



Protecting our Hawai'i communities from natural disasters, disease pandemics, bioterrorism and public health emergencies.

Public Health Preparedness News

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PHP holds “Closed POD” event

The ability to quickly dispense life-saving medication is an essential part of emergency response. On January 16, 2013, the Department of Health’s Public Health Preparedness Program (DOH PHP) and federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) co-hosted their first joint “Closed Points of Distribution” (POD) training. More than 25 organizations participated in the inaugural event in Honolulu.

Closed PODs are designed to help companies and organizations distribute emergency medical countermeasures, under the direction of DOH, to employees and their family members during a disaster or public health emergency. By dispensing oral medications in-house, an organization can increase the likelihood that its employees come to work during a disaster, thus improving the organization’s ability to continue to function. Another benefit of closed PODs is they reduce the demand on public dispensing sites and contribute to an effective emergency response.

Commander Adam Lofton, CDC Division of State and Local Readiness, discussed the Strategic National Stockpile, a supply of medications and medical supplies reserved for emergency situations, such as bioterrorism. DOH has plans to receive SNS shipments and quickly and efficiently distribute their contents throughout the state. Collaboration between DOH, other government entities, and the private sector is crucial to this effort; additional closed POD planning is underway statewide.

The use of closed PODs is one of many planned methods for delivering medications to each county’s population within 48 hours of a disaster.

Maui groups train for radiation hazards

Radiation hazards, whether by accident or by human design, warrant an “all hands” response. For a week in January, the DOH Maui District Health Office (DHO), 93rd Civil Support Team, and Maui County agencies received training on radiation and radiological hazards from representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy.

The public health workers, along with first responders from the 93rd CST and Maui County, spent two days in classroom sessions covering basic concepts in radiation awareness, possible sources in Hawai'i, dangers such as dirty bombs, and the Fukushima nuclear incident. This was followed by an exercise in which the scenario was a terrorist using a dirty

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DOH staff and MRC volunteers boarded the Vision Bus to raise awareness of disaster preparedness.

**The non-profit Project Vision provides free retinal scans to underserved populations. Its 35-ft. Vision Bus has state-of-the-art equipment to check for diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, and other eye problems. Retinal exams also check for diabetes, high blood pressure, and other conditions.*

Big Island staff join the Vision Bus

The Vision Bus* toured the Big Island again—this time with a few extra passengers from emergency preparedness.

During free vision screening and retina exams at stops around the island, PHP staff from the Hawai'i DHO and Big Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers distributed *Plan 9* and *Plan To Be Ready*, two free brochures from the DOH. PHP staff and MRC volunteers also spoke with community members about the challenges of emergency preparedness and some easy steps to overcome them.

The Vision Bus stopped at local farmers' markets, shopping center parking lots, community centers, the County Fair, and Hilo Bay Front. This allowed DOH to reach a wide range of the public, including the homeless, elderly, young families, and recent arrivals. Their most important message: being prepared doesn't require a lot of money, but it does require planning ahead. Staff from the DHO's Food Safety and Public Health Nursing programs discussed food safety and personal health during disasters.

In the end, DOH staff had distributed hundreds of free brochures to the local community, MRC volunteers donated more than 30 hours to community outreach, and almost 900 Big Island residents received free eye exams. It was great progress in our continuing effort to educate the community on disaster preparedness.

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bomb to disperse radioactivity. Appropriate procedures were discussed, and the roles and responsibilities of all agencies were identified.

In Hawai'i, radiation threats would mostly affect medical facilities and military vessels powered by nuclear reactors, such as submarines. Other threats include dirty bombs during a terrorism event and nuclear accidents, such as the Fukushima incident, which released radioactive material into the environment.

"The training was very informative, and the tabletop exercise gave participants an idea of their roles and responsibilities in a dirty bomb incident," said Marc Nishimoto of the PHP program on Maui, who attended the training with other Maui DHO employees.



Jeff Eckerd, Environmental Health Program Manager, explains the role of the Hawaii State DOH during a classroom training on a possible radiological incident within Hawai'i.

The safest place to be during an earthquake is...

Find out at the DOH Diseases Outbreak Division's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/HI.DOCD





Spotlight on the HAWAI‘I MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS



MRC Joins Public Health Preparedness

The Hawai‘i State MRC has undergone some changes over the past year. The MRC program is now integrated within the PHP program, as part of the DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division.

The PHP program’s involvement in public health emergency planning and collaboration with State Civil Defense, the Health-care Association of Hawai‘i, and county Civil Defense agencies make it a perfect match with the MRC’s goals and mission of

building and supporting teams of local volunteers that can contribute to public health services throughout the year and during times of community need.



Maui epidemiologic specialist Takako Nakaaki reminds MRC volunteers to pack their rain boots.

Maui volunteers conduct dengue fever surveillance

Maui County Health Volunteers got a taste of real-life disease surveillance when Maui epidemiological specialist Takako Nakaaki enlisted their help with outreach activities in an area where a person with infectious dengue fever had spent time.

The single case of dengue had been reported to DOH in December 2012. Fortunately, Maui volunteers and public health workers had been trained in 2011 when dengue cases were suspected, so extensive training was not necessary; Nakaaki gave Just-In-Time

trainings before everyone headed out. The volunteers were equipped with mosquito repellent and brought along raincoats and rubber boots, since dengue is a mosquito-borne viral infection.

The group also carried fact sheets about dengue and a cover letter from District Health Officer Lorrin Pang, MD, MPH, explaining the purpose of their visit: mosquito control, active surveillance, public education, and the prevention of mosquito bites. As of February 1, 2013, no further cases of dengue have been reported in the area.

In Hawai‘i, dengue fever is occasionally found in people who have traveled overseas to dengue-endemic countries. In 2001, a dengue outbreak on Maui affected 90+ individuals, prompting a concerted effort by the Maui DHO, County of Maui, and residents to contain the spread of the disease.



Community groups assess their health risks, vulnerabilities in a disaster

A lively gathering of community leaders, emergency management professionals, and representatives of government and non-governmental organizations joined PHP staff February 19 in Honolulu to discuss the human health impacts of a major disaster.

Key community stakeholders included people from across all sectors of the community: business, cultural and faith-based, education and childcare, emergency management, health care, housing and sheltering, media, mental and behavioral health, social services, senior services, and other community leaders.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify the health impacts of different hazards (earthquake, hurricane, tsunami, pandemic, etc.) upon Hawai'i, what resources and services would be needed to mitigate those impacts, and

what resources and services currently exist. Participants considered these questions from the perspective of the sector of the population which they serve.

The input gained from the forum will be added to ongoing efforts to assess the health vulnerabilities and risks that face our communities in the event of disaster.

The PHP program will continue to engage the wider community as it conducts this Health Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) over the coming months.

Data from surveys, interviews, and additional stakeholder forums will inform this baseline assessment, which will assist in identifying gaps and prioritizing preparedness planning and response activities. The HRVA will be shared with participants and posted for public viewing upon completion.





Kaua'i workshops refine skills

Practice makes perfect, especially when those skills might save a life. In two separate workshops, Kaua'i DHO staff and Kaua'i MRC volunteers received refresher training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and



Evie Boiser, Public Health Nurse, checks the fit of a face mask while trainer Marcus Bass sprays a nasty tasting mist.

hazardous waste response. The CPR course covered the essentials of adult, child, and infant CPR, and the use of automated external defibrillators. The content was tailored for lay rescuers in the community and workplace. The instructor, John Tyler and Associates/Aloha CPR, also taught basic first aid for first aid providers. A week later, Public Health Educator Rachele Bachran and PHP Planner Tommy Noyes organized a refresher course in Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER).

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March Madness...

- **7** years ago, Hawai'i was bombarded with torrential rain for 40+ days (Mount Waialeale on Kaua'i got a record 93.71 inches). The so-called "Biblical Flood" caused a dam break on Kaua'i that killed seven people, a sewer overflow in Honolulu, floods and property damage throughout the state.

- On **March 9**, 2012, a thunderstorm struck O'ahu and Lana'i with the largest hailstone ever in the state of Hawai'i, 4.5" long. It also brought lightning, floods, and a waterspout (tornado over water) that caused minor damage in Kailua.

- On **March 11**, 2011, the 9.03 Tohoku earthquake was the most powerful in Japan's history, and one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world since record-keeping began in 1900. It created a tsunami that crippled the Fukushima nuclear facility, altogether causing 15,878 deaths and \$235 billion in damage. In Hawai'i, tsunami damage was estimated in the tens of millions of dollars.

- On **March 25**, 2012, a 4.9 earthquake hit the Big Island. The epicenter below Honouliuli caused a rockslide on Highway 190.

- On **April 1**, 1946, an 8.6 earthquake struck off Alaska's Aleutian coast. It lifted the seafloor along the fault line, creating a 130-ft. high, 400-m.p.h. tsunami that demolished an Alaska Coast Guard lighthouse, preventing a warning from being sent. Five hours later, the tsunami struck Hilo, killing 159 residents and destroying the waterfront. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center was created soon afterward.

- On **April 2** in 1868, a 7.9 earthquake occurred near Kilauea, the largest to occur in Hawai'i in recorded history. Its aftershock sequence continues to this day, more than 140 years later. The earthquake, landslides and tsunami killed 81 people, destroyed 100 homes, and disrupted the magma systems inside Kilauea and Mauna Loa.

There's an APP for that!



- Get instant access to "Active Hazards" (current, real-time incidents) from around the globe with the **Disaster Alert** mobile app from the Pacific Disaster Center, managed by the University of Hawai'i.

Visit: www.pdc.org/projects/mobile/disaster_alert_app.htm

- Tsunami?!!! Where's the nearest refuge or shelter? Before panic sets in, download the **HTEZ Honolulu Tsunami Evacuation Zones** mobile app from the City & County of Honolulu, Department of Emergency Management.

Visit: www1.honolulu.gov/mobile/htez.htm

- Be ready for severe weather with the **Hurricane** mobile app from American Red Cross. Monitor conditions, prepare your family and home, find help, and communicate with others – even if the power is out.

Visit: www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/hurricane-app