



Update

Report on Public Health Emergency Preparedness in Oregon

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A new report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights Oregon's public health emergency preparedness efforts. The national report features this photo, taken in the Oregon Public Health Division Agency Operations Center.

Oregon Scores Well on Two National Public Health Preparedness Assessments

- Oregon's ability to respond to a public health emergency has dramatically improved since 2001, when federal funds for that purpose began to flow to states across the nation, according to two recent national reports.
- "These reports confirm that preparedness funding has made a significant difference in state and local planning efforts," said Mike Skeels, Ph.D., interim state public health director. "We are much better positioned to mount an effective response to a public health emergency than we were seven years ago."
- "Public Health Preparedness: Mobilizing State by State," compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shows Oregon has made progress in the areas of disease detection and investigation, laboratory testing capabilities and planning, training and exercising.
- The CDC report does not rank states, instead presenting the data as a snapshot in time, recognizing

that improvements may have occurred since the information was collected.

- The full report, "Public Health Preparedness: Mobilizing State by State" is on the Web at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/publications/feb08phprep/>
- "Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism," an annual assessment of the nation's ability to respond to a public health emergency issued by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH), ranks Oregon as having achieved 9 out of 10 key preparedness indicators. Oregon was one of 22 states to score nine or above, higher than all other Western states.
- In January Oregon achieved all 10 indicators when the State Public Health Laboratory received Bio-safety Level 3 certification enabling it to handle potentially lethal infectious agents.
- To view the entire TFAH report, visit their Web site at: <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror07/>

Mike Skeels, Ph.D., M.P.H., Named Interim Director of Oregon Public Health Division

- Mike Skeels, Ph.D., M.P.H., director of the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL), has been named interim director of the Oregon Public Health Division following the resignation on Feb. 1 of former director Dr. Susan Allan.
- Skeels has worked in public health since 1977. He joined the Public Health Division in 1983 to direct the OSPHL, a position he held until 1990. From 1990 until 1994 he served as the state's public health director, before voluntarily stepping down to return to overseeing the lab.
- Prior to moving to Oregon he led state public health labs in Montana and New Mexico. He also is a clinical professor at the Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine.



State and local public health and elected officials cut the ribbon during a recent dedication ceremony at the new location of the Oregon Public Health Laboratory in Hillsboro.

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory Moves to Hillsboro

- After 30+ years on the Portland State University campus, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) recently relocated to a new facility in Hillsboro.
- The previous lab facility was a renovated parking structure, which limited both the space and bio-safety level of the work that could be performed.
- The new facility contains a self-sufficient Bio-safety Level 3 laboratory that allows safe handling and testing of higher risk specimens suspected of containing agents of bioterrorism such as poxviruses, as well as handling of emerging disease threats like avian influenza and drug-resistant tuberculosis. This new facility received certification for handling biological threat agents by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Select Agent Program in mid January.
- This expanded capacity allows the OSPHL to improve its support for public health emergency preparedness activities.



Members of Oregon's Disaster Medical Assistance Team were deployed to Vernonia to assist after the town was flooded during December storms.

Public Health Division Response to Winter Storms

- In response to severe winter storms that caused widespread power outages and flooding in early December, the Public Health Division activated its Agency Operations Center (AOC) from Tuesday, Dec. 4, through Monday, Dec. 10, to provide health and medical support (ESF #8) for the emergency.
- The AOC was staffed by approximately 20 people throughout the activation, and the division also staffed the ESF #8 desk at the State Emergency Coordination Center.
- During this activation, the AOC assisted in deploying Oregon's Disaster Medical Assistance team to Vernonia to provide medical care to 279 patients, and processed one order for medical supplies for the Vernonia Clinic.
- The AOC deployed two epidemiological strike teams to visit three hospitals and two clinics to conduct surveillance of illness and injury in the flood-affected areas.
- PHD epidemiologists investigated a suspected case of meningitis and rumors of gastrointestinal illness associated with the Vernonia shelter.
- The Hospital Preparedness Program surveyed affected hospitals and medical clinics to determine whether they had

power and adequate communication equipment and supplies.

