

July - September 2008

This fall has been an exciting time of change and new adventures at the University of North Carolina. We welcomed a new Chancellor, Holden Thorp, who shares our commitment to improving health around the world. And on September 26, we celebrated a new name for our school as we officially became the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. As we prepared for this official re-naming, Dean Barbara Rimer reminded us of the dual focus implicit in our name: serving the people of this great state as part of the University of North Carolina while also working on matters of global public health. We have embraced this dual focus in our work at the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness.

This quarter we have worked on developing curricula for several important groups in North Carolina, including state laboratorians and preparedness coordinators. At the same time, we have continued to refine and improve the train-the-trainer field epidemiology curriculum for public health professionals in Central America and Panama that we are developing in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are also scheduling pilot tests of another partnership project with the CDC: an avian influenza online training in Asia, Africa, and the US.

---Pia MacDonald, NCCPHP Director

Surveillance & Epidemiology

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

Team Epi-Aid welcomed the fall semester with dozens of new volunteers and several volunteer opportunities. Team Epi-Aid volunteers conducted HIV risk surveys at North Carolina's PrideFest on September 27 in Durham. Team Epi-Aid volunteers have also been asked to assist the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) with a Hepatitis C outbreak investigation.

Technical Assistance to North Carolina

NCCPHP and NCDPH continued to train local health department professionals on the North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS). This quarter, NCCPHP trained individuals in more than 30 counties on using the system for reporting general communicable diseases and staff in more than 20 counties on reporting cases of tuberculosis.

NCCPHP reviewed and provided feedback on 30 local health department pandemic influenza preparedness plans in July, August, and September.

Publications

MacDonald PDM, Alexander LK, Ward A, Davis M. Filling the gap: providing formal training for epidemiologists through a graduate level online Certificate in Field Epidemiology program. *Public Health Rep.* 2008;123:669-680.

Presentations

Pacelli S, **Gunther-Mohr C**, Forester J. Behavioral Health All-Hazards Readiness and Response Training Curriculum. Presented at the 2008 National Area Health Education Center Organization (NAO) Conference; June 28-July 1, 2008; Denver, CO.

Pacelli S, **Gunther-Mohr C**, Forester J. Behavioral Health All-Hazards Readiness and Response Training Curriculum. Presented at the 2008 National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH) 34th Annual Conference; August 6-9, 2008; Burlington, VT.

Horney JA. Missed opportunities: Incorporating health education into emergency response. North Carolina Chapter, Society for Public Health Education 2008 Annual Meeting; September 11-12, 2008; Winston-Salem, NC.

Plan updates were made this year to incorporate comments from NCDPH and to include new joint communication plans for a potential 8-12 week dismissal of county schools and childcare facilities. As of September 2008, 77 local health departments (91%) have submitted updated pandemic influenza preparedness plans and 64 have received NCCPHP feedback.

Also this quarter, 15 local health department staff from Healthy Carolinians in Pitt County were trained to use Epi-Info software.

Training & Education

Training Web Site

Two new courses were added to the Training Web Site this quarter: *Tick-Borne Diseases of the United States* and *ABCs of Pandemic Influenza*. These 2 new courses bring the total number of courses on the site to 159. There were 1,732 new users in this quarter, for 28,305 total users, as well as 3,644 new course completions, for 52,720 total course completions from 135 countries.

FOCUS on Field Epidemiology

Two new issues of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* were published in English: Volume 5, Issue 3: "Rapid Needs Assessment and GIS," and Volume 5, Issue 4: "Cluster Investigations of Non-Infectious Health Events." In addition, two issues are newly available in Spanish: Volume 3, Issue 5: "Aspectos Básicos del Análisis de Datos: Variables y Distribución (Data Analysis Basics: Variables and Distribution)" and Volume 3, Issue 6: "Análisis de Datos: Pruebas Estadísticas Simples (Data Analysis: Simple Statistical Tests)." These issues are all now available on the *FOCUS* Web site at <http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/focus/>.

NCCPHP recently completed a survey of Spanish *FOCUS* subscribers to learn how the publication is being used by Spanish-speaking public health professionals. More than half of respondents (57%) indicated that *FOCUS* was part of the required training for their positions. In addition, a large number of subscribers used Spanish *FOCUS* to develop training and curriculum materials for others: 42% for academic purposes and 39% for developing training materials for public health practitioners and other public health professionals. Given that 30% of respondents did not have access to other training materials in Spanish, this suggests the importance of *FOCUS* and the need for further development of Spanish materials.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Training for North Carolina Local Health Departments

The fifth and final session of the influenza preparedness course for local health departments ended in August. Eleven of the 17 students in the fifth cohort completed all course requirements, for a total of 177 health professionals representing 67 of the 85 health departments in North Carolina. The lectures from the course will be individually archived on the NCCPHP Training Web Site in the coming weeks.

NCCPHP in the News

Team Epi-Aid gets high marks in five-year evaluation. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. September 2008.

Spanish edition of *FOCUS on Field Epidemiology* a valuable resource for subscribers. *Impact: a quarterly newsletter*. The North Carolina Institute for Public Health. September 2008.

Sullivan S, **Anderson M**. Pilot course for preparedness coordinators launches August 4, 2008. *NC PHRST 4: Regional Surveillance News*. September 2008.

Alfano-Sobsey E. New Epi-Team curriculum. *NC PHRST 4: Regional Surveillance News*. September 2008.

Avian Influenza Online Training Course

Development has continued on the 11-module Avian Influenza Online Training Course being developed for CDC employees outside the US. In addition, NCCPHP has been working with partners at the CDC to plan pilot tests of the curriculum in several settings in Asia, Africa, and the US. The first pilot test will likely focus on the first module, “ABCs of Influenza,” as well as the modules on case investigation, case management, and a case study on outbreak investigation.

Disaster Response Network Training Project

NCCPHP continues to register new users for the 8-module online training program on disaster mental health. In addition, NCCPHP is working with mental health professionals in Georgia, Massachusetts, and British Columbia, Canada to customize modules 1 and 8 of the training program with location-specific information. Module 1 covers an Introduction to the Disaster Response Network, while Module 8 covers activation for disasters. The remaining 6 modules address mental health interventions in disasters, resiliency and self-reliance, as well as ethical issues in disaster response. More information on the Disaster Response Network training can be found at <http://nccphp.sph.unc.edu/NCDNRtraining/>.

NC Preparedness Coordinators Online Course

The pilot session of the *North Carolina Preparedness Coordinators Online Course* ran from July through September with 25 participants. Experienced preparedness coordinators participated in the pilot session, completing activities on working with partners, exercises and drills, communication, and workforce development. Participants also engaged in several active discussion boards, providing valuable information on the responsibilities and challenges of serving as a local preparedness coordinator. Extensive evaluation data will now be analyzed by NCCPHP to improve the course before the official roll-out later this fall.

The Role of the Laboratorian in Investigation: A Training Series for Public Health Laboratorians

NCCPHP staff have been working in close coordination with colleagues at the NC State Laboratory of Public Health to develop a 3-part training program that will serve as a curriculum tool for enhancing trainee knowledge regarding the role of the state laboratory in epidemiologic investigation. The training curriculum will aim to increase and improve trainee understanding of public health laboratory infrastructure at both the federal and state levels. The modules will include an introduction to the state public health laboratory, the role of the local public health laboratory, and finally, the role of the state laboratory in public health preparedness.

CDC Sustainable Management Development Project

NCCPHP is once again working with the CDC’s Sustainable Management Development Program. This quarter, NCCPHP and CDC project staff created a needs and feasibility assessment for Web-based learning needs of Management for International Public Health graduates and in-country workshop participants for pilot-testing in October.

Work with Partner States

Illinois

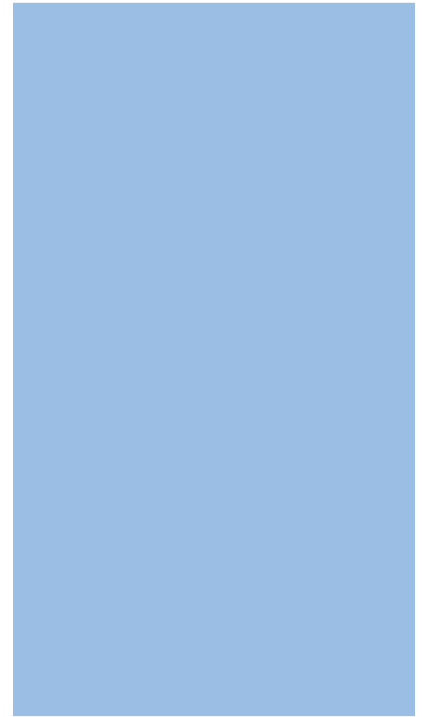
NCCPHP staff returned to Illinois to participate in the Illinois Public Health Emergency Preparedness Summit: "Exercising and Assessing the Heartland." NCCPHP staff facilitated a case study scenario on social distancing with 61 participants.

Texas

NCCPHP presented information about the Public Health Emergency Law course at the Region 6 Legal Preparedness Action Planning Workshop in Austin, Texas.

Tennessee

NCCPHP shared copies of the revised *Introduction to Mental Health Preparedness* video- and workbook-based training program (including a new Spanish edition) with the Tennessee Department of Health for distribution to local and regional health departments. The original version of this training was developed in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Health in 2006 and implemented with all local health departments throughout Tennessee in 2007.



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."***