

**Cross-Jurisdiction
Cross-Disciplinary
Exercising**



We can collaborate!

**Partners in Public Health
Preparedness**

Brookline (MA) Public Health Department

Cambridge Advanced Practice Center for Public
Health Preparedness

Harvard School of Public Health Center for
Public Health Preparedness



~ 3000 Local Public Health Agencies
in US



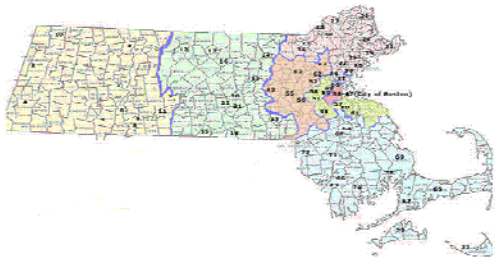
12% of them are in Massachusetts



351 cities and towns
351 local health agencies



PH Emergency Preparedness
Regions



Region 4b



Local Needs – Local perspective

- ❑ Local Health Departments in MA and in Region 4b are very small, and in some cases have no paid staff.
- ❑ Local health department emergency preparedness needs:
 - Staff/People resources
 - Training
 - Resources (e.g., guides for developing plans)
 - Stuff (supplies)
 - Sustainability
 - Funding



Local Needs – Advanced Practice Center Role

- ❑ “Learning lab”
- ❑ “Scary bugs”
- ❑ Demonstrating value of collaboration
- ❑ Product development
- ❑ Technical assistance



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program

- ❑ Originated from community needs
 - Limitations of didactic sessions
 - Limited opportunities for training
 - Need to integrate PH into the response community
 - Need to educate response community about PH threats



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program

- ❑ Community needs (continued)
 - Challenges in assembling multiple communities
 - Need for vertical integration
 - Difficulty in gathering appropriate cadre of evaluators
 - Need for concrete, valid feedback



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program: Design

- ❑ Multi-jurisdictional
- ❑ Multi-disciplinary
- ❑ Public health focused



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program: Scope

- Designed and led >35 exercises
 - Discussion-based (tabletop)
 - Operations-based (full-scale, functional, drill)
- Reached over 4,000 participants from more than 200 municipalities in MA and ME
- Average exercise > 100 participants



Collaboration History

Brookline- Collaborations

- The Brookline Public Health Department (BPHD) has worked collaboratively (informally) with other communities for many years.
- Region 4b/APC has formalized and helped to coordinate the working relationship with other local communities.
- Region 4b identifies needs and gaps and the APC develops resources to assist with helping with needs and filling gaps.
- The BPHD has worked with the Harvard School of Public Health on exercises and drills.



Cambridge APC Regional Projects

- Public Health Mutual Aid Agreement
- Pandemic influenza exercises
- Emergency Dispensing Site Trainings
- Pocket Communicator
- Emergency Preparedness Begins at Home
- Master the Disaster
- MAVEN Functional Exercise



HSPH-CPHP Regional Projects

- Pandemic influenza exercises
- Mass dispensing exercises
- Surge care facility exercise
- MRC notification programs
- MAVEN



Impact of Collaboration

Local Perspective – Impact of Working Together

- ❑ Regional Coordinator has given local health departments assistance with staffing by providing regional liaisons, assistance with MRC recruitment, development and day to day operations
- ❑ Funding for trainings, local allocations and special projects
- ❑ Supplies - Signs, EP at Home, vests, communication equipment
- ