The Health Officer’s Role in Public Health Emergencies

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Saturday, April 9, 2016
Charleston Marriott
Objectives

- Provide an overview of public health preparedness
- List various types of public health emergencies
- Review history of public health preparedness
- Describe the emergency response structure in WV
- Identify specific health officer roles in emergencies
Public Health Preparedness
Public Health and Medical Preparedness Initiative

- Purpose:
  - Assist public health and medical organizations to plan, prepare, train and equip for response to large scale emergency incidents that threaten the public’s health and potentially push the organization past their normal surge capacity.
Why is Public Health Preparedness Important?

- Unpredicted, rare but catastrophic events
  - World Trade Center; bioterrorist attack
- Predictable but novel events
  - Pandemic flu; SARS; West Nile Virus; floods
- Immediate, everyday public health threats
  - TB: HIV; tobacco injuries; cancer; heart disease
Public Health Preparedness does not create a new role, rather, it enhances the agency’s traditional functions to better prepare and respond to a large scale emergency incident.

Examples: Clinical care, medication dispensing, sanitation, communication, planning, incident management, etc.
Types of Public Health Emergencies

- Emergency
- Disaster
- Continuity
- Resilience
- Operations
- Safety
- Infrastructure
Incident vs. Event

- An incident is:
  - An occurrence, caused by either human or natural phenomena, that requires response actions to prevent or minimize loss of life, damage to property and/or damage to the environment.

- An event is:
  - A scheduled non-emergency activity.
September 2004 Flood
Hurricane Ivan
Wind Storm
Snow Storm
Displaced Katrina Victims Arriving at Camp Dawson
The 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic
Anthrax Sent by Mail

September/October 2001
Bluestone Dam
Derecho
The Threat of Terrorism
Moving Mass

The estimated 60-mile-long chemical plume from last Thursday’s spill has made its way to the Ohio River and is heading west.

Sources: Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission; City of Cincinnati and Louisville Water Company

The Wall Street Journal
A strong, flexible, responsive public health system well-linked with community partners!

In an emergency, “public health” includes all of us—health departments, hospitals, EMA, public safety, government.

It’s about people, plans, partnerships and tools.
History of Public Health Preparedness

World Trade Center Attack
September 11, 2001 Emergency Response
Federal Authorities

- Presidential Policy Directive 8
- National Incident Management Systems
- National Preparedness Goal
- National Health Security Strategy
- National Response Framework
Public Health Preparedness in WV
WV Health and Medical Systems: Non-Emergency

WVDHHR-BPH

49 Local Health Departments

Health Care Providers and Facilities +
Many Other Health Partners (including Emergency Management)
WV Health and Medical Systems: Emergency

Local OES
Other Local Assets

ARC
LLE
EDUC
LHD

49 Local Health Departments

WV Local Emergency Operations Centers

Health Care Providers and Facilities & Many Other Health Partners

NIMS/ICS

WVDHHR-BPH

WVDHHR
DHSEM
WVNG
WVSP
WVDEP
ARC
WV DNR
WVDOE & Others

WV State Emergency Operations Center

Federal Ops Centers

NIMS/NRP
Center for Threat Preparedness

- Coordination
- Planning
- Public health and health system preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery
- Technical assistance
- Grants management/funding
WV Health Care System

- 74 hospitals (~57 acute care; 3 state-owned; 4 VAs)
- 35 primary care organizations (93 sites) and 9 free clinics
- ~200 EMS agencies
- 13 community mental health centers
- 1 poison center
- 3 medical schools
- 18 schools of nursing
- Many private providers and facilities
- Multiple non-profits and professional associations
Federal Partners

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Division of State and Local Readiness
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Incident Management Team = Command and General Staff Members
Health Command Center

State Emergency Operations Center

DHHR Leadership

Health Command (CTP)

Local Emergency Operations Center

Local Health Department

Local Hospital
Preparedness Resources

- Funding
- Response Plans
- Credentialed Volunteers
- Public Health Alerting System
- Situational Awareness
- Medical Countermeasures
- Risk Communications
- Incident Command
Preparedness Resources (cont.)

- Healthcare Coalitions
- Training
- Equipment
- Epidemiology and Prevention Services
- Laboratory Services
- Environmental Health Services
- Behavioral Health
Health Officer Engagement

- Prepare
- Respond
- Recover
Responder Safety and Health

Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance (ERHMS) System: Implementation Training

Course Menu
Pre-Deployment
Deployment
Post-Deployment
What is a POD?

- **Point of Dispensing Site (POD)**
  - In a worst case scenario (Anthrax), prophylaxis of an entire population may be required
  - Volunteers and other partnerships used to staff/coordinate/perform activity
  - Normal doctor/patient/pharmacist relationship is not feasible

- **Closed PODs**
  - Variation of a POD
  - Designed to lower overall numbers of public coming to open PODs
  - May also be used for critical infrastructure
Is This Your Job?
Health Officer Engagement

- Clinical Care
- Leadership/ICS
- Support to LHD Team
- Subject Matter Expert
- Training
- State System of Health/Medical Direction
- Advocate
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