



Preparing our Hawai'i communities for natural disasters, disease pandemic, bioterrorism and public health emergencies.

Public Health Preparedness News

September 2014

Department Operations Center has DOH-wide functional exercise

Natural disasters are a public health threat. In an emergency, the Hawai'i Department of Health's (DOH) Departmental Operations Center (DOC) may be activated to support emergency operations and coordinate the public health response statewide.

To test DOH's ability to respond in a hurricane post-landfall scenario, more than 120 staff members participated in one of three full-day shifts of a DOC functional exercise as part of the annual statewide Makani Pahili exercise.

The DOC drew staff from all DOH administrations, including District Health Offices on the Neighbor Islands and was conducted at the State Laboratories Division in Pearl City.

To refresh DOH staff and increase their familiarity with the department's core capabilities in a disaster, the functional exercise provided role-playing experience in Emergency Operations Coordination, Emergency Public Information and Warning, Information Sharing, and Mass Care.

The exercise also allowed for a first-hand assessment of DOC procedures by experienced external monitors, providing



Eye of the Storm:

DOH staff were put in Logistics, Finance, Operations, Planning, or Command roles and tasked with quickly coordinating their efforts toward the mock incident's objectives.



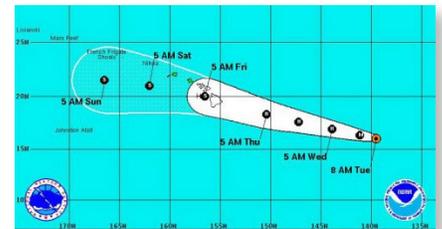
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DOH activates for Hurricane Iselle

In the days preceding Hurricane Iselle's downgrade to tropical storm status, DOH prepared for the possibility of a statewide natural disaster.

State Emergency Response Team (SERT) representatives reported to the state EOC. DOH staff coordinated with state and county Civil Defense agencies and American Red Cross (ARC), contacted Public Health Nurses and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, and kept in communication with the SERTs, environmental and behavioral health



staff, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, and other partners.

Twenty-one MRC volunteers responded by helping staff 10 ARC shelters; most stayed for eight hours or longer. Additional MRC volunteers were standing by in case the shelters stayed open.

"The DOH response to Hurricane Iselle was a success, and provided a good learning opportunity to refine our plans for future responses," said Melissa Viray, MD, DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division.

DOC Functional Exercise continued from page 1

insight and feedback on DOH's procedures for handling public health tasks and activities in an emergency.

An after-action report concluded that each shift of the DOC successfully activated and responded to the mock incident and supported the hurricane response objectives of performing lifesaving and sustaining measures and conduct-



ing mass care and sheltering operations. The report recommended that staff would benefit from further training on the tools used for inter-agency communication and from further familiarization with emergency response plans.

Training would also benefit DOC leadership to be more efficient in their roles during an emergency response.



PHASTeam attends RIMPAC

The world's largest international maritime exercise got a little help from the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH).

At the 24th Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) joint exercise, held in July, DOH Public Health Assessment and Surveillance Team (PHASTeam) members were on-site at the invitation of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH).

As part of the largest Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief exercise in recent history, the PHASTeam conducted assessments of field hospitals and supporting structures. RIMPAC was

an ideal opportunity for the PHASTeam to further define its role in emergency response.

In addition, Director of Health Dr. Linda Rosen and State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park acted as representatives of the Ministry of Health for the location of the exercise scenario, the fictional island nation of Griffon.

Based on scenario reports, DOH activated its

Scenario: a mock Category 3 tropical cyclone impacts the fictional island of Griffon. Initial reports suggest 8,000-10,000 persons are displaced, with 300 dead and 500+missing. A public health team is reporting outbreaks of malaria, dysentery, dengue, and cholera. Case numbers are increasing each week. Water and wastewater facilities are severely damaged. Hospitals and clinics have extensive damage and no commercial electrical power. Remaining functional healthcare facilities are inundated with storm-related injuries and outbreak-related illnesses.

