



PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS NEWS

HEALTHY PEOPLE · HEALTHY COMMUNITIES · HEALTHY ISLANDS

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Welcome!

The Public Health Preparedness (PHP) News is a quarterly publication designed to provide emergency preparedness news and education as it relates to public health and health care issues.

This will include highlights from the Hawai'i Department of Health's (HDOH) preparedness activities such as trainings, exercises, evaluations, real events, and educational programs conducted in our communities. These collaborative efforts help to ensure and facilitate the capacity of the department, the health care and public health communities, and ultimately the state of Hawai'i to respond effectively and efficiently to public health emergencies.

We hope you enjoy this first edition of the PHP e-newsletter!

Preparing for All Hazards

Are you prepared? From anthrax to zombies, no matter the threat, there are steps everyone can take to get ready for the unexpected. Many resources are available to help individuals, families, and businesses to be prepared.



National Hurricane Preparedness Week May 27–June 2, 2012

Here are a few timely events and new resources to use and share:

During **National Hurricane Preparedness Week**, May 27–June 2, 2012, HDOH Department Operations Center (DOC) staff will be training and exercising using hurricane-based scenarios. A number of staff will also be taking part in the annual State Civil Defense Makani Pahili hurricane exercises the following week.

Hurricane season in Hawai'i runs from June 1 to November 30, with peak season extending from July to September. Take time to learn more about hurricane hazards and how to prepare for them. Check out the Tropical Cyclone Preparedness Guide at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/os/hurricane/resources/TropicalCyclones11.pdf>.

Preparing for All Hazards, cont'd.

PHP recently released a new video production covering the basics of creating an emergency kit, having a plan, and staying informed. To view the video, go to <http://hawaii.gov/health/BT/index.html>, or click on the image.

For the resources shown in the video, go to:

- *Plan 9 brochure*, <http://hawaii.gov/health/about/reports/plan9a.pdf>.
- *Plan to Be Ready booklet*, <http://hawaii.gov/health/about/reports/plantobeready.pdf>.

The **Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH)** is the nation's first hotline dedicated to providing disaster crisis counseling. The toll-free Helpline operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This free, confidential, and multilingual, crisis support service is available via telephone (1-800-985-



5990) and SMS (Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746) to U.S. residents who are experiencing psychological distress as a result of a natural or man-made disaster. The helpline staff provides confidential counseling, referrals, and other needed support services.

The DDH is funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Visit www.samhsa.gov/disaster for more information and resources related to disaster behavioral health.

Around the state...

Preparing to meet and respond to public health emergencies requires sustained effort and collaboration with partners and stakeholders from throughout the community. In a disaster, such

partnerships will be critical; government agencies cannot do it alone. Here's a look at recent PHP activities designed to prepare and equip local communities to meet a variety of health threats.

Hawai'i District Health Office Holds Mass Care Exercises

Earlier this year, Hawai'i District Health Office (HDHO) held exercises focused on establishing and operating alternate care sites (ACS)¹ in East and West Hawai'i to strengthen the Big Island's emergency operations plans and disaster response capabilities.

In February, West Hawai'i HDHO staff members joined Konawaena High School staff, volunteers from Big Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), and the American Red Cross Hawai'i State Chapter (ARC) to mount a daylong exercise to set up and operate a general population American Red

Cross shelter and an ACS shelter for evacuees with medical needs.

In March, East Hawai'i HDHO staff worked with MRC volunteers, observers from Waiakea High School, and the National Guard's 93rd Civil Support Team to conduct an exercise focused on logistics for transport of equipment and supplies to the ACS and operations for set up of the site itself.

¹ Alternate Care Site (ACS)

A temporary basic health care facility established during an emergency that addresses low level health issues such as wound or dialysis care so that hospitals can focus on the critically ill or injured.

Hawai'i District Health Office Holds Mass Care Exercises, cont'd.

A full-scale hurricane evacuation shelter exercise involving HDHO staff, MRC, ARC, Hawai'i Humane Society, and staff and students from Waiakea High School is planned for East Hawai'i for July 18, 2012. This exercise will test plans for opening and operating both a general population shelter and an ACS.

To date, more than 30 teachers and staff from Waiakea High School have completed the American Red Cross shelter operations training.



Hilo public health nursing staff and MRC nurse volunteers test ACS cots.

2012 Maui Emergency Support Function (MESF) Exercise

The 2012 Maui Emergency Support Function (MESF) Exercise was a weeklong series of exercises in March to train staff and volunteers on dispensing medical countermeasures¹ and providing care at an alternate care site (ACS). The exercises trained over 60 staff and volunteers and provided the opportunity to educate over 60 private citizens about these emergency preparedness efforts.

The medical countermeasures dispensing exercises used a scenario in which a potential biological warfare agent—*Bacillus anthracis*, the organism that causes anthrax—was released on Maui. For the ACS training exercise, staff and actors based drills on treating patients during a flu pandemic.

The exercises were held at several locations. At the West Maui Senior Center and Kahului Elementary School, members of the Kaunoa Senior Services Program were used as patients in the point of dispensing (POD)² exercises. POD exercises were also conducted at the Sheraton Maui Resort and Spa and the University of Hawai'i Maui College.

At Kahului Elementary School, an exercise was conducted to test part of the pandemic ACS plan. Public health nurses from Maui, Molokai, and O'ahu participated in this exercise, with Maui County Health Volunteers participating as staff and patients.



Maui County Health Volunteer nurses Jane Cambouris and Priscilla Bratland provide medical countermeasures to volunteers at the West Maui Senior Center as part of the 2012 MESF training exercise.

A discussion-based exercise to identify potential problems of a drive-through dispensing model involved participants from several different agencies, including Maui County Civil Defense, Maui District Health Office, Kaiser Permanente, G4S International Security Company, Maui Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) chapter, and the Maui County Health Volunteers.

1 Medical Countermeasures Dispensing
Vaccines, antiviral drugs, antibiotics, antitoxins, and other instruments provided in support of treatment or prophylaxis to an identified population in accordance with public health guidelines and/or recommendations.

2 Point of Dispensing (POD)
A site within a community set up to dispense mass quantities of medicines, vaccines, medical equipment, or supplies to the public who may not yet be exhibiting symptoms of disease.

DOH Staff Attend Strategic National Stockpile Training

Trained staff are key to mounting an effective response to large-scale public health threats. To strengthen mass prophylaxis capabilities in our local communities, staff from the Hawai'i and Kaua'i District Health Offices joined preparedness professionals from 30 other states and U.S. territories to participate in the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Preparedness Course held in Atlanta, Georgia in April 2012.

Offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Strategic National Stockpile, this course trains participants to manage and dispense SNS assets effectively in response to a bioterrorism incident, pandemic, or other public health emergency.

Through classroom discussions about mass prophylaxis planning and point of dispensing (POD) operations, coupled with exercises involving the receiving, staging, storing, and mass distribution of SNS assets, trainees learned how to build and improve SNS preparedness and response capabilities in their respective counties.



Anne Holmberg, HDHO staff, moves SNS assets during training.

Keep in Touch!

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