



Volunteer Management and the National Health Security Preparedness Index

Introduction to the NHSPI

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), coordinated the development of the National Health Security Preparedness Index (NHSPI) with representatives from over 25 stakeholder organizations. The mission of the NHSPI is to provide an accurate portrayal of our nation's health security using relevant, actionable information to help guide efforts to achieve a higher level of health security preparedness. While the Index is still in its early stages of development, it represents the most comprehensive set of health security preparedness measures to date. The intended uses of the NHSPI include: strengthening preparedness; informing decision making; guiding quality improvement; and advancing the science behind community resilience.

The Index offers a snapshot of national preparedness to demonstrate progress and identify areas where greater improvement is needed. Over 75 experts representing states, counties, cities, partner agencies, academia, private sector and other organizations helped shape the Index. As part of the development process, states and a wide array of stakeholder associations were provided the Index model, structure, and content for review. The data behind the Index were collected from preexisting sources in an effort to prevent an additional burden to states.

The 2014 Index

The NHSPI will continue to be expanded and refined over the next several years to include additional areas and drivers of health security preparedness. For the development of the 2014 Index, ASTHO has expanded the NHSPI Team to nearly 100 experts in various sectors of health security. This year's model will include new measures in the areas of Environmental and Occupational Health, Healthcare Service Delivery, and Legal/Administrative Preparedness. The NHSPI Team will again seek broad stakeholder feedback before the updated Index is officially released.

Management of Volunteers in Emergencies

The management of volunteers in emergencies component of the Index exists as a subdomain in the domain of Community Planning and Engagement. This subdomain is defined as *the ability to coordinate the identification, recruitment, registration, credential verification, training, and engagement of health care, medical, and support staff volunteers to support the jurisdiction's response to incidents of health significance*. For the 2013 NHSPI, this subdomain contained 13 measures; 12 of which were collected from the Medical Reserve Corps. Most of these measures were *workforce* measures, (i.e., the number of pre-registered volunteers for each type of medical profession, normalized per 100,000 population, to allow for comparison between states).

For the 2014 Index, the NHSPI Model Design Workgroup considered additional measures to include within this subdomain. These new measures are from data sources such as the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) and Citizen Corps. However, there remains a gap in the availability of consistent data across all states for non-medical volunteers in emergencies. The NHSPI Team has engaged the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) to further develop this data collection in the future.

2015 and Beyond

The NHSPI Team is also discussing how to improve the Index model for 2015 and beyond. For example, the Model Design Workgroup is considering issues such as hazard weighting and validation studies. In addition, there have been many questions from the practice community about how the NHSPI can be applied to territories, local jurisdictions, and tribes. The NHSPI Team plans to form a small “think tank” later this year to begin brainstorming how the NHSPI or parallel indices can be applied to these jurisdictions.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has agreed to take over ownership and management of the NHSPI beginning in January 2015. ASTHO, CDC and the rest of the NHSPI Team are working closely with RWJF to ensure a smooth transition. The NHSPI will continue to evolve to include other key elements of health security, and the model will continue to be refined to reflect the whole community in health security preparedness.

For more information and to provide feedback on the NHSPI, visit www.nhspi.org.