

Lecture Hall

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
72nd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Terrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness

Monday, June 23

1:00 – 1:50pm

Climate Change Impacts on Human Health and Welfare in the United States: The Need for Preparedness Planning

Colleen E. Reid, MPH, ASPH Environmental Health Fellow, EPA, Washington, DC

Climate change, interacting with changes in land use and demographics, has the capacity to affect important human dimensions, especially related to human health, human settlements and human welfare. Projected climatic changes include increased frequency of heat waves, increased variability of precipitation, changes in minimum and maximum temperatures, sea-level rise, increased intensity of tropical storms, more droughts as well as more coastal and riverine flooding. Direct and indirect health and well-being impacts of climate change may include morbidity and mortality associated with heat waves and extreme weather events, changes in the range and incidence of vector- and water-borne diseases, exacerbation of air pollution and aeroallergens, food and water shortages as well as impacts of extreme events on mental health. The specific climatic changes and associated health impacts of climate change will vary spatially and temporally, and the impacts will not be felt equally by all areas of the country, nor in all sectors of the population. We will summarize the science findings from the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (USCCSP)'s Synthesis and Assessment Product (SAP) 4.6: Analyses of the Effects of Global Change on Human Health and Welfare and Human Systems as well as emphasizing the importance of developing climate change adaptation plans by local health professionals to prevent the projected health impacts of climate change.

2:00 – 2:50pm

Environmental Health Preparedness and Nuclear Reactors: The Legacy of the SL-1, Three Mile Island, and Chernobyl Accidents

Daniel D. Sprau, DrPH, RS, CIH, CSP, Professor Emeritus, CAPT, USPHS (Reserves), East Carolina University, NC

Preparing for a renaissance in nuclear power presents significant environmental health concerns for local public health officials. Information will be presented in terms of the legacy of three reactor accidents (SL-1, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl) and the need for environmental health preparedness and involvement in the future. Since no new nuclear power plants have been built in the United States for nearly thirty years, possible new incident scenarios will be discussed along with the implications for environmental health program involvement at the local health department level. Results of a survey of North Carolina Registered Sanitarians working in the communities around nuclear power plants will be presented. Potential risks and the possible environmental health impacts of future nuclear power generation along with their impact on public health and overall preparedness will also be discussed. Although a positive and optimistic perspective on the

future of nuclear power will be presented, local environmental health preparedness and involvement will be presented as a necessity.

3:00 – 3:50pm

How to Prepare When the Budget is Bare

Michèle Samarya-Timm, MA, HO, REHS, CHES, DAAS, Health Educator, Franklin Township Health Dept., NJ

All-hazards Preparedness is an integral component of environmental public health, as well as being essential to individuals and business communities. In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, environmental health specialists in public and private sectors will play a key role in protecting the community's health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Unfortunately, shrinking budgets have become a critical reality of the world we live in, and this often forces essential preparedness planning to be reduced or sidelined.

Rising to the challenge of ongoing essential preparedness activities on limited budgets can be daunting to almost any workplace. However, continuing development of critical preparedness infrastructure under financial constraints can give rise to out-of-the-box solutions and non-traditional partnerships. Motivating buy-in from co-workers, managers, industry partners and stakeholders at all levels can serve to launch creative response initiatives that may have otherwise been left untapped. Awareness of existing and often "hidden" resources can help develop preparedness, response and recovery parameters.

This presentation will explore how collaborative efforts, creative assessment, and use of non-traditional resources can serve to augment preparedness planning and help to compensate for shrinking preparedness funding.

4:00 – 4:50pm

Preparing for the Super Bowl: Public Health Incident Command and Surveillance

Alisa Diggs, MPH, Director, Maricopa County Public Health Emergency Management, AZ
Robert French, MD, MPH, Maricopa County Health Dept., AZ

While most persons think of the annual Super Bowl as a one-day event, planning by many organizations begins months before game day. The host public health agency, in this case Maricopa County Health Department, made plans to use their public health employees and staff from partner agencies to staff a public health Incident Command Post. Command and General staff roles were identified and filled with staff from the state and local health department as well as staff from the health departments of neighboring counties and from hospitals. A liaison was also placed at the federal Joint Operations Center.

Existing disease surveillance systems were used which included BioSense, EFORS, MEDSIS and RODS, adding active surveillance modes to the more traditional passive mode of physician disease reporting. A baseline of disease prevalence was established using the syndromic groupings of gastrointestinal, respiratory, influenza-like illness, and rashes. Ongoing influenza surveillance was integrated into the effort.

Epidemiological and Environmental Health staff was organized into the Operations Branch, with surge capacity personnel planning needs met through the Arizona Master Mutual Aid Agreement.