



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

Public Health Preparedness News

June 2014

Department-wide workshops build Communications Surge Capacity

"Tell the public what they need to know, so they can make the right decisions" was one of the takeaway lessons at Crisis Communications Workshop. The May 13–14 training sponsored by the Public Health Preparedness (PHP) branch was offered to staff throughout the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH).

In a disaster or public health emergency, DOH's ability to provide the community with timely, accurate, and credible information will be critical. However, regular communication capacity may be overwhelmed.

PHP seeks to strengthen the department's Emergency Public Information and Warning capacity by developing "communications surge capacity" among DOH staff.

These trained employees would be called upon in a major disaster to assist the Communications Office in gathering critical health information and helping disseminate it to the public.

The hands-on workshop covered crisis and emergency risk communications (CERC), social media during a crisis, media briefing, interview tips and techniques, and Joint Information Center background.

The participants, as potential members of a communications surge capacity team, also learned how messaging in a crisis differs from messaging for everyday situations, and how to coordinate and collaborate to support the DOH's communication needs in a variety of disaster scenarios.

The workshop was conducted by Media Survival Group, a nationally recognized leader in crisis communications training. The instructors are certified trainers for the Department of Homeland Security and the training



"The training was awesome! It brought to light the importance of communication and the impact of each role in a disaster," said Kainani Quiacusan, DOH Human Resources. "I feel very fortunate for this opportunity and look forward to expanding my knowledge in crisis communications."

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El Niño's impact on hurricane season

Right on cue to the official start of Eastern Pacific Hurricane Season (May 15), Tropical Storm Amanda formed due east of Hawaii before dissipating.

For 2014, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts a near- or above-normal season, and expects about 4-7 tropical cyclones (which includes tropical depressions, tropical storms, and hurricanes) to affect the central Pacific. An average season has 4-5 tropical cyclones.

The slightly higher-than-usual number is due to an El Niño event that scientists expect will develop later this year. This alteration in the ocean-atmosphere system in the tropical central Pacific will favor more and stronger cyclones, in contrast to the pattern of low hurricane activity seen in the central Pacific since 1995.

"Now is the time to make sure that you and your family are ready and prepared for the 2014 hurricane season," said Tom Evans of the Central Pacific Hurricane Center.

Visit the [Central Pacific Hurricane Center](#) and view the [NOAA Tracking of Tropical Depressions](#).



Communications Surge Capacity

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was chosen as the model for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) for its official emergency public information guidance.

The training will be followed up with other workshops intended to build communication skills among the DOH communications surge capacity team.

Media Survival Group also conducted a "Media Spokesperson Workshop" for DOH staff to gain training in, and simulated experience with, dealing with the media.



"Standing in front of a video camera and being questioned by a 'reporter,' I really felt the unique aspects of communicating purposefully during a crisis," said Tommy Noyes, Kaua'i District Health Office. "Simulating a media interview during an evolving, life-threatening scenario was time well spent on skills that will prove extremely useful when the situation arises."

The spokesperson training was designed to help DOH leadership improve their crisis communication skills, and benefit them in their ongoing work.

"The facilitators were excellent and complemented each other well," said Kainani Quiacusan, DOH Human Resources. "For me experience is the best teacher and there was definitely a wealth of knowledge from experience in that room."

"I came back to my desk after this training with gratification and appreciation of Joint Information Center," added Laurie Nagai-Morgan, DOH Executive Office.

Public Health Nurses educate Onelau'ena residents

In a faraway corner of the Ewa Plain, DOH Public Health Nurses (PHNs) convened during multiple evenings in May to provide "Community Based Medical All-Hazards Response Training" to residents of Onelau'ena Transitional Shelter.

It's the third consecutive year that PHNs have joined the Hawaii Air National Guard (HIANG) to educate West O'ahu residents on disaster preparedness and achievable tasks.



"The presentation was very visual, colorful, lively, easy to follow, and local. It really engaged the audience. They paid attention all the way through and asked good questions," said PHN Jean McDermott. "Onelau'ena has been conducting a healthy living program, so we could easily tie a good diet and exercise to improving your physical and mental resilience to disaster."

For this year's statewide disaster training exercise (Makani Pahili), PHNs also prepared the 228 residents of Onelau'ena for a mock evacuation and decontamination involving a "chemical incident/airborne threat" that HIANG conducted on June 7.

Using a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation created by the Public Health Preparedness (PHP) branch, PHNs explained how to pack an emergency kit, create a family plan, keep informed during a disaster, and build their physical and mental resilience to disaster.

PHNs distributed **Plan to Be Ready** guides and personal emergency backpacks provided by PHP, and donated starter supplies.

