



**Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness
University of Iowa College of Public Health**

Mission

Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) train front-line workers in state and local health departments, preparing them to protect American citizens in the event of a public health emergency – inclusive of infectious, environmental, occupational, and terrorist threats. Created in 2000 with CDC funding, the network of 27 centers located in graduate, accredited schools of public health has already reached hundreds of thousands of public health workers through applied training and targeted technical expertise aimed at protecting communities in real-world crises. The CPHP network of world-renowned preparedness experts, convened and coordinated by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), ensures a strong public health response is available across the nation when and where it is needed.

Importance

The Upper Midwest faces many challenges in preparing its public health workforce to identify and address a wide range of health threats. This rural, agricultural region has not only a diverse and aging population, but also must be prepared to respond to numerous zoonotic diseases, emerging infectious human diseases, and other emergencies. All these lend complexity to ensuring a coordinated and distributed training effort for the region's public health workforce.

The Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness (UMCPHP) is supporting preparedness training priorities in the region through assessment, curriculum development, program delivery and evaluation in collaboration with the Iowa Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, the Iowa Hospital Association, the Iowa Medical Society, and the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory. For example, the Center's collaboration with the Iowa Association of Local Public Health Agencies (I-ALPHA) has been ongoing since 2001 and continues with identification of issues surrounding assessment, training and evaluation for public health preparedness education in Iowa. I-ALPHA represents the large majority of Local Public Health Agencies in Iowa and the majority of residents in Iowa. Fran Sadden, President I-ALPHA and Health Director Siouxland District Health said that "without continued funding, education efforts to advance members of Iowa's current and future public health workforce and those who lead them would be seriously impacted."

Accomplishments

Training and Education

- The *Prepare Iowa* Learning Management System is Iowa's first internet-based learning management system and is offered to users through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health. *Prepare Iowa* is designed to serve as a comprehensive training and education resource that allows users to assess their knowledge and guides them to competency-based courses to fulfill their expanding professional development needs. Users can map out a training plan and track progress along the way. Currently there are more than 120 online courses available. In addition, UMCPHP has developed online courses to meet local and state-identified needs, including "Isolation and Quarantine," "Basic Epidemiology," "HAZMAT Awareness for First Responders," "HAZMAT for Healthcare Providers," "Weapons of Mass Destruction," and "Emergency Medical Services: Operations and Planning for Weapons of Mass Destruction."
- UMCPHP sponsors the *Public Health Preparedness Grand Rounds* which is an annual series of eight educational programs that feature topics of contemporary concern to professionals with public health

preparedness responsibilities. In addition, UMCPHP has partnered with the University of Albany CPHP to advertise one another's lecture series and UMCPHP also provides web-casting services for the University of Albany CPHP programs to strengthen outreach efforts.

- UMCPHP produced and provided a workshop on pandemic influenza preparedness for businesses for the Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce at their request. Collaborating with the South Central CPHP, the program addressed assumptions regarding a pandemic's effect on business operations, including the workforce, techniques for preventing or limiting the disease, and continuity of operations.
- UMCPHP developed and offered the eight-month Train-the-Trainer (TtT) Program for four consecutive years, from 2002-2005. One hundred sixty-eight individuals -- including emergency room physicians, veterinarians, environmental health specialists, disease prevention specialists, hospital administrators, public health nurses, epidemiologists, public health administrators, laboratorians, emergency first responders, emergency management administrators, pharmacists, public information/extension specialists, board of health members, and dispatchers graduated from this program. Through evaluations, trainees have reported that one of the primary benefits of participating has been the opportunity to identify and meet key partners in emergency preparedness across the state of Iowa and to network with others in the program. The graduates of the TtT program now serve as UMCPHP Associates and continue to support training efforts at the local level and in their own communities.
- UMCPHP continues to conduct an annual Associates Meeting where local and regional partners as well as graduates of the *Public Health Preparedness Train-the-Trainer Program* are invited to attend sessions which feature discussions of specific training needs and upcoming programming.
- *Public Health and Terrorism Preparedness: Cross-Borders Issues Roundtable* meetings were co-sponsored in 2003, 2004, and 2006 by UMCPHP and the University of Minnesota CPHP. Impact surveys indicated that over half of the respondents increased communication with personnel within their states and with colleagues in other states/countries as a result of attending these programs. Additionally, 44% of respondents reported they were able to develop or facilitate the creation of new collaborations as a result of contacts made at the roundtable(s). Over 110 individuals attended the 2006 roundtable in Bloomington, MN, which aimed to increase understanding regarding common components of existing collaborations and provided participants the opportunity to learn from identified strengths and weaknesses of existing cross-border emergency preparedness planning models.

Preparedness Leadership

- The Center convenes a multidisciplinary committee called the Education and Training Advisory Committee (EdTrAC) with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Public Safety, and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management. EdTrAC's mission is to ensure that Iowa's preparedness training opportunities provide timely, integrated and quality content appropriate to their broad set of stakeholders, resulting in a well trained workforce. Approximately 50 individuals from across the state of Iowa actively participate in EdTrAC and represent over 33 professional organizations. The success of this collaborative endeavor is evident in products such as the *Forensic Epidemiology Train-the-Trainer Program*, a well-developed EdTrAC web-site that functions as a mechanism to communicate and coordinate training across disciplines, and an educational DVD on pandemic influenza, titled "Pandemic Influenza: Protecting Iowa's First Responders."
- UMCPHP leads the University of Iowa Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Task Force in developing the pandemic influenza plan for the university. Additionally, UMCPHP is collaborating with the Harvard University CPHP in developing a tabletop exercise to test the feasibility of the plan. Through collaboration with the UI task force, UMCPHP has become more involved in the local community and

with county and state officials in preparing for pandemic influenza. In addition, the work of the task force is being shared with the other colleges and universities across the state and region.

Products

- UMCPHP produced a DVD -- *Pandemic Influenza: Protecting Iowa's First Responders* -- to provide Iowa's first responders with a consistent message regarding the challenges, safety considerations, and legal issues involved in responding to an event of pandemic proportions. The complete DVD consists of five 15-minute long video segments presented by subject matter experts from across the state. In September 2006, 2,600 copies of the DVD were distributed to organizations including fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement. Since that time, an additional 400 DVDs have been distributed upon request.

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