

Center Spotlight



a program of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health

A quarterly newsletter highlighting NCCPHP activities and accomplishments

October - December 2007

In the last quarter of 2007, the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness (NCCPHP) continued working to strengthen public health workforce readiness through wide-ranging and diverse projects.

Our work in the area of mental health preparedness has expanded with several new projects. The first of these was a partnership with the NC Disaster Response Network to mount a series of online trainings for mental health professionals interested in volunteering in disaster situations. Moreover, NCCPHP is creating an update to a program developed last year for local health departments and community volunteers titled "Introduction to Mental Health Preparedness." The update will include new case study activities and development of a Spanish program for limited English-language populations. In addition, NCCPHP is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create a curriculum about mental health preparedness for radiological disasters that includes interviews with survivors of radiation accidents. Finally, NCCPHP is working with the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, and the NC Area Health Education Centers to host a regional conference titled "Psycho-Social Consequences of Diverse Threats" on June 10th, 2008.

We are working with CDC's Public Health Law Program and McKing Consulting to develop an updated course in Public Health Emergency Law that is targeted at public health and emergency management personnel to improve understanding of some of the legal and policy issues particular to public health emergencies. The course contains three new modules covering inter-jurisdictional mutual aid, mass evacuation, and the provision of public health services to a displaced population. This new course will soon be available nationally online and on a CD-ROM.

As we move into 2008 we look forward to working with our many local, state, national and international partners.

---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director

Presentations

Alexander LK, Wallace JW, Wilfert, RA, Griffin J, Horney JA and MacDonald PDM. Maintaining currency and quality in an online distance learning system: Lessons learned. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

Anderson MK, Rosselli R, Johnson ML, Simeonson K, Bergmire-Sweat D, MacDonald PDM. Delivering quality technical assistance for local health department pandemic influenza planning. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

Gunther-Mohr C, Wallace JW, Alexander LK, Horney JA, Bradley LN and MacDonald PDM. Why take 30-minute preparedness training modules? Participant perceptions regarding utility and effectiveness. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

Surveillance & Epidemiology

Team Epi-Aid (SPH student volunteers assisting with urgent public health response)

This quarter, Team Epi-Aid volunteers assisted several county health departments with disease outbreak investigations. Volunteers conducted interviews for a cryptosporidiosis outbreak in Alamance County, a possible respiratory outbreak in Washington County, and an *E. Coli* outbreak in Wake County. Volunteers and NCCPHP staff also attended and facilitated a focus group meeting on vaccine priorities for pandemic influenza that was held in Henderson County. This was one of only 4 public engagement meetings held nationwide by Health and Human Services (HHS), CDC, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), with help from The Keystone Center. NCCPHP staff also conducted training on the Epi Info software for 15 Team Epi-Aid members.

Technical Assistance to North Carolina

NCCPHP and North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) staff are working together on the rollout of North Carolina's new online disease reporting system, the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NCEDSS). This quarter the work was focused on 14 counties who are starting to use the system for reporting tuberculosis. These counties are Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Johnston, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Nash, New Hanover, Pitt, Robeson, Wake, Wayne, Wilkes and Wilson. Activities included development of training materials and delivery of online webinar trainings. NCCPHP staff also continued to work closely with NCDPH subject matter experts to develop training material for the next phase of the rollout focusing on general communicable diseases.

NCCPHP continued development of a training curriculum about basic epidemiology and outbreak investigations for the North Carolina Epi Teams. Case studies on various outbreak investigation scenarios were developed and pilot tested in Person, Orange, Lee, and Carteret counties.

Furthermore, NCCPHP staff responded to requests for assistance using the Workforce Development System from users in Beaufort, Catawba, Chatham, Columbus, Durham, Guilford, Hertford, Pitt, Randolph, Wilkes, and Wilson counties. The Workforce Development System (<http://www.publichealthpreparedness.org/>) is a tool used to assess and track training needs of individuals.

Training & Education

Training Web Site

In the 4th quarter of 2007, the NCCPHP Training Web Site had 5,123 newly-completed trainings and 2,035 new registered users, for a total of 23,368 users. Three new trainings were added to the site, with a total of 189 NCCPHP trainings available. In addition, the training site itself has been evaluated and redesigned to be a more effective and user-friendly educational tool.