To get their backpack, each resident was asked to first fill out the "Basic Household Information" and "Family Medical History" portion of their **Plan to Be Ready** guide.

To encourage residents to maintain (rather than consume) these supplies, PHNs noted that just-in-time training prior to the June 7 "evacuation" would include an inspection of the backpacks.



"The residents said to me, 'It was the first time we were shown how to get prepared' and 'It opened my eyes to see how far everyone else is away from Hawai'i,'" said PHN Dori Sparlin.



Big Island takes Psych First Aid

Hawaii District Health Office (HDHO) staff from East and West Hawaii, including representatives of Environmental Health, Public Health Nursing (PHN), Adult Mental Health, and Medical Reserve Corps volun-

teers, met in Kamuela to attend Psychological First Aid training. intervention for use by disaster response workers and the general public to help people cope with the emotional impact of a disaster and its aftermath.

The simple-to-use approach can

prevent long-term mental health problems and strengthen people's resilience.

Psychological First Aid works in everyday situations, emphasized instructors Mike Wurtz and Ken Lee. Both instructors are licensed social



workers with experience in disaster response.

The techniques can be applied in a wide range of work situations, from PHN home visits to Environmental Health handling restaurant owners stressed by the

need to get their damaged businesses up and running as quickly as possible after a disaster, while still meeting all DOH food safety regulations.



Download the free Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide and other manuals from the **National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD**.

Big Island holds Environmental Health Disaster Workshop

DHO Environmental Health (EH) programs from both sides of the Big Island met to discuss EH responsibilities and challenges before and following a natural disaster.

These include the need to minimize breeding grounds for flies, mosquitoes, and rats.

Hurricane, tsunami, and earthquakes will damage homes, grocery stores, restaurants, water systems and waste treatment systems, such as cesspools and septic tanks. Disasters also leave standing water and piles of rubbish. These issues must be addressed by EH to protect the public health and help the community recover as quickly as possible.

A high-priority goal for EH is ensuring the food supply chain can get up and running as quickly as possible while still meeting all food safety regulations, even if the restaurant or grocery store is still undergoing repairs.



Staff who served on Kauai following Hurricane Iniki shared graphic photos and personal insights, which highlighted the range of issues and challenges in such a response.

Because the workshop preceded Hawaii County's participation in Makani Pahili (the annual state-wide hurricane training exercise), participants focused on hurricane response.

Sanitation, Vector Control, Food & Drug, Safe Drinking Water, and Waste Water branches discussed rules, regulations, and guidance for their respective programs. They reviewed current HDHO response plans to identify gaps.

Next steps include an assessment of existing equipment and supplies, developing a planning/supplies checklist, and tabletop exercise.

Maui conducts closed POD for Airport Rescue & Fire

Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) personnel are the frontline responders at airports.

They respond to aircraft accidents, building damage, and sick passengers arriving on flights to our islands. They are the “top dogs” in the response arena, and they are great students in medical countermeasure training.

As part of the continued efforts by the Maui District Health Office (MDHO) to prepare Maui County for public health threats, personnel from Kahului Airport attended a “Closed Points of Distribution” (POD) exercise May 21. The training helped to prepare airports in Maui County to dispense



Maui firefighters Falcon Johnson and Michael Medoff take notes as MDHO Planner Marc Nishimoto explains the response plan for activating the medical countermeasures.



medical countermeasures to airport staff, employees of airline carriers, and travelers in the airport.

Public Health Preparedness Planner Marc Nishimoto and Public Health Educator Rachel Heckscher conducted the training. Participants were given a background of the overall response plan for

an event requiring activation of a closed distribution site.

Participants then practiced distributing bottles of antibiotics to fellow class members in response to a mock anthrax attack.

“We really appreciate the Department of Health coming in and

training our people,” said Kahului Airport Superintendent Marvin Moniz.

Echoing his sentiments were Operations Manager Kathy Wade and Fire Captain Robert Acantilado, who brought a contingent of seven ARFF personnel. Two security personnel were also in attendance.

Big Island MRC attends Preparedness Fair

Big Island Medical Reserve Corps (BIMRC) participated in Tsunami Awareness Month’s Emergency Response and Preparedness Day Fair on April 19 at the Wailoa River Recreation Center grounds in Hilo.

The Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency, Pacific Tsunami Museum, Office of the Mayor, and other community groups and stakeholders collaborated with BIMRC on this public education event to raise awareness of the hazards of tsunamis and the history of tsunamis in our community.

Fair organizers also highlighted the capabilities and services of first responders, emergency response agencies, and other disaster support organizations.