- The Office of Family Health Immunization Program processed four orders for tetanus vaccine (1,020 doses), which were delivered by ODOT to Columbia County.
- The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program provided needed baby formula to Clatsop County.
- The PHD Drinking Water Program deployed three field teams to assist in testing local water systems, worked with affected public water systems to resolve infrastructure damage, and provided 600 water testing kits for private wells and springs.
- The State Public Health Laboratory tested water samples from more than 100 private wells.
- The Environmental Public Health section provided subject-matter expertise and fact sheets on a broad variety of flood recovery safety topics, and collaborated with Oregon OSHA to provide storm debris health and safety information to clean-up workers.
- PHD and PHEP public information officers worked closely with Environmental Public Health staff to issue 14 media releases during the activation.
- The Virtual Joint Information Center on the secure Health Alert Network (HAN) was activated to provide coordination of information among responding public information officers. There were more than 900 logins to the site during the storm emergency.
- HAN was used extensively throughout the emergency to send a total of 17 alerts, and 60 documents were shared on the HAN Document Library. There were more than 1,700 logins to the site during flood recovery operations.

Department of Human Services Winter Storm 2007 Debriefing

- Several Public Health Division staff participated in a Feb. 7 Department of Human Services (DHS) debriefing on how

DHS divisions responded and provided services to their clients during the 2007 winter storm incident. Key focus was on business continuity, disaster recovery, and coordinating the human services response.

- All major divisions within DHS participated in the debriefing and provided lessons learned to the Director's Office. The Vulnerable Population Task Force project was recognized for contributing to the overall success of the response.

Regional Emergency Management Technical Committee (REMTEC) Meeting

- Response and recovery efforts and lessons learned from the severe winter storms that produced flooding in many communities in December were the primary topics of the Jan. 4 Regional Emergency Management Technical Committee Meeting.
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director Mike Harryman, B.S.B./M., attended the monthly meeting, which brings together Portland-metro area emergency managers and response organizations from cities, counties, regions and special districts. State agencies and utility representatives participate in a non-official manner.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program Joins National Radio Network

- A recently installed 30-foot-high antenna on the roof of the State Office Building in Portland marks Oregon public health's entry into the world of high-frequency radio communications.
- *"With this new system, if traditional communication systems go down, we have another way to talk directly with more than 20 Oregon counties and 40 hospitals,"* said Kevin Cradock, B.A., B.S., Health Alert Network manager.
- The Public Health Emergency Preparedness program used \$50,000 in federal funding to join the U.S.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Public Health Radio Network through a cooperative agreement with the CDC. Under the agreement, the Public Health Division received and installed two high-frequency radios, one of which is mobile and can be deployed anywhere in the state.

- Oregon is one of the first Western states to join the CDC network, which connects multiple state health departments and emergency operations centers, the CDC, Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations such as the American Red Cross.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Regional Pandemic Influenza Planning Conference

- Draft federal guidance for state-level pandemic influenza planning was the topic of a Jan. 25 Web conference that included leaders from 10 western states and territories that collectively comprise DHHS Public Health Service Regions IX and X.
- The conference provided more than 200 leaders from Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, American Samoa and Guam with an opportunity to shape and improve the draft guidance.
- They represented various governmental sectors that need to be involved for successful pandemic planning, including public health, transportation, business and industry, law enforcement, consumer safety, education, emergency management, human resources, homeland security, the National Guard, and governor's office staff.
- Once the guidance has been revised, each state is required to update its statewide pandemic influenza plan.
- Public Health Division staff will take the lead in working with other state partners in updating Oregon's plan and submitting it to DHHS in June 2008.

National Guard Briefing on Strategic National Stockpile

- On Jan. 25, state preparedness staff provided a briefing to members of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard on the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program.
- Representatives from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) discussed their role when the SNS is delivered to the state.
- A primary outcome of the briefing was the possible use of military airfields and warehouses as alternate sites to receive and store the SNS during statewide emergencies.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Joint Information System/Center Training and Exercise

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Public Information Officer Christie Holmgren, B.A., APR, led a Joint Information System/Center training and functional exercise based on a highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak scenario for key partners on Jan. 15 at Oregon Emergency Management in Salem.
- The training and exercise were designed to test the Joint Communication Plan that is part of Oregon's Multi-agency Response to a Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Animal Emergency plan.
- Participants included public information officers and subject matter experts from the Oregon Public Health Division, Oregon Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Inspection Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Representatives from Yamhill and Marion county public health departments also participated in the training and exercise. Both counties have commercial poultry operations.
- The training was part of a series of plan

orientation workshops and exercises funded through a grant from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE).

