

CENTER SPOTLIGHT

A quarterly newsletter highlighting NCCPHP activities and accomplishments



January - March 2008

We have had an exciting start to the new year here at the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness (NCCPHP). We have spent much of the first quarter of the year meeting with partners and showcasing the breadth of our projects.

In February, I flew to Mexico City, Mexico, for a 2-day workshop with the Pan American Health Organization on epidemiology education for public health workers. I participated in a session on recent strategies and technologies for delivering public health and epidemiology curriculum and specifically shared information about some of our applied epidemiology projects, including the *Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation* course and the Online Certificate in Field Epidemiology.

Also in February, several members of our staff attended the Public Health Preparedness Summit in Atlanta, GA. We joined nearly 2000 public health preparedness professionals from around the country and presented on 3 of our projects: our partnership with the NC Division of Public Health to review local health department pandemic influenza preparedness plans, a successful program with the Tennessee Department of Health to roll out the "Introduction to Mental Health Preparedness" curriculum to nearly 2000 Tennesseans, and gave a presentation with our partners at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) on our train-the-trainer curriculum for avian influenza.

---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director

Surveillance & Epidemiology

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

This quarter, 17 Team Epi-Aid volunteers conducted a hurricane assessment survey in the 7 counties of the Albemarle Regional Health District. In addition, 3 Epi-Aid volunteers entered HIV risk survey data into the Epi Info database for the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) and Metrolina AIDS Project.

Presentations

Brady K, **Gunther-Mohr C**, Watkins B. Getting started with mental health preparedness: lessons learned from statewide implementation of basic training for Tennessee local health departments. Presentation at the 2008 Public Health Preparedness Summit; February 19-22, 2008; Atlanta, GA.

Rosselli R, Anderson M. Evaluation of Local Health Department Pandemic Influenza Plans. Presentation at the 2008 Public Health Preparedness Summit; February 19-22, 2008; Atlanta, GA.

Taylor R, Goode B, **Horney J**, Sunenshine R, Chester T and Mott J. Developing and training multi-agency rapid response teams for outbreaks of avian influenza in the United States. Presentation at the 2008 Public Health Preparedness Summit; February 19-22, 2008; Atlanta, GA.

Technical Assistance to North Carolina

This quarter, NCCPHP and NCDPH continued training local health department professionals on the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS), with assessment site visits to Forsyth, Pitt, Granville, Vance, and Mecklenburg counties. Trainings were held for 31 NCDPH staff and 35 local health department staff from Wake, Pitt, Granville, Vance, and Mecklenburg counties.

NCCPHP continued pilot testing the curriculum for the North Carolina Epi Teams. The curriculum consists of 6 interactive case studies and several exercises that will be available on a dedicated Web site along with other resources. The Web site and curriculum will be launched at the Fifth Annual North Carolina Communicable Disease Epi Teams conference in Chapel Hill on May 19.

Training & Education

Training Web Site

In the first quarter of 2008, the NCCPHP Training Web Site had 4,422 newly-completed trainings and 1,523 new registered users, for a total of 24,890 users. We added 5 new trainings and archived several old trainings that were out of date, bringing the total number of trainings to 154.

FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

One new issue of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* was published this quarter, Volume 5, Issue 1: *Laboratory Biosafety Levels*. Two new issues of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* were published in Spanish, Volume 3, Issue 1: *Estudios de Cohorte en Investigaciones de Brotes (Cohort Studies for Outbreak Investigations)* and Volume 3, Issue 2: *Estudios de Casos y Controles en Investigaciones de Brotes (Case Control Studies for Outbreak Investigations)*. All of these issues are available on the [FOCUS Web page](#).

Field Epidemiology Training Program, Guatemala

Work this quarter centered on completing Module 5, "Prevention Effectiveness," of the train-the-trainer field epidemiology curriculum for Central America and Panama. Additionally, 1 NCCPHP staff member traveled to Guatemala City in February to observe the teaching of Module 4, "Project Management and Evaluation." Planning is also underway for Module 6, which will be an elective module covering a variety of subject areas.

CDC Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP)

NCCPHP continued to work with our CDC partners to design and build a Blackboard course for alumni of the CDC's Management for International Public Health program (MIPH). The alumni course will be made available in the next quarter with continued support from NCCPHP. In addition, a new cohort of scholars will begin the MIPH program in the fall and NCCPHP will again provide technical assistance for the online components of the course.

NCCPHP in the News

Preparedness Center launches a new look for the new year. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. March 2008.

Applications being accepted for Field Epi Certificate summer session. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. March 2008.

Symposium Series on Public Health Preparedness

The 2008 Symposium Series began on January 17 with a lecture by Dr. Patricia Watson of the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder on the mental health aspects of pandemic influenza. Ninety-four people attended the live online event and another 40 have viewed the archived event. The series continued March 20 with a lecture on the North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool (NC DETECT) delivered by staff from the Department of Emergency Medicine at UNC-Chapel Hill. More than 100 people attended the live online lecture.

The next event on April 17 will discuss public health ethics in emergency situations. More information and a registration link are available on the [Symposium Web site](#).

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Training for North Carolina Local Health Departments

Thirty students representing 19 North Carolina health departments and several other organizations participated in the fourth session of the *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness for Local Health Departments* course. The course began in late January and ran through the end of March. NCCPHP worked with the North Carolina Division of Public Health to lead the course and will offer another session this summer.

Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation Training Course

NCCPHP once again teamed up with the state General Communicable Disease Control Branch to provide technical support for the next session of the *Introduction to Communicable Disease Surveillance and Investigation* training course. More than 50 students are enrolled in the course, which will run through the end of May.

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Advanced Practice Centers Conference

In February, several NCCPHP staff members traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to assist with NACCHO's Advanced Practice Centers (APC) Conference. More than 250 people attended the 2-day APC conference, held as a pre-conference event to the Public Health Preparedness Summit. The conference featured presentations on emergency preparedness tabletop exercises, pandemic influenza, vulnerable populations, and environmental health emergency plans.

NCCPHP staff are also assisting NACCHO with the 2008 APC Webinars that began in March and will continue through early May. Specific topics and registration information can be found [here](#).

Public Health Emergency Law

The Public Health Emergency Law course has been completed and is now available online at the [CDC's Public Health Law Program Web Site](#).

Mental Health Preparedness

Planning continued for the Behavioral Health All-Hazards Readiness and Response Training Continuum Conference to be held in Chapel Hill on June 10. The conference material will include awareness training, basic behavioral health for all responders, and refresher online courses to enhance and sustain skills. At least 75 people have already registered for the conference. Learn more by visiting the [conference registration site](#).

Workforce Development

NCCPHP responded to requests for assistance with various aspects of the Public Health Workforce Development System for local health department staff in Burke, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Clay, Davie, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Hertford, Lincoln, Macon, McDowell, Person, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Vance, Wilkes, and Wilson counties. In addition, NCCPHP staff conducted a data analysis for Burke County as part of its health department's accreditation activities.

Work with Partner States

West Virginia:

NCCPHP staff are completing revisions to 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.

Louisiana:

NCCPHP has finalized a new Pandemic Influenza Preparedness training for the Louisiana Department of Public Health. The course covers Louisiana-specific information for pandemic influenza preparedness at a local level.

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."***