The free event for the Hilo community was a highly interactive learning environment about the various emergency response and disaster support resources that are available in Hawaii County.



Center photo: BIMRC volunteers Janice Nakahara, Ann Marie Muramoto and Roberta Horita with BIMRC Coordinator Dan Gushiken.



Spotlight on the

HAWAI‘I MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS



Kaua‘i MRC helps improve CPR/First Aid certification

Iris Craig, new member of the Kauai Medical Reserve Corps (KMRC), worked her network at the Department of Transportation’s Harbors Division to come up with a new training option for CPR/First Aid certifications.

Her friend, Lt. Max Matias of the Lihue Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting team, graciously offered to assist KMRC members in obtaining or renewing their certifications.

“Thank you for choosing Max to teach the BLS/ CPR course,” said KMRC member Debbie Blackwell. “His instructor skills are the best! He really worked with us to get the correct technique.”

Lt. Matias, who received other high praise for his Basic Life Support training course, also opened the training to high school students who are interested in firefighting careers.



Lt. Max Matias (center) of Lihue Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting led two-day CPR/First Aid training for Kaua‘i Medical Reserve Corps members Neva Olsen and Debbie Blackwell (far left), Denese Wojcik and Iris Craig (far right) and high school students.

Kaua‘i MRC supports MS Sunset Walk

Joining 300-odd runners and walkers at the request of National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society, the Kauai Medical Reserve Corp (KMRC) provided medical support at the society’s Sunset Walk.

The April 19 event ran several miles along Ke Ala Hele Makalae, Kauai’s coastal multi-use path, with a goal to mobilize individuals and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of those affected by MS.

KMRC volunteers, certified in CPR/First Aid, fulfilled the event’s medical support needs. It was just one year ago that the devastating terrorist incident at the 2013 Boston Marathon took lives and limbs, so Sunset Walk organizers placed considerable faith in the KMRC.

Although they were fully prepared to respond to the anticipated medical needs, KMRC did not report a single incident requiring medical attention, emergent or otherwise.



Kaua‘i Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr. expressed gratitude to KMRC members Denise Wojcik and Iris Craig for volunteer medical support during the Sunset Walk.

PHP, MRC engage SPIN families with special-needs kids

Donning a White Sox cap and toting a baseball-inspired “Disaster!” game, Public Health Preparedness (PHP) joined O’ahu Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to “Hit a home run with SPIN!” at the organization’s 29th annual conference, held April 5 at the UH Manoa campus.

SPIN, or Special Parent Information Network, is a parent-to-parent organization that provides information, support and referral for Hawaii parents of children and young adults with disabilities.

Children with special needs have much higher health risks during a natural disaster or emergency. This includes teenagers and young adults who are learning to live independently.



This year’s SPIN conference showcased a “Field of Dreams” for families to foster positive futures for their children.

At the invitation of the state Disability and Communication Access Board, PHP and MRC took advantage of this excellent opportunity for community outreach by educating the visitors to their booth on emergency preparedness topics.

PHP also provided **Plan to Be Ready** guides and supplied 400+ “Personal Emergency” backpacks to the event for all families in attendance.

MRC volunteers Suzi Mann and Yoko Chun play “Disaster!” with families and other attendees of the 29th annual SPIN Conference.

Section training prepares DOH for DOC

With representatives of all DOH administrations in attendance, the Public Health Preparedness branch and contractor Engineering/Remediation Resources Group, Inc., held five full-day training sessions on staff members’ duties and responsibilities during a disaster.

“Departmental Operations Center: Standard Operating Guidelines and Section Training” in April and May was conducted for personnel assigned to positions in the Departmental Operations Center (DOC).

The training was designed to help ensure that staff on the DOC roster are thoroughly aware of their duties and responsibilities, and to familiarize staff with the updated Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG).

The updated SOG takes an “all-hazards” approach and aligns with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

It provides guidance on how to 1) notify staff and activate the DOC, 2) use DOC resources and equipment, 3) obtain resources and personnel, 4) apply Incident Command System (ICS) forms and procedures, 5) transfer information between agencies and Emergency Operation Centers, 6) track costs, and 7) communicate with staff members in remote locations.

To ensure quick and easy application in high-stress situations, the new SOG has section-specific tabs with operational procedures, position-specific job aids, and pertinent ICS forms.



“The training demonstrated how the SOG integrates into the operational period and overall planning process,” said trainer Chris Curatilo. “Our goal is to enhance the readiness of DOH personnel.”

Link to the newest Hurricane App! at www.facebook.com/HI.DOC



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Send comments and questions to: PHPnewsletter@doh.hawaii.gov