Evaluations

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Setting Ourselves Up for Success: Extreme Weather, Climate and Public Health

July 18, 2013

Featured Speaker

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Disclosure Statements

The planners and presenters do not have any financial arrangements or affiliations with any commercial entities whose products, research or services may be discussed in this activity.

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Recent Headlines

“American Southwest broiling in triple-digit temperatures for the fourth consecutive day”

“More rain heads into waterlogged NY communities”
“Flooding in upstate NY damages homes, closes roads”

Important Terms

• Exposures:
  – Weather, Extreme Weather Event, Climate
  – Climate Variability, Trends and Projections
• Risk Factors
• Interventions
  – Adaptation, Mitigation, Resilience

Weather

Increasing Warming and Wetness in NYS 1900-2008
Vulnerable Populations

- Physical Setting
- Community Adaptability and Resiliency
- Individual Sensitivity

Mitigation Versus Adaptation
Focus of Stakeholder Organizations (N=14)

- Reducing greenhouse gases
- Preparing for effects of climate change

Mitigation

- Both, but more mitigation (n=4)
- Both, but more adaptation (n=1)
- Mitigation (n=3)
- Adaptation (n=3)
- Neither (n=3)
- Don’t know (n=1)

NYS Surveys

- DOH leaders/program & surveillance managers
- Local health departments
- Stakeholders

LHDS who Believe Climate and Health Important NYSDOH Focus

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Neutral
LHDS with Sufficient Information About Climate and Health

Strongly Disagree 6%
Disagree 51%
Neutral 26%
Agree 17%

LHD Survey: Conclusion
• Climate change and health viewed as an issue of huge scale and scope
• LHDs cite limited resources, lack of direction as to what to prioritize or where to begin to tackle it
• Opportunity to partner with LHDs implementing climate change into strategic planning

Populations Represented by Surveyed Stakeholder Organizations

Stakeholder Results
Ideas
• Health Ed.
• Outreach
• Policy Dev.
• Media
Barriers
• Lack of $, time, materials
• Competing priorities
• Lack of empowerment
• Insufficient incentives to partner
• Institutional inertia

Activities of Local Environmental PH Programs
• Surveillance
• Risk Assessment
• Exposure/Hazard assessments
• Outbreak investigations
• Outreach/Education/Risk communication
• Guideline Development
• Regulation
• Policy Development

Smallest Impact

Largest Impact

Counseling & Education
Clinical Interventions
Long-lasting Protective Interventions
Changing the Context
Socioeconomic Factors

Examples
• Distribution of materials that promote safety and health during extreme weather events
• Opening of cooling centers
• Provision of free air conditioners
• Building Resilience
• Poverty, education, housing
Public Health Values

• Be a worthy steward of the taxpayers’ money and trust
• Focus on outcomes
• Build on what works
• Foster innovation and creativity
• Support benefits for all

PROMOTE A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT: Built Environment
Goal #1: Improve design and maintenance of the built environment to promote healthy lifestyles, sustainability and adaptation to climate change

‘Syndromic’ Surveillance

Hypothermia and Cold Illness Surveillance

Cold Injury Risk Ratio by Minimum Temperature, Controlling for Temporal & Meteorological Variables
Heat Illness Surveillance to Inform Interventions

Source: 2011 Health Advisory #8: “Heat-Related Morbidity and Mortality in New York City”

Heat Emergency Activation Threshold

- Retrospective analysis to evaluate heat advisory thresholds (May-September 1997-2006)
  - Excess mortality increased as heat index increased
  - Substantial excess mortality below conventional heat warning threshold
- New advisory level set
  - 2 days with HI ≥ 95°F
  - 1 day with HI ≥ 100°F
- Heat emergency criteria different in other areas

Source: Metzger, Ito, Matte, 2010

Gaps

- Research:
  - Relationship between climate and weather factors and health
  - Elucidation of individual and community wide risk factors for health outcomes
  - Effectiveness of interventions

Gaps

- Surveillance:
  - Locally relevant epidemiology and surveillance to inform interventions
- Outreach/Education
  - Tailored messages to local populations and evaluation of subsequent protective behavioral change
Gaps

Number of Pubmed Search Results by Year for Public Health and Climate or Weather or Climate Change

Preparing for Future Climate Impacts on Public Health

Setting Priorities

significant morbidity or mortality in NYS under current conditions, or current major threats

AND

Strong empirical data to relate projected changes in climate variables to greater environmental hazards/exposures

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