FEMA Region X Regional Interagency Steering Committee

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director Mike Harryman, B.S.B./M., attended the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X Regional Interagency Steering Committee meeting on Jan. 30. Members include all state emergency management agencies and Emergency Support Function (ESF) points of contact from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Briefings were provided by key federal partners on current operations.
- FEMA provided an overview of the recently released National Response Framework (NRF). The NRF Core Document is an all-hazards guide to disaster response for all levels of government and the private sector. Annexes to the plan outline how the Federal government will organize to support state requests for disaster assistance.
- To view and download the NRF Core Document as well as the Emergency Support Function, Incident, and Support Annexes, please visit the NRF Resources Center web-site at www.fema.gov/NRF

Oregon Emergency Response System Council (OERS)

- During the Feb. 15 meeting of the Oregon Emergency Response System (OERS) Council, PHEP Director Mike Harryman, B.S.B./M., provided a briefing on the upcoming statewide pandemic influenza planning effort. Many of the 27 state agencies represented on the OERS Council will be updating their portions of the plan once the pending federal guidance is released.

2008 Public Health Preparedness Summit

- PHEP Director Mike Harryman, B.S.B./ M.; Health Alert Network Manager Kevin Cradock, B.A., B.S.; Operations Manager Beth Crane, B.S.; Strategic National Stockpile Coordinator Kathy Scott, Dr.P.H.; and Training and Exercise Manager Lynda Muriera, J.D., M.P.H., attended the annual Public Health Preparedness Summit Feb. 19-22, in Atlanta, Ga.
- During a pre-summit session, Cradock was part of a panel discussion regarding full-scale exercises. He talked about Oregon's response during TOPOFF 4, Pandora (Oregon's full-scale pandemic influenza exercise in Nov. 2006), and recent severe winter storms.
- The summit provided staff with information on best practices and lessons learned from across the nation. Key areas of focus included:
 - Measuring Preparedness
 - Current Issues and Hot Topics
 - Preparedness Planning
 - Laboratory Preparedness and Response
 - Surveillance and Epidemiology
 - Strategic National Stockpile
 - Communicating in a Crisis
 - Evaluating Preparedness and Response
 - Continuing Education, Training and Workforce Development
 - Legal Aspects of Preparedness, and
 - Skills-Building.
- Oregon Emergency Management Director Ken Murphy, who currently serves as president of the National Emergency Management Association, was master of ceremonies for the summit.
- The goal of the summit is to help public health improve plans, response and recovery efforts.
- Presentations from this year's summit are available on the summit Web site at: <http://www.phprep.org/>
- Next year's summit will be Feb. 16-20, in San Diego, Calif.

Radiation Protective Services Activities

- Over the past several months, Public Health Division Radiation Protective Services (RPS) Medical Physicist Bonny Wright, M.S., has provided radiological emergency preparedness training to staff and emergency response partners at Silverton Hospital, Legacy Health System in Portland, Samaritan Albany General Hospital, Salem Hospital, Lower Umpqua Hospital in Reedsport, Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay, Providence Hood River Hospital, Mid Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, St. Anthony and Good Shepherd hospitals in Pendleton, and Columbia County Public Health in St. Helens.
- In February, Wright and Radiation Health Physicist Daryl Leon, B.S., teamed up following presentations on Radiological Emergency Preparedness to Pendleton and tribal fire departments and St. Anthony Hospital for a tabletop exercise using a dirty bomb scenario. The two also provided training and conducted a similar tabletop exercise for Hermiston Fire Department and Good Shepherd Hospital. This is the first time RPS has made a joint presentation for hospitals and fire departments along with a tabletop for radiological emergency preparedness. The goal is for the hospitals to become better acquainted with their partners in order to plan for an effective response to any radiological incident.

Strategic National Stockpile Meeting

- The Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program played host to a meeting with primary response partners on March 6 to identify short- and long-term activities to strengthen the program and improve Oregon's score on the annual SNS State Technical Assistance Review.
- SNS partners include ODOT, the Oregon State Police, the Cities Readiness Initiative Program and the Oregon Board of Pharmacy.



Drummers from the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest (NARA) opened and closed a session on "Tribal Issues and Cultural Understanding" during the recent annual public health Workforce Development Conference.

