Preparedness Newsletter
In the US-Affiliated Pacific and Caribbean Islands

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ASTHO News

Follow @ ASTHO on Twitter to get the latest public health news from our website and partners

Tell us what you think!

Thank you for subscribing to the Preparedness Newsletter in the US-Affiliated Pacific and Caribbean Islands. ASTHO would like to assess the value and utility of this newsletter. Results will be used internally within ASTHO to determine how to best use the organization's limited resources to meet your technical assistance needs. This survey is anonymous and will take less than five minutes to complete. We ask that you submit your responses by January 9, 2015. Thank you!

Please click here to complete the survey.

ASTHO Develops Ebola Guide

ASTHO, in partnership with a working group of state health officials and risk communication consultants, has developed the resource Top Questions On Ebola: Simple Answers Developed by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. ASTHO staff and the ad hoc committee worked with Dr. Randall Hyer and Dr. Vincent Covello from the Center for Risk Communication to assist state and territorial health officials in preparing to communicate with the public, media, and policymakers about Ebola. The messaging guide includes more than 60 message maps, key questions, and science-based answers as an effort to ensure Ebola messages are consistent across the nation. In addition, the appendix includes a "Media Interviews: Tips and Pitfalls" section to review before engaging with the media.

Promising Practices

Call for Preparedness Stories

ASTHO's "Have You Shared" initiative systematically collects and disseminates stories that highlight promising and useful practices and implementation strategies developed by state, territorial, and freely associated state health agencies. ASTHO created the Have You Shared campaign to solicit stories of promising practices and is working with our members to capture stories from across all ASTHO content areas. Please tell us about your successes in Preparedness at http://www.astho.org/Forms/Preparedness/Accomplishments/.

Preparedness in the News
White House Launches Disasters.Data.Gov

As part of the White House Innovation for Disaster Response and Recovery Initiative, the Administration has launched disasters.data.gov. The portal serves as a resource for the public, the disaster preparedness community, and all government levels. It provides disaster information and datasets, apps and tools, and involvement opportunities to help strengthen national preparedness and community resilience. To learn more, read the whitehouse.gov blog post.

Vulnerable Populations in Emergencies and Disasters: The Reality of Puerto Rico

Dr. Ralph Rivera-Gutierrez, Principal Investigator and Director of the University of Puerto Rico Center for Public Health Preparedness, presented his poster on "Vulnerable Populations in a Disaster: The Reality of Puerto Rico" at the 142nd APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition. Data from a Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) of public health, medical, mental and behavioral health systems was used to identify vulnerable populations with needs to be addressed in Puerto Rico's emergency preparedness and response plans.

Partner Updates

Joint WHO-SPC-PIHOA Ebola Infection Control and Prevention Workshop

PIHOA conducted an Ebola Infection Control and Prevention workshop, held December 2 - 4 in Nadi, Fiji. ASTHO engaged in this activity as a partner in the workshop planning team and the facilitator team led by Dr. Mark Durand, PIHOA's Performance & Health Information Systems Initiative Coordinator. PIHOA also managed the adaptation of the course material into an organized package for a one-day workshop suitable for patient transport and isolation unit staff. Trainer candidates from the Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital in American Samoa, American Samoa Department of Health, Guam Memorial Hospital, and Commonwealth Health Center in Saipan attended the training of trainers workshop and developed plans for in-country delivery of the program. Plans are also underway to deliver the package in other pacific island countries and territories, including the United States Affiliated Pacific Islands. For further information and workshop materials, please contact Mark Durand at durand@pihoa.org.

