



## Washtenaw County Public Health All-Hazard Emergency Response Plan

### Executive Summary

Washtenaw County Public Health is responsible for protecting the health of the public. Normal activities include preventing illness or injury, investigating disease outbreaks and promoting health. In order to perform these and other critical activities during a large-scale disaster or disease outbreak, comprehensive all-hazard plans are in place. These plans define potential Public Health roles, responsibilities and actions. They also rely on the collaboration and cooperation of multiple organizations, emergency entities, health providers and the public.

This document provides an overview of the Public Health Comprehensive All-Hazard Emergency Response Plan – with specific attention to those areas where Public Health fills key leadership roles, for instance:

- Controlling disease outbreaks (intentional or unintentional);
- Issuing emergency orders or warnings, such as detaining individuals or closing public gatherings and functions;
- Coordinating the release of health information and official instructions;
- Protecting the environment (food safety, water, sanitation, etc.); and
- Providing vaccines or drug treatment, if necessary, quickly and safely to the entire population or affected portions of the population.

Major sections of the All-Hazard Plan are briefly described below. For more information, please contact Public Health at 734-544-6700.

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### Washtenaw County Risk Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan

- The plan identifies potential hazards in the county and ranks them according to severity, frequency and available resources;
- analyzes vulnerable areas in the county; and
- identifies goals, objectives and mitigation strategies

Washtenaw County Emergency Management maintains the plan; more information is available at <http://emergency.ewashtenaw.org>.

### Incident Management

- Public Health is responsible for the administration of health services under the County Emergency Action Guidelines.
- Public Health is "NIMS-compliant." In other words, the National Incident Management System (or Incident Command) is used to manage resources during events. Staff members participate in NIMS training, and the system provides a defined, "top down" structure with consistent language across response organizations.
  - The Incident Manager represents Public Health and health care at the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), when activated.
  - The Incident Manager may initiate a Public Health response with or without a local emergency declaration or activation.

### Legal Authority

Under the Public Health Code, Public Health has broad legal authority to prevent and control disease and injury. Examples include limiting the movement of individuals who may pose a health threat to others; banning public gatherings to prevent the spread of illness; or inspecting or closing businesses that may harm the public's health.

### Communications

The Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Plan describes the roles, lines of responsibilities and resources necessary to communicate with the public, media and local response partners. In most cases, Public Health will coordinate the release of health information or instructions with other responders through the EOC or a designated Joint Information Center. Tools, such as automated alert systems (MIHAN), fact sheets, hotlines, calling trees, the regional 211 system, listservs, backup generators and Mhz radios are in place and tested regularly.



### Surveillance

Monitoring disease levels is a routine part of Public Health's role and critical for detecting and controlling serious outbreaks. The Epidemiologist and Public Health Nurse follow up on all reportable illness. They are available 24/7 and can be alerted to any unusual "spikes" of illness in the community. They also work regularly with, hospitals, schools, health care providers as well as state and federal health authorities. The Epidemiologist publishes an electronic report of tracked illness in the County quarterly and can use this same format to issue emergency alerts when necessary.

### Laboratory Services

Although there are some lab services in Washtenaw County, the primary lab for most biological issues is the Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Laboratories, which has 24/7 response.

### Community Containment and Infection Control

Plans and procedures are in place if isolation and quarantine or other measures are necessary to control a disease outbreak. WCPH policies are based on the recommendations of the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Isolation is the separation of those persons ill from those who are not ill. Quarantine is the separation of those persons who are not ill but are exposed. In both cases, the purpose is to prevent additional transmission of a specific illness.

### Medical Management and Surge Capacity

The Modular Emergency Medical System (MEMS) is designed to address gap in casualty and victim care resources that would exist with a large number of casualties (i.e. the health system is overwhelmed). The MEMS concept has been adapted regionally; however, responsibility for implementation is with public health and hospitals locally. Components include:

- Acute or Alternate Care Centers (temporary or auxiliary hospitals)
- Neighborhood Emergency Help Centers/Dispensing Sites (non-medical treatment or mass dispensing of medicines or vaccines);
- Medical Coordination Center (regional coordination);
- Public information, outreach and medical transport.

Public Health is responsible for setting up and staffing the Neighborhood Emergency Help Centers and/or Dispensing Sites. In a large or very serious event, the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Program may be used. The SNS is a federal resource designed to provide mass quantities of pharmaceuticals or other medical supplies when they are needed locally. Resources are requested through State and Federal Emergency Management. Public Health is responsible for distributing SNS assets to the public, if necessary. SNS plans are in place for guiding public distribution.



Alternate Dispensing Sites: Some area residents may have difficulty receiving treatment at a public dispensing site. For example, nursing home residents, persons with mobility issues or incarcerated individuals may be unable to come to a public site. Still others may be unwilling to come to a public site because of language issues. WCPH is working with organizations serving persons who may be unable or unwilling to reach a public site to develop agreements to provide treatment at the specific organization's site. If you would like more information, please contact the Emergency Preparedness [Health Educator](#), or call 734-544-6700.

#### Data Management

Public Health is responsible for tracking staff and volunteers responding during an emergency event as well as the resources used. For example the **Michigan Volunteer Registry** allows health professionals and general volunteers to pre-register to assist during a public health emergency. The site is secure. Public Health can use it to contact interested persons when needed. Visit [www.mivolunteerregistry.org](http://www.mivolunteerregistry.org).

#### Mental Health Response

Community mental health agencies include Community Support and Treatment Services (CSTS); Washtenaw Community Health Organization (WCHO); and Public Health Prevention and Community Response Services. During an emergency event, these service providers work with and through Public Health to ensure the care of their clients; provide services to first responders (including Public Health workers); and help ensure appropriate messages regarding mental health reach the public.

#### Continuity of Operations and Recovery

Continuity of Operations (COOP) planning helps Public Health and other public or private businesses plan ahead for service interruptions or staff shortages. For example, are there parts of your operations that can be temporarily suspended? Who will make that determination? If that person is not available, is there a back up plan and procedure? Answering questions like these ensures the most important services continue and helps return services to normal as soon as possible. Public Health has prioritized essential personnel and operations and prepared checklists to provide guidance as operations return to normal after an emergency or disaster.



## Training and Evaluation

Training and exercising is an ongoing part of Public Health Emergency Preparedness. Individual and group training takes place annually. Drills test particular response capacities and are done numerous times throughout the year. Examples may include responding to an emergency message during non-business hours. In addition, at least one major exercise is done each year. For example, a public flu clinic is scheduled for November 8, 2008. The public can receive low-cost flu vaccines while WCHP practices mass vaccination with our community partner, HVA (Huron Valley Ambulance).

After each drill or exercise, the Public Health Preparedness staff prepares an After Action Report, which documents corrective actions and plan updates.

## Annexes and Appendices

- Annexes
  - Biological
  - Chemical
  - Radiological
  - Public Health Services Annex to the Washtenaw County Emergency Action Guidelines
  - Environmental Health Emergency Response Plans
- Appendices
  - Anthrax
  - Botulism
  - Plague
  - Smallpox
  - Tularemia
  - Ricin
  - Nerve Agents
  - Blood Agents
  - Blister Agents
  - Radiation/Nuclear
  - Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
  - Pandemic Flu
  - Natural Disasters

