

ASPH Report

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF BIOTERRORISM AND EMERGING INFECTIONS: TRAINING THE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

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In 1999, the Saint Louis University School of Public Health recognized that the nation was unprepared for a bioterrorist attack and established the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections. The Center's mission is to develop authoritative educational and reference materials on bioterrorism and disseminate it to public health professionals and the community at large. After receiving a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2000, the Center grew substantially, and was named one of the CDC's Specialty Centers for Public Health Preparedness. Today the Center serves a nation-wide audience of public health professionals, physicians, nurses, infection control specialists, first responders, and the public.

Six months before the events of September 11, the Center had already completed three national surveys covering preparedness for a bioterrorist incident or an emerging or re-emerging infectious disease outbreak. These surveys were sent to emergency room and primary care physicians, occupational health physicians, infection control professionals, and members of the public health workforce. In addition, qualitative information was collected from infection control professionals using focus group methodology. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Center sent out a follow-up survey to assess changes in attitudes toward preparedness for bioterrorist attacks. The results of these surveys will be used to design educational material specific to the workforce development needs of the targeted groups.

As a follow-up to the initial surveys, the Center is conducting focus groups with survey participants to develop a more in-depth understanding of attitudes toward bioterrorism preparedness. The information collected will be published in professional journals and posted on the Center's website.

The Center has developed a broad range of reference materials in various formats for the use of medical and public health professionals.

Reference material, fact sheets, news updates, and



Center Staff: *back row from left:* Laveta Stewart, Bruce Clements (Associate Director), Brooke Shadel (Associate Director for Science), David Sterling, Greg Evans (Director), Terri Rebmann; *front row from left:* Gene Carroll, Tiana Murphy, Susan Prichard

power point slide presentations can also be found on our website, www.bioterrorism.slu.edu. The website received more than 6000 hits a day after the September 11 attack of the World Trade Center and currently averages 10,000 hits per week.

Center Objectives

- To use quantitative and qualitative research methods to determine the needs of the professional and citizen groups served by the Center and to develop educational material to satisfy those needs
- To employ the results of this research to develop reference and educational material tailored to these needs
- To prepare undergraduate and graduate students and working professionals by utilizing distance technology to offer courses and certificate programs in bioterrorism preparedness
- To utilize advanced multimedia techniques in the development and distribution of educational material
- To maintain a Web site that provides easy access to reference and educational material to bioterrorism professionals and citizens
- To provide assistance to other organizations that wish to develop educational material for public health preparedness

Professional development courses offered by the Center are tailored to specific health care, public health, and first responder audiences, and make use of an innovative modular format. Learners will be able to take these courses for continuing education credit specific to their discipline. The courses will be offered via interactive CD-ROM. They will cover many aspects of bioterrorism including hospital and community planning, diagnosis and treatment of bioterrorist agents, epidemiological surveillance, outbreak investigation, and infection control.

In response to the need for education in the field, the Center is offering an undergraduate course in terrorism preparedness. In addition, the Center teaches a distance learning course: Bioterrorism—The Public Health Response, as part of the School of Public Health's Masters Program in Public Health. The Center is also developing two new courses: Bioterrorism Epidemiology and Infection Control for Biological Agents. These courses can be taken for graduate credit or as a sequence of courses for a Certificate in Bioterrorism Preparedness.

The Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections at Saint Louis University is dedicated to the development and dissemination of up-to-date, accurate, and authoritative information on bioterrorism preparedness. The Center's methods are designed to reach the broadest range of medical and public health professionals and address their concerns and needs. Our ultimate goal and the focus of our efforts is to protect the public from the consequences of a bioterrorist attack.



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Examples of Reference Material Text

- Planning Template for Healthcare Facilities
- Case Definitions for Infectious Conditions
- HICPAC Guidelines
- MMWR Strategic Plan for Preparedness
- CSB & EI Fact Sheets
- DOD Blue Book
- DOD Isolation Guidelines
- DOD "Defense against Toxic Weapons"
- Mass Casualty Disaster Plan Checklist
- CDC Strategic Plan for Preparedness
- CDC Strategic Plan for Preparedness
- National Pharmaceutical Stockpile
- Health Alert Network Description
- CDC Interim Smallpox Response Plan
- Smallpox Vaccine: Recommendations
- Procedures for Collecting Environmental Samples
- Official CDC Health Advisories
- Children and Anthrax: Fact Sheets
- DOD Toxin Book
- DOD Medical NBC Battlebook



**CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
CSB & EI**
BIOTERRORISM & EMERGING INFECTIONS
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

NEWS Procedures for Collecting Surface Environmental Samples for Culturing *Bacillus anthracis*

NEWS Free Resources from McGraw-Hill Education

NEWS Updated information on how to handle mail from the CDC and US Postal Service

NEWS US Army Medical Command, Bio/Chemical Terrorism Satellite Broadcast

NEWS Clinical slide presentations on primary bioterrorism agents

Quick References
Fact sheets, slide presentations, commercial products, and tables

About Us
Our mission, vision, values, and location

Bibliography
A comprehensive literature review for bioterrorism

Research Projects
Current research projects underway at CSB&EI

News-Updated Weekly
Current news & newsletters related to bioterrorism and emerging infections

Key References
Planning documents & bioterrorism articles in HTML and PDF versions

Official Remarks
A chronology of congressional testimony and procedural remarks

Case Studies
Published articles on bioterrorism events of potential bioterrorism agents

In Case of Emergency
Reporting procedures, how to handle threats, and hotline numbers

Education & Training
A listing of education and training resources

Staff
Names and e-mail addresses of the staff at CSB&EI

Internet Resources
Links to government, professional, and academic resources

