

From the Chair of the ASPH Board

Preparedness of the workforce has relationships with many sectors within the public health system. Accomplishment of preparedness at any level requires cooperation on many levels. Professionals in the practice community and those from schools of public health need to work together to build the United States' capacity to respond to the needs of individuals and populations as a result of terrorism and other threats.

While this may seem like something new, in reality this is similar to what public health has always done. Gains in the health of the American population can be attributed in major part to the collaborative pathway of understanding from the scientists to the bedside to the community. These successes highlight the invisibility of successful public health and prevention strategies and explain the complacency that plagues us in public health. The threat of terrorism shatters this sense of complacency and increases the need for public health professionals at all levels. We need to strengthen existing and establish new partnerships beyond public health with state and local colleagues who share the concern for the health and safety of the public. Terrorism engenders the need for urgency. Urgency highlights the gaps in trained personnel who will be needed to work across the community agencies responding to an emergency. It mandates the need for operational research that can help accelerate the translation of science into clinical and population-based practice.

The Academic Centers for Public Health Preparedness (A-CPHP) within the schools of public health are vital conduits to assist in filling the gaps in trained public health professionals and in hastening the translation of science into practice. This investment will help prepare the academic and practice communities to build a new public health infrastructure that can function within the continuous presence of new and emerging threats.

The Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) is grateful to have a role in the design and implementation of the A-CPHP program. We thank the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for its leadership in recognizing early on the need for advanced training for the public health workforce and involving the ASPH, its staff, and its member schools as leaders in this process.

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