Building Community Resiliency: Ensuring Emergency Preparedness

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Disaster Defined

“A disaster is the result of a vast ecological breakdown between humans and their environment, a serious and sudden event (or slow, as in a drought) on such a scale that the stricken community needs extraordinary efforts to cope with it, often with outside help or international aid.” (from Noji, Gunn and Lechat)

Disasters require a partnership between local, state and federal government......... - and the community -
Disasters Come In Many Forms:
What Nature Does To Us

- Tornados Midwest
- Tsunami In Asia / Africa
- Influenza 1918
- Texas Plant Fire, May 01, 2002, CNN
Disasters Come In Many Forms:
What We Do To Each Other

September 11, 2001
Baltimore Sun Photos 09/12/01

Genocide in Darfur, Sudan

Exhausted Darfur refugees in eastern Chad
Photo by Mark Brecke

War in Iraq
Disasters Come In Many Forms:
What We Don’t Do

Hurricane Katrina/Rita September 2005
Defining Preparedness

- A process not a point in time!
- Always ask - Prepared for what?
- Can use real life events to measure preparedness
- Drills are an essential activity

Goal: To go from chaos to controlled disorder
Most people are unprepared for a public health crisis & they know it.
- 32% have taken no special steps
- 87% not enough steps
- 40% less prepared than in the past

Many people believe that they are more prepared than they actually are.
- Only half have a three day supply of food, water & medication

The term public health crisis does not resonate with people. Yet they are concerned about events that could lead to one.

Vulnerable populations remain of special concern
APHA National Poll
Vulnerable Populations

- Mothers with kids in household
- Local food banks
- Hourly wage workers & employers
- Schools servicing kids kindergarten – 12th grade
- Individuals with chronic health conditions

- Mirrors general population but has special needs
- 58% of mothers no 3 day supply of water
- 61% of people with chronic conditions have at least a two day supply of medications
- Only 18% of employers could continue to pay all employees if operations were interrupted
- Only 15% of hourly workers have enough money saved to provide for their family in such an event.

In a Disaster, a resilient community should be able to mitigate the risks to individuals, families, and the community as a whole from preventable, serious health threats.
Preparedness Capacities: Building A Resilient Community

- Planning
- Education
- Individual / Family preparedness
- Public health response
  - General
  - Infectious outbreaks
  - Environmental
    - Hurricanes / Tornados
    - Floods
    - Snowstorms
    - Earthquakes
  - Terrorism
    - Biological
    - Chemical
    - Explosions
    - Nuclear / Radiological
- Recovery
Preparedness Capacity: Planning Activities

- Community engagement in local emergency planning
- Planning activities
  - Individual & family plans
  - Business continuity plans
  - School emergency plans
  - Health system plans
Community Awareness & Education

- Plan awareness
- Engage in drills
- Media advocacy

More than a governmental responsibility
Individual / Family Preparedness

- Family plan
- Learn first aid
- Get health insurance
- Get medical home
- Become health literate
- Learn how to get care
- Medical records & history
- Immunizations up to date
- Family emergency communication plan
Community Preparedness

- First responders
- Healthcare system
- Core public health response
  - Infectious threats
  - Environmental
  - Terrorism
- Community engagement
Emergency First Responders

- On scene individuals
  - Police
  - Fire
  - EMS
- Emergency managers
- Health providers
- Public health
- Other government agencies
  - Local
  - Federal
- Voluntary organizations
  - Red Cross
  - Citizens corps

Initial response is local – Then scales up
Core Public Health Response

- Emergency care
- Evacuation
- Nursing care at shelters
- Secure perishable foods
- Ensure potable water
- Provide medical care
- Basic sanitation
- Disease & vector control
- Vaccination (e.g. tetanus)
- Mental health supports
- Safety net primary care

One component of overall emergency response
Public Health Response: For Infectious Threats

- Disease surveillance
- Laboratory capacity
- Disease control
  - Mass vaccination
  - Antiviral distribution
  - Exposure reduction, social distancing
- Health system surge capacity
  - Patients, workforce, supplies & equipment, space
- Risk communication
- Mortality management
- Routine health management
- Coordination: Local, regional, national
Community Response: Implement Social Distancing Strategies

- Voluntary home curfew
- Suspend group activity
- Cancel public events
- Close public places
- Suspend public travel
- Restrict travel
- Snow days
- Non-essential workers off
- Work quarantine
- Cordon sanitaire

Primary hygiene: Hand washing & coverage of nose & mouth
Barriers: Surgical Masks vs. N - 95 Masks
Community Response: Manage Societal Disruption

- Continuity of government
- Business continuity
- Access to food, water
- Transportation
- Public safety
- Trash, sanitation
- Goods & supplies
- Services
- Critical infrastructure
Community Response Capacity:

Provide Human Services

- Food & Water
- Housing
- Hygiene & sanitation
- Social support systems
- Treatment & prophylaxis for disease
- Disease monitoring
- Dependent care
- Compensation & liability issues
Community Capacity To Recover: Related To Social Determinants

- Poverty
- Job availability
- Housing
- Environmental conditions
- Health infrastructure
- Chronic health needs
  - Mental health big problem
- Education
- Helplessness and Hopelessness
- Discrimination

View your pre-crisis work as a determinant of recovery speed
Directly Engaging The Public To Create Community Resilience

APHA is creating a national movement for all Americans to be able to protect themselves, their families, and their communities from preventable, serious health threats

Protect, Prevent, Live Well
First Campaign: “Get Ready”  
(Pandemic Influenza Preparedness & Emerging Infectious Diseases)

- It is core public health
- A “wave” of activity exists
- Involves many partners
- Engages the public
- Few focused on the public & we add value

Web site: http://www.getreadyforflu.org
Flu blog: http://www.getreadyforflu.blogspot.com/
The Committee of the American Public Health Association (A.P.H.A.), believing the disease extremely communicable, strongly advocated legislation that would prevent the use of common cups and utensils and would ban public coughing and sneezing. The A.P.H.A. implored the public to develop the habit of washing their hands before every meal and paying special attention to general hygiene. They cautioned that nervous and physical exhaustion should be avoided and encouraged exposure to fresh air. A more controversial method of flu prevention, disputed by the A.P.H.A., involved gargling with a variety of dubious elixirs. Various physicians advised rinsing with everything from chlorinated soda to a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and boric acid.

APHA committee on pandemic influenza
From JAMA - December - 1918
National Public Health Week 2007
“Preparedness & Public Health Threats”

- Monday-Addressing the unique needs of mothers with children in the household
- Tuesday-Addressing the unique needs of local food banks
- Wednesday-Addressing the unique needs of hourly-wage workers and employers
- Thursday-Addressing the unique needs of schools serving children in kindergarten through 12th grade
- Friday-Addressing the unique needs of individuals with chronic health conditions, with a focus on diabetes, asthma, cancer and high blood pressure
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