PHASTeam – comprised of subject-matter experts in behavioral health, environmental health, public health, and epidemiology.

PHASTeams' mission is to quickly provide situation awareness to DOH leadership via on-the-scene assessments and surveillance data gathering. These data help DOH response personnel in prioritizing their response efforts. Assessments also help to identify and/or mitigate any potential public health emergencies before they become a larger threat.



DOH PHASTeam and HAH participants at RIMPAC. The unique training involved 49 ships, 6 submarines, 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel from 22 nations. The DOH PHASTeam was prepared to react PHAST and PHURIOUSLY to any public health emergency.



PHP holds POD training for mass distribution

DOH Public Health Nurses and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers trained on July 15 and 18 on setting up and running an open Point of Distribution (POD).

The drills were part of DOH efforts to strengthen its response capability in case of a pandemic, bioterrorism event such as a large-scale anthrax exposure, or any other public health crisis requiring mass distribution.

PHP began with a primer on the Strategic National Stockpile, CDC's repository of emergency medical countermeasures.

Next, staff walked the audience through the steps involved in setting up a POD. Having familiarity with the basic layout of PODs and taking traffic flow into consideration are critical to quickly dispensing medicine to a community during a crisis.



The POD drills afforded the opportunity to role-play various POD positions: incident commander, medical screener, security, logistics,

a line of communication between PODs and the department operations center is essential.

Point-of-Distribution (POD) Clinics

- Designed to quickly deliver medication or other medical countermeasure to many people during a pandemic, bioterrorism attack, or natural disaster.
- Open PODs: distribute medications or other medical countermeasures to the general public.
- Closed PODs: deliver medications or medical countermeasures to a company or organization, which distributes them to employees and family members.

dispenser, and persons receiving medication for themselves and their household.

The class also trained with 800 MHz radios; in a real-life event, maintaining

Public Health Nurses educate seniors in preparedness

Senior citizens need to prepare for disasters, too! On July 22, Public Health Nurses (PHNs) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers presented "Be Safe, Be Prepared" to the residents of D.E. Thompson Village, a senior living apartment complex in Ewa Beach.

Residents were asked to complete a survey of their knowledge of emergency preparedness. They received information

on disaster preparedness and pertinent health topics from PHNs and MRC volunteers, as well as personal disaster backpacks donated by the PHP program. PHNs organized the fair with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

PHN Jean McDermott concluded the event with a Power-Point presentation created by PHP on disasters, health, and personal preparedness.



Senior residents of D.E. Thompson Village in Ewa Beach receive information and personal disaster backpacks from DOH Public Health Nurses and the Public Health Preparedness program.

Maui holds “Congregate Care Shelter” training

King’s Cathedral in Kahului was the site of a large, joint field exercise to assess the capabilities of local agencies in setting up a congregate care shelter in the aftermath of a hurricane.

The exercise, part of the state-wide Makani Pahili hurricane exercise, included personnel from Maui District Health Office (MDHO), American Red Cross, Maui Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Maui Humane Society, and Maui County Health Volunteers (MCHV), a Medical Reserve Corps unit.

The exercise was conducted to better prepare agencies in the response and recovery phases of a hurricane strike (Maui

soon had a close call with Tropical Storm Iselle; see “Iselle,” below).

In support of the shelter and lead agency American Red Cross, two teams consisting of MDHO and MCHV personnel ran the health and medical station. Each team consisted of a physician, nurses, and support staff. Besides providing healthcare services to clients and staff, the MDHO/MCHV teams also provided public health assessments.

Public Health Nurse Christopher Thomas served as the Health and Medical Station manager.

King’s Cathedral graciously provided its facility for the exercise and identified additional rooms for separate operational elements of a congregate care shelter. “King’s Cathedral will help the people of Maui after a hurricane,” said Pastor Albert Kamau.