(Presentations, continued)

Johnson ML, Smith MH and Ramsey S. Enhancing public health infrastructure through the use of mobile GIS. Paper presented at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

Johnson ML, Smith MH and Ramsey S. Incorporating mobile GIS technologies into local public health. Roundtable session at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

Lynch MM, Davis M, Rosselli R, Alexander LK and Simeonsson K. Lessons learned from a pilot online course on pandemic influenza preparedness for local health departments in North Carolina. Paper presented at the American Public Health Association 2007 Annual Meeting; November 3-7, 2007; Washington, DC.

NCCPHP in the News

Behavioral training for disasters to be offered in 2008. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. November 2007.

Team Epi-Aid assists with survey at NC Pride Festival. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. November 2007.

FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

One new issue of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* was published this quarter. Volume 4, Issue 6: Contact Tracing is available on the *FOCUS* Web page.

An issue of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* was published in Spanish as well. The newly-available Spanish issue is Volume 2, Issue 6: Investigaciones de Epidemiologia Forense (Forensic Epidemiology Investigations).

One Medicine Conference

Working with the NCDPH and several state partners, NCCPHP assisted with organizing the Fifth Annual One Medicine Symposium, Globalization and Emerging Risks. Approximately 375 public health professionals, physicians, veterinarians, nurses, physician's assistants, and members of the military from all over the US attended the two-day conference in Durham, NC, in December. All presentations from the symposium are available on the symposium Web site (<http://www.onemedicinenc.org/>).

School Nurse Conference

In October, hundreds of school nurses from all over North Carolina gathered in Greensboro for the 24th Annual School Nurse Conference. 97 nurses attended the pre-conference training workshop titled "Disaster Preparedness for North Carolina School Nurses: Taking Preparation to the Next Level." NCCPHP staff gave presentations about disaster preparedness in the school setting and the unique role of the school nurse and led participants through a case study scenario based on a hypothetical outbreak of pandemic flu in their school community.

CDC Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP)

The NCCPHP and SMDP team is preparing to launch a new Blackboard course for alumni of the CDC's Management for International Public Health (MIPH) program. The site will allow graduates of the program to communicate with each other through email and discussion boards, share common experiences, and discuss the challenges they are facing in their home countries.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Training for North Carolina Local Health Departments

A total of 28 participants representing 19 counties and a US Air Force Base completed the third session of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness course in October. The participants in this online class spent 4 months listening to lectures, completing activities, and participating in discussion boards. NCCPHP plans to run a fourth session of the course beginning in late January 2008.

Public Health Emergency Law

The new modules of the Public Health Emergency Law course covering inter-jurisdictional mutual aid, mass evacuation, and the provision of public health services to a displaced population were pilot tested with 50 participants in Washington, DC, and North Carolina during October. The content will be available at the [CDC's Public Health Law Program Web site](#).

Mental Health Preparedness

Pilot testing continued for the 8 modules of the NC Disaster Response Network online training. There are currently approximately 85 registered users of this program which is designed to increase the number of individuals trained in mental health disaster response in North Carolina.

NCCPHP continues working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a new radiation and mental health preparedness curriculum. A NCCPHP staff member traveled to the CDC offices in Atlanta in November to conduct interviews with survivors of radiation disasters. Excerpts from these interviews will be incorporated into the new training program.

Planning is underway for the Behavioral Health All-Hazards Readiness and Response Training Continuum Conference in June. The conference will introduce the new Training Continuum to community-based disaster responders in the hopes of increasing awareness of the psycho-social consequences of man-made and natural disasters.

Work with Partner States

West Virginia

NCCPHP staff completed a first draft of an occupational health training program for public health responders in West Virginia. The training program covers disease transmission, personal protective equipment, symptomatic and disease-specific precautions, and immunization recommendations for health care workers.

Illinois

NCCPHP staff traveled to Springfield, Ill., in November to attend and facilitate a workshop held as part of the Association of State and Territorial Health Offices (ASTHO) and CDC's Social Distancing Law Project. The workshop consisted of several lectures and a case study scenario involving pandemic influenza in a large metropolitan area. The workshop was attended by more than 180 physicians, state and local public health officials, university officials, judges, and attorneys.

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.

North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness
NC Institute for Public Health | School of Public Health | The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Campus Box 8165 | Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8165
Phone 919-843-5561 | Fax 919-843-5563 | email nccphp@unc.edu

***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."***