VA Caribbean Healthcare System Conducts Ebola Virus Disease Preparedness Exercise

VA Caribbean Healthcare System, a joint commission of medical facilities in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, participated in the Veteran Healthcare Administration's (VHA) nation-wide Ebola preparedness activities. Ten outpatient clinics conducted exercises from December 1 - 9, 2014. Exercises were aimed at training personnel on safe care of Ebola patients and covered all aspects of Ebola infection control, such as patient screening, isolation, transportation, environmental control, waste management, and donning and doffing of personal protective equipment.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Division of Strategic National Stockpile Announces Its Course Schedule

The Division of Strategic National Stockpile (DSNS) is happy to announce its Strategic National Stockpile Preparedness course and Mass Antibiotic Dispensing Train-the-Trainer (MADT) course schedules for federal fiscal year 2015. Provided in partnership with FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Alabama, interested applicants can apply through CDP's registration system at https://cdp.dhs.gov/register/registration-process/. Open season for applications is approximately three months from the start of each course. All travel expenses will be paid for by FEMA for state and local personnel, and the courses are free.

The SNS Preparedness course is a "blended" course using self-paced learning, virtually-led classrooms, and in-person training to provide state and regional planners and MCM staff all the information needed to design and execute MCM mass dispensing. This includes instruction on formulary, warehouse operations, distribution methods, and point of dispensing operations.

SNS Preparedness Course Dates:

- 18 - 20 February 2015
- 4 - 6 May 2015
- 10 - 12 August 2015

There are no prerequisites for the SNS Preparedness course.

The MADT course can help improve your preparedness training. Working with DSNS's expert trainers, your staff can become certified to offer CDC continuing education credits through a FEMA authorized course. Please pass on this exciting opportunity to those who provide training in your jurisdiction.

MADT Course Dates

- 27 - 29 May 2015
- 24 - 26 August 2015

Prerequisites for this course are:

- Attendance at either DSNS' SNS Preparedness course, or Mass Antibiotic Dispensing (MAD) course, or Mobile Preparedness course (MPC).
- At least a part-time role as trainer.
Upcoming Trainings & Events

Military Assistance to International Health Emergency Response: Examining Frameworks for an Ebola-like Disaster in the Asia Pacific

When: Wednesday, January 28 - Thursday, January 29, 2015
Where: Pacific Beach Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii
Description: "In consideration of the international health security crisis currently unfolding in West Africa, Banyan Analytics, an Asia-Pacific focused, not-for-profit research and analysis institute of Analytic Services Inc., will hold a conference featuring a tabletop exercise and high-level discussion regarding the military response to a future complex health emergency in the Asia-Pacific." Featured guests are Dr. Deon Canyon, Associate Professor at University of Hawai‘i at Manoa; and Dr. Robin Robinson, Director of Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, visit http://www.anser.org/node/867.
Registration: RSVP at Banyan.Analytics@anser.org.

International Disaster Conference & Expo

When: Tuesday, February 10 - Thursday, February 12, 2015
Where: New Orleans, Louisiana
Description: "The mission of the International Disaster Conference & Expo (IDCE) is to unite public and private sector professionals from around the world for discussions regarding policy, lessons learned, best practices, and forward thinking, resulting in the mitigation of loss of life and property when catastrophic events occur." Event details available on the International Disaster Conference & Expo website.

2015 Preparedness, Emergency Response, and Recovery Consortium and Exposition (PERRC)

When: Monday, March 23 - Thursday, March 26, 2015
Where: Orlando, Florida
Description: PERRC will "bring together healthcare, medical, public health and volunteer emergency management personnel involved in disaster recovery and response efforts representing the governmental, public and private sectors to discuss shared practices in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. This forum will provide a hands-on, adult learning environment promoting the sharing of ideas and discussion of best practices." More information available at http://www.perrc.org/.
Registration: Now open at https://www.cvent.com/events/2015-preparedness-emergency-response-recovery-consortium-expo/registration-be644ac8fca84c17b9e97dea4b28e1f0.aspx.
Have something to share?

If your agency or organization would like to contribute to the Preparedness E-Newsletter, please contact us at nfajardo@astho.org. Content should be of interest to public health professionals in the US Affiliated Pacific and Caribbean Islands and should concern public health and healthcare system preparedness and related activities.

About ASTHO

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

ASTHO is the national nonprofit organization representing the state and territorial public health agencies of the United States, the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, and the District of Columbia. ASTHO's members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, are dedicated to formulating and influencing sound public health policy, and to assuring excellence in state-based public health practice.

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