Left: PHN Ronna Patty conducts intake of “patient” Mary Santa Maria (MDHO Health Educator and MCHV member). PHP Health Educator Rachel Heckscher (middle) acts as interpreter for the Spanish-speaking patient. **Right:** MDHO shelter teams 1 and 2, led by PHN Christopher Thomas (center, seated holding radio).

Maui County, meet Tropical Storm Iselle

On August 6, 2014, Tropical Storm Iselle slammed into Hawai‘i and caused wide-spread damage on the Big Island.

In Maui County, Maui Civil Defense activated their Emergency Operations Center (EOC), where agency representatives from various county departments, state agencies, and non-governmental organizations reported for duty.

From the Maui District Health Office (MDHO), Lorrin Pang, MD, and PHP Planner Marc Nishimoto took shifts assisting with health and medical support.



The Maui Emergency Operations Center during Tropical Storm Iselle.

The major health-related operational element for Iselle was emergency shelter operations (see “Training,” above), managed by the American Red Cross.

Several health and medical issues arose with clients at the Central Maui shelter at H.P. Baldwin High School, where Dr. Pang conducted the initial assessment of clients.

Among them were an alcoholic individual who was undergoing withdrawal because he stopped taking medication and a hospice patient who experienced some distress when her back-up oxygen tank regulator malfunctioned.

The clients were managed at the Baldwin shelter with the assistance of DOH public health nurse Bethany Legin, who replaced the outgoing Red Cross nurse.



Tropic Care Kaua'i does 22,000 procedures

More than 9,000 Kauai residents benefited from some 22,000 medical procedures – all provided at no cost to patients – during Tropic Care Kauai 2014.

The Kauai District Health Office (KDHO) applied for the Tropic Care mission through

facilitated collaborations between the military and County of Kauai, the Hawaii Department of Education, and University of Hawaii's Kauai Community College. KDHO also promoted the free medical clinics to the community at large.

Kauai Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers supported Tropic Care by managing traffic flow through the clinics.

IRT medical missions deploy medical reservists who are willing to devote their annual training to improving health in a medically underserved area. Mission goals are to practice rapid overseas mobilization and withdrawal

of personnel, as well as efficiently provide dental, optometric, and

medical services in volume.

For Tropic Care Kauai, the U.S. Army coordinated more than 280 medical and logistics reserve and active personnel in the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force. They arrived from all four corners of the nation to participate in this two-week deployment.



the U.S. Pentagon's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) medical program. KDHO



Major Tina Burr, U.S. Air Force 911th Air Lift Wing, examines a Kauai resident's eyes at Eleele Elementary School. (Photo by Kevin Kim, U.S. Army)

Big Island's shelter-in-place outreach is just in time!

"The lady who bought two 5-gallon water jugs must have been really glad she did when Hurricane Iselle hit us just one week later!" said PHN Jasmine Staup, referring to outreach in West Hawaii to share information about emergency preparedness and shelter-in-place.

Timed to coincide with the start of Hawaii's hurricane season, the July 31 efforts by Public Health Nurses (PHNs), Public Health Preparedness (PHP) staff, and Hawaii Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers – all from the Hawaii District Health Office (HDHO) – were organized by the West Hawaii PHNs.

In support of the initiative, KTA Waimea and Keauhou, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and Choice Mart all generously offered their

storefront space and assistance. Some displayed their available emergency preparedness supplies.

"We wanted to remind people that everyone needs to plan ahead because

natural disasters can strike any time," said PHN Jasmine Staup.

"It's hurricane season, but in the last few years, the Big Island has been hit by flooding, earthquakes, tsunamis, and wildfires too," she added.

"Being prepared is the most important thing we can do to ensure our families are safe."

Popular handouts included **Plan to Be Ready** and **Plan 9** and from the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), as well as HDHO brochures that focus on planning for sheltering in place and disaster preparedness for people with functional and access needs.

"Having the outreach displays in stores made it easy for people to pick up the extra batteries or cans of food they needed," Staup said.