Workforce Development Conference

- The PHEP Training and Exercise Team presented a Workforce Development Conference March 3-5 in the Portland area.
- This conference was conducted with faculty and staff from the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, University of Washington School of Public Health.
- This was the fourth cooperative conference with the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice.
- Participants were able to choose two different sessions from among the following topics:
 - Intermediate Epidemiology Concepts and Methods
 - Leadership Development - Skills, Styles, Attitudes
 - Program Planning and Evaluation
 - Building Effective Teams & Cross Agency Collaboration.
- The Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board also participated and provided a valuable session on *"Tribal Issues and Cultural Understanding."*
- Approximately 100 state and county medical and EMS professionals attended the conference.

PHEP Liaison and Hospital Preparedness Program Regional Coordinator Workshop

- PHEP liaisons and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) regional coordinators met for an all-day workshop on Jan. 22 to further integrate the programs at both the state and local planning levels.
- Primary areas of focus include training and exercises, Medical Care Points/alternate care sites, at-risk/vulnerable populations, medical surge, communications, logistics, pandemic flu, mutual aid, public information, volunteer management, fatality management, pharmaceutical resources and behavioral health.

Hospital Preparedness Program Region 3 News

- Region 3 Coordinator Tracy DePew, EMT-1, reports that Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene plans to use its scheduled move to the new Riverbend Campus in Springfield as an opportunity to exercise a planned evacuation. Sacred Heart is the only Level 2 Trauma Center in Southern Oregon.
- Another event that will provide an excellent opportunity for regional planning and coordination of assets will be the 2008 U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials, June 27 through July 6, in Eugene. The event has been likened to a two-week long University of Oregon Ducks' game, and will significantly impact the community. The event is expected to draw 1,000 athletes and 150,000 spectators.
- Local hospitals in the region are working with partners at the state and local levels and plan to use Hospital Incident Command System both for the Sacred Heart move and the Olympic trials.
- In addition, for the Olympic trials they plan to exercise Hospital Medical Surge Capacity Capability Tiers 1-3 and, in the event of a medical emergency, will interface with the Medical Reserve Corps and Oregon Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.



An ODOT driver delivering vaccine is the last to get through a snow-covered pass before the road is closed to all traffic.

Vaccine Delivery Response

- January's frigid temperatures caused problems for numerous health clinics throughout Oregon. Many received routine replacement vaccines from a national distributor, but they arrived frozen and unusable at a time when Oregon's school exclusion day was fast approaching. On this day, children who are not up-to-date on their immunizations are kept out of school until they receive the needed vaccines.
- The partnership between the Oregon Public Health Division (OPHD) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), which developed out of preparedness planning, was used to remedy the situation.
- Five ODOT drivers transported 1,120 doses of vaccine from the OPHD Immunization Program to 20 clinics with limited road access due to the heavy snow pack.
- This was the second time in recent months that the two state agencies exercised their partnership. During the December 2007 storm, ODOT delivered 1,080 doses of vaccine to Vernonia in Columbia County as part of the response effort.

Pandemic Influenza Planning

- Under the guidance of Public Health Preparedness Pandemic Influenza Planner Julie Plagenhoef, a Public

Health Logistics Workgroup has formulated a draft Antiviral Distribution Template designed to flesh out state recommendations and guidelines, and help counties formulate their plans.

- The planning template should be ready for distribution in April.
- Plagenhoef has also begun meeting with health systems that cross jurisdictions to discuss their potential role as one distribution mechanism for antivirals during a pandemic. She plans to reach out to retail pharmacy chains as well.
- A letter was recently sent to critical infrastructure and tribal planning partners offering them an opportunity to purchase antiviral medication through the state on a federal contract at a reduced price.
- State distribution plan exercises are being planned in the spring and summer.
- Pandemic Influenza Planer Michael Kubler continues work on community-based mitigation measures and has facilitated tabletop exercises with public health and local education partners in a number of counties.
- The exercises have focused on how cancellation of classes could work as a mitigation measure and the impacts, both direct and indirect, such an action would have on a community.
- There is still time to arrange a tabletop exercise for your community if you would like to do so. For more information, call Kubler at 971-673-1097, or e-mail: Michael.R.Kubler@state.or.us.

Hospital Capacity Web Site

- The Public Health Division has officially launched a new Hospital Capacity Web site, called "HOSCAP." The secure, online system allows hospitals to update bed and supply census from a computer in the emergency department, and gives the state a bird's eye view of hospital capacity during an emergency.
- The new version replaced an older system that was shared with the University of Washington's Harborview Medical Center.

