCCPHP staff completed work on a curriculum module prototype and attended an introductory course in Guatemala on March 13-16. This project is being carried out in partnership with the CDC and international partners in Guatemala including Guatemala's Ministry of Public Health and the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Avian Influenza Curriculum Development

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, and NCCPHP provided 3 Rapid Response trainings in Washington, DC, Denver, CO, and Atlanta, GA, for state and local officials responsible for identification, surveillance, and response activities for avian influenza. NCCPHP facilitated the trainings and developed the curriculum based on the UC Department of Health and Human Services/CDC guidelines for *State and Local Health Departments for Conducting Investigations of Human Illness Associated with Domestic Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreaks in Animals*.

NACCHO Advanced Practice Centers Training Conference

NCCPHP staff facilitated sessions and assisted with logistics for nearly 170 attendees at the 2007 Advanced Practice Centers Training Conference held February 20-21 in Washington, DC. The 8 APCs presented trainings on best practice public health preparedness resources and programs. All respondents to the conference evaluation reported that the conference was very or somewhat useful. NCCPHP will compile conference materials into a trainer's guide and CD-ROM to be distributed to all conference attendees and NACCHO members. Preparations also began on the "webinar" series that will provide a brief overview of each of the 8 APC trainings presented at the conference.

Mental Health Preparedness Training Curriculum

NCCPHP conducted 2 Mental Health Preparedness trainings for nearly 100 public health professionals in Knoxville and Jackson, TN, 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 5 learning activities.

Preparedness Training Series

A year-end survey of participants in the 2006 Preparedness Training Series found that 94% rated the trainings as "Very Good" or "Good" and 88% reported that ease of use was "Very Good" or "Good." Participants from public health, EMS, healthcare, emergency management, and many other fields participated in the 2006 series. The 2007 Preparedness Training Series got underway with topics on pandemic influenza, radiation, and chemical terrorism, and nearly 450 registrants by the end of March.

Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness

NCCPHP continued its 2006-07 Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness by hosting three online symposia titled "Pandemic Influenza: Local Preparedness," "ICS in Action: Using the Incident Command System in Public Health," and "Pandemic Influenza Risk Communication: From 1918 to Today--What is Different?" 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.

Online Certificate in Field Epidemiology

A new semester began in the online Certificate in Field Epidemiology. The 12-credit graduate level program is offered entirely over the Internet. The curriculum addresses the core functions of outbreak investigation, surveillance systems and methods, infectious disease epidemiology, and field epidemiology methods.

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 64 new students who began the 15-week Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation training course in January.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Training for North Carolina Local Health Departments

A second cohort of 43 students representing 38 counties began the online pandemic influenza preparedness course for North Carolina local health departments. NCCPHP developed the course in conjunction with the General Communicable Disease Control Branch in the NC Division of Public Health to increase knowledge and build skills relevant to the essential and unique elements of an influenza pandemic response at the local level.

Lifelong Learning

NCCPHP completed and delivered final reports of a workforce development survey of all employees in the North Carolina Division of Public Health and Department of Environmental Health for their accreditation process. NCCPHP provided demographic and training needs data for all state-level public health employees, as well as for specific occupations, agencies, and sections within each agency.

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

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