ASPH Report



RESPONDING TO ACTS OF TERRORISM: SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PARTNERS CONTINUE TO MAKE HISTORY

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Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor 60 years ago, deans representing schools of public health passed a resolution that authorized the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) "to be of service and assistance to the Surgeon General, the Army, and the Navy." Schools of public health responded by providing valuable courses in such areas as parasitology, tropical medicine, and sanitation for members of the military and the government during the war effort.

Schools of public health were ready to take action again in response to the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent anthrax threats. Faculty and staff at the 31 graduate schools of public health have again demonstrated critical foresight and preparedness to serve the needs of our nation. These faculty and staff, in league with federal, state, and local agencies and community partners, have contributed to the development of a multitude of resources, systems, and trained personnel competent in disease and injury prevention, health promotion, and disaster remediation to facilitate the ongoing protection of individuals and communities in our changing world. A new, and little-discussed, program at schools of public health contributes to the nation's health through the provision of effective and up-to-date public health training and preparedness to public health workers via a network of regional centers. These centers train and prepare the interdisciplinary responders, who are not only the first people to arrive on an emergency scene, but are those who manage operations, staff communications, and provide technical support to the kinds of events surrounding 9-11 and the recent anthrax attacks.

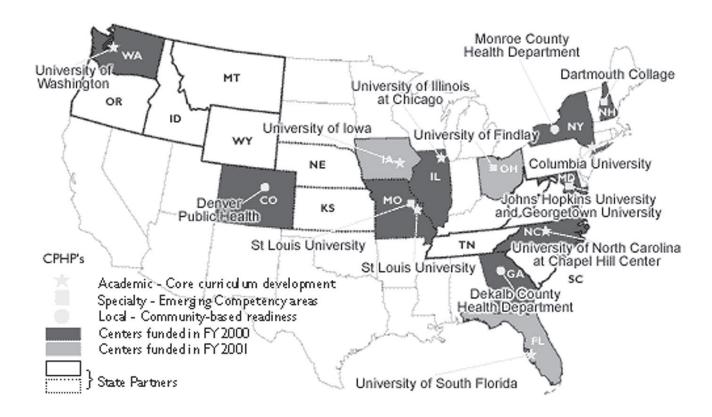
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has developed a system of Public Health Training Centers (PHTC) which aim to improve the nation's public health system by strengthening the technical, scientific, managerial, and leadership competence of the current and future public health workforce. Emphasis is placed on developing the existing public health workforce as a foundation for improving the infrastructure of the public health system and helping

achieve the objectives of *Healthy People 2010*. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have funded a stream of Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) which are key entities in preparing front-line public health workers to respond to bioterrorism and outbreaks of infectious disease.

Both the CDC and HRSA centers are implemented in collaboration with vital partners such as neighboring academic institutions, state and local public health agencies, and other community organizations. Both of these centers are enthusiastically supported by ASPH. To assist in these efforts, ASPH staffs a steering committee comprised of both sets of centers called the ASPH Academic Public Health Workforce Centers' Steering Committee, the purpose of which is to enhance the education, training, and preparedness of members of the public health workforce and to assist in the coordination of these efforts among ASPH member schools with workforce centers. The committee is co-chaired by Drs. Jim Gale (University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine) and Hardy Loe (University of Texas School of Public Health) and is composed of one representative of each of the seven CDC centers and fourteen HRSA centers, along with ex officio members from the federal funding agencies and key practitioner organizations. Founding co-chair Maggie Potter (University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public Health) was instrumental in the launch of the committee and just recently stepped down.

THE HRSA-FUNDED PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTERS

HRSA began funding eight training centers in fiscal year 2000, and today nearly blankets the country with PHTCs. To provide just one example, the Texas Public Health Training Center (TPHTC), which is a collabration among the University of Texas School of Public Health, University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health, and the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, aims to improve the health of Texans by building up the competence of the Texas workforce. The TPHTC uses a variety of traditional and non-traditional formats to provide training, including classroom, interactive TV, virtual courses/online instruction and video, and self-paced workbooks.



Training formats include short courses, field placements (internships), continuing education units (CEUs), and certificate programs. The center has produced a new document, Disaster Planning, Preparedness and Resources for Public Health Departments, which is available at their website: http://www.txphtrainingcenter .org

THE CDC-FUNDED CENTERS FOR **PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS**

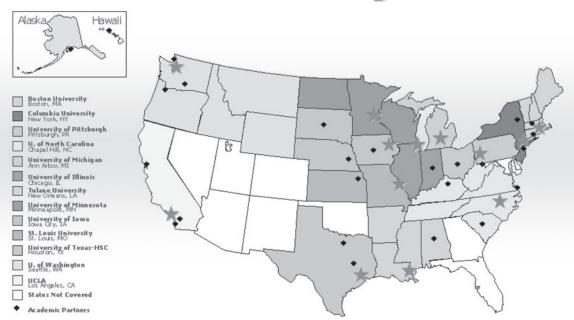
The CDC launched the Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) about one year before the recent terrorist attacks. In the wake of 9-11, the CPHPs have provided valuable assistance to local communities and the nation, and, furthermore, have assisted in the response to anthrax attacks.

Just days before 9-11, the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University CPHP, in close partnership with the New York City Department of Health, finished training almost 800 public health nurses in emergency preparedness, using a curriculum based on PH emergency response competencies and the nurse's functional role and responsibilities. This training was delivered just in time for the nursing staff who worked in the shelters for individuals and families that were opened by the American Red Cross and operated 24 hours a day for two weeks.

To highlight a few of the other CPHPs and their partners:

- The Saint Louis University School of Public Health Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections has developed a graduatelevel course on bioterrorism preparedness.
- One of the most noteworthy products of the CPHP at the University of South Florida College of Public Health was the delivery of a national teleconference on October 11, the one-month anniversary of the terrorist events of 9-11. The teleconference was titled "Recovering from Terrorist Acts: Strategies to Aid the Public Health Professional and Agency" and was down-linked at several hundred sites across the country. Subsequently, a timely segment was added to train practitioners how to respond to the emerging threat of anthrax.
- The College of Public Health, University of Iowa CPHP, with several partners, will soon be producing a video for first-responder training at the grass roots level targeted to local fire, police, emergency management and public health per-





sonnel, and other first-responders. The subjects covered are: (a) an introduction to anthrax; (b) the proper use of personal protective equipment; and, (c) precautions needed by law enforcement and fire department first-responders when approaching a suspicious situation.

- The University of Illinois at Chicago's Illinois Regional Health Workforce Center is conducting a study of the federal programs to combat and respond to bioterrorist attacks and the implications for the health workforce.
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's CPHP is developing and conducting training for staff who will aide the CDC in responding to calls from across the country regarding bioterrorism concerns.

Schools of public health continue to make history by working with federal agencies, health departments, and communities to bring academic and scientific achievement to the public health providers who can use it and who respond to large and small public health emergencies every day. Thanks to a small, yet unique, funding opportunity with HRSA and CDC, the Public Health Training Centers and the Centers for Public Health Preparedness are making a difference in how America responds to acts of terrorism. Through this, they are fortifying the public health system and helping front-line workers save lives. ASPH will continue to forge bonds with federal, state and local partners through its 31 accredited schools of public health; build capacity to defend public health defense; and support the CDC and HRSA in their mutual goal to expand the existing network of centers with additional funding to ultimately cover all states and territories in the union.

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