

Disaster Preparedness Update

Sponsored by Florida Hospital Association and the State of Florida, Department of Health

Quarterly Newsletter— Issue 1

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Syndromic Surveillance

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The SWG Syndromic Surveillance workgroup held their first meeting July 25, 2005 in Tampa. The purpose of this group is to review the present and future roles of syndromic surveillance systems in the state and set forth guidance for implementing syndromic surveillance systems statewide. Participants include representatives from the Department of Health at both the local and state level; and hospital infection control practitioners and emergency department personnel.

It has been decided that the state approach to syndromic surveillance will be a Standards Based approach and recommendations, rather than a System based approach where only one system is used statewide.

Subcommittees were formed to work on the following specific standards:

- Syndrome groups and definitions
- Protocol for response, signal generation, and statistical algorithms
- Methods of data acquisition and timeliness of data acquisition
- Memorandums of Understanding / interconnectivity agreement templates

The initial focus of data sources will be on emergency department data in counties with populations of greater than 200,000 people. As resources allow, syndromic surveillance will expand into less populated areas and / or have more data sources such as primary care clinics. The next meeting of this group is tentatively scheduled for early November.

Hospital Preparedness Training Workgroup

Approximately 2 years ago, Hospital Staff Core Competencies for Disaster Preparedness were developed by a Health, Medical, Hospital, and EMS State Working Group Sub Committee. These competencies were approved by the Domestic Security Oversight Council in April 2004. As the training workgroup moves forward with these competencies, they will;

- Serve as a clearinghouse for trainings that meet established competencies
- Develop a hospital training toolkit, that includes training templates, resource lists, and a crosswalk of trainings that meet established competencies
- Provide recommendations on hospital training funding strategies

The Florida Department of Health hired ADG Business and Governmental Consultants to do some preliminary work on these objectives and it is now up to the Hospital Training Committee to continue moving this initiative forward. Since the last meeting, progress has been made on the toolkit. A small workgroup met and began developing training templates for "all" hospital personnel and the "basic" level competency training. The first draft of these templates will be shared with the committee at their next meeting scheduled for October 18, 2005, at the Florida Hospital Association in Orlando.



Office of Public Health Preparedness Introduction and Healthcare Workforce Surge Update

It is with great pleasure that I have joined the Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP) at the Department of Health. The Office of Public Health Preparedness (PHP) coordinates planning and program development for DOH and other state agencies to protect the public health of Florida's citizens and visitors from the effects of manmade and naturally-occurring events. The goals of the office are to upgrade preparedness for, and response to, bioterrorism, outbreaks of infectious disease, and other public health threats and emergencies. PHP works closely with our hospitals to help ensure that they are well-prepared to respond. With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) and partnerships with our emergency responder and public health constituents, PHP oversees a multitude of preparedness projects that include comprehensive plans as well as training components, equipment and pharmaceutical caches.



Kris-Tena Albers

The major project I am involved with is Healthcare Workforce Surge. The last two years has re-confirmed that Florida is a vulnerable state to emergency events. To this end we can all agree that a functional robust plan is needed to address healthcare workforce surge. The plan is in the beginning phase: investigation, research and data collection. In the near future a statewide advisory group will be convened to address healthcare workforce surge and the issues surrounding it. Some of these issues include: legal liability and regulatory issues, state licensure and license portability Issues, hospital role in facilitating recruitment of capable volunteer health care personnel, regional interstate planning, activation protocols, payment or non-payment of volunteers, volunteer database management, and worker's compensation issues.

I look forward to working with you,
Kris-Tena Albers, ARNP, CNM, MN

Draft Regional Hospital Catastrophic B3 Response Plan Adopted

Draft regional hospital catastrophic response plans for bomb, burn and blast incidents have now been adopted for each of the seven RDSTF Regions in Florida. The regional plans have been submitted to the Florida Department of Health by FHA and its planning partners (Florida State University and Health Strategies, Inc.) and are currently open to review and comment from all Florida hospitals through the end of September.

Visit www.hrpflorida.org for
*Regional Response Plans
and Tier Designation Info.*

The concept of operations of the hospital response plan is tied to a "tiered" response protocol. The intent of this tiered protocol is to assure that no individual hospital becomes overwhelmed in a bomb, burn or blast situation; and hospitals receive only those patients that they are most capable to treat.

Thus, patients with multiple trauma would not be directed to a small hospital with limited operative capabilities and trauma hospitals would not receive patients that have minor injuries.

To date, 75 percent of all acute care hospitals in Florida have self-designated to participate in the plan. At your request, members of the planning team are available to discuss details of the plan with key staff of your hospital via conference call. If you have comments or questions about the plan or are interested in participating and being a part of the plan, please contact Kim Streit by e-mail at kims@fha.org or (407) 841-6230.