- The new HOSCAP is now fully integrated with the Oregon Health Alert Network (HAN), allowing users to access both systems with the same user identification and password. A multi-region/agency advisory committee was formed in August 2007, and meets monthly to discuss system policy operation.
- Key stakeholders came together in December to participate in a joint application development session with system developers to plan for the next release and system upgrades planned for fall 2008.

Staff Changes

- Chris Biggs, B.S., M.S., has been named acting director of the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) while Mike Skeels, Ph. D., heads up the Public Health Division. Biggs first came to the lab in 1990 and currently manages the Virology/Immunology Section.
- Lead Preparedness Planner Nan Newell, Ph. D., has started a job rotation in the Genomics Program in Office of Family Health for about 8 months. She will continue to work for PHEP one day a week, on Fridays.
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planner Michael Kubler has accepted a permanent position in the planning section, replacing Bob Costa, who left the Public Health Division in 2007.
- Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Region 9 Coordinator Don Hanna has left the program for a job in Washington State. Hanna has worked in the hospital community for many years, with a focus on continuous improvement. He provided practical input and guided the other coordinators with his improvement background and process work. He contributed greatly to the HPP program over the years with wit, wisdom and knowledge of the Region 9 community.
- HPP Region 6 Lead Administrator Pete Kingsley retired Feb 14. He also held the Region 6 coordinator position from 2004 to 2007. Kingsley worked in



High School Field Trip

Immunization Program Epidemiologist Juventila Liko, M.D., M.P.H., presented a global overview of measles and disease investigation techniques during a recent presentation for students from New Urban High School in Clackamas County. The half-day field trip included an overview of public health, a tour of the Public Health Division Agency Operations Center, demonstrations of several Web-based systems used in public health to monitor disease and respond to emergencies, and participation in an emergency response quiz game.

the EMS community for many years, and was a well respected employee of Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles. He contributed greatly to the HPP program with his wisdom and was a great calming factor at meetings.

PHEP E-Learning Opportunities

- Refresh and renew your skills by taking an online course. Each course runs from 30-60 minutes and if you need to exit from the course prior to finishing, your place will be book marked and you can return where you left off.
- Available courses include:
 - Introduction to Outbreak Investigation, course #C00546
 - Introduction to Communicable Disease and Epidemiology, course #C00337
 - Working with Interpreters in a Public Health Setting, course #C00338)

- Laboratory Packaging and Shipping, course #C00183 and
- Introduction to Oregon Public Health Emergency Response, course #C00177.
- FEMA recently announced the release of revisions for three on-line courses:
 - IS-120.A: An Introduction to Exercises, course #C00191,
 - IS-130: Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning, course #C00580 and
 - IS-800.B: National Response Framework, course #C00064.
- IS-120.A and IS-130 take approximately 5 hours to complete, and provide 0.5 CEUs.
- Those who have previously completed IS800 or IS-800A are not required to complete IS-800B as part of NIMS compliance activities. However, emergency management professionals are strongly urged to complete this new course. The course takes approximately 3 hours to complete, and provides 0.3 CEUs.
- Be sure to update your employee transcript on your Learning Center homepage after completing the course.
- You can register for these courses through the DHS Learning Center, <https://dhslearn.hr.state.or.us>

Coming Events:

- National Disaster Medical System Training Summit, March 15-19, Nashville, Tenn. For more information, visit: <http://www.ndms.chepinc.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PHEP Cooperative Agreement project officer Oregon site visit, March 20-25.
- The 2008 Regions IX and X Strategic National Stockpile Workshop, March 26-28 in Portland.
- Public Health Week, April 7-11
- The 2008 Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) National Leadership and Training

Conference, April 8-11, in Portland.

For more information, visit: <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/HomePage>.

- Oregon Emergency Management Association Annual Conference, April 21-24, at Sunriver Resort in Bend, Ore. For more information, visit: <http://www.oregonemergency.com/>
- Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program annual full-scale exercise, May 5-7, Umatilla Army Depot.
- Northwest Region's Fifth Annual Bi-National Cross Border Public Health Surveillance and Response Workshop, May 14-16, at the Best Western Lakeway Inn in Bellingham, Wash.
- 26th annual conference of the Western Regional Epidemiology Network, May 15-17, Ashland, Ore. The Oregon Public Health Division is this year's host.
- Oregon Epidemiologists' Conference, May 28-30, Bend, Ore.
- ASTHO-NACCHO Joint Conference, Sept. 9-12, Sacramento, Calif.



DHS

Oregon Department of Human Services

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http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/preparedness/phep_newsletter_index.shtml

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