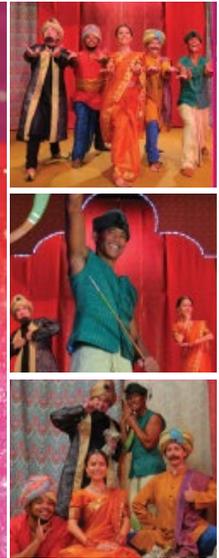
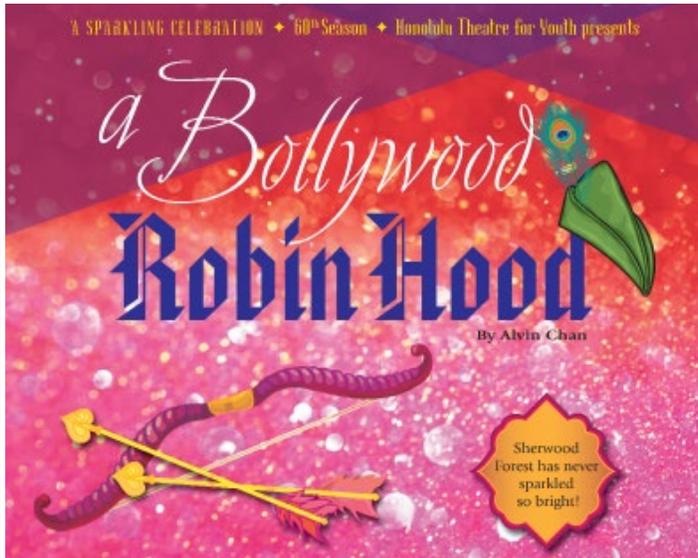
West Hawaii: MRC volunteer Dr. AnnMarie Muramoto and Public Health LPN Benita Salazar at the Keauhou KTA store.

Wash, Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands!

Parents, Teachers, Keiki: lend me your ears! The Honolulu Theater for Youth's 2014 season kicked off with a glitzy musical, "A Bollywood Robin Hood."

The show features a catchy, fun musical skit on "hand washing" created specifically for the Hawaii Department of Health, Public Health Preparedness Branch!

Watch the short video on YouTube: [A Bollywood Robin Hood](#).



Closed POD at Kinau Hale

Public Health Preparedness (PHP) personnel distributed a total of 427 Heater Meals to DOH staff in Kinau Hale on July 8 as practical training for a closed Point of Distribution (POD).

In a bioterror attack or disease pandemic, a closed POD may be set up to quickly and efficiently get lifesaving antiviral medication or other medical countermeasures into the hands of DOH staff.



PHP used an Incident Command Structure to distribute the meals, provided to encourage employee readiness for emergencies by stocking food in their workplace go-kits.

Staff publicized the event via building-wide email blasts, word-of-mouth, and eye-catching posters. Some employees also stopped by because they saw or heard the bustling activity on the 4th floor.

"The Heater Meal Closed POD was great training for us, and well-attended by DOH staff in the building. We received many positive comments, including requests to continue providing this service/drill annually," says PHP planner Terry Visperas.

Closed PODs are being developed throughout the state with medium to large employers, who recognize the benefits in providing this service to employees and their families in the event of a disease outbreak or bioterrorism event.

App for That!

- The **Hawai'i Tsunami Information Service** can help you find evacuation zone maps and other vital preparedness information. Search by address, community, or GPS location. Developed by the NOAA and State of Hawai'i.



Download the app: [Hawaii Tsunami Info](#)

- Need tips on helping survivors cope after a disaster? The **SAMHSA Disaster App** can access the behavioral health resources you need to provide emotional support. Includes pre-deployment, on-the-ground, and post-deployment resources for responders.



Download the app: [SAMHSA Disaster App](#)

- When an earthquake strikes, use the **Earthquake App** from American Red Cross to get updates and notifications, find help, and let others know you are safe – even when the power is out.



Download the app: [Earthquake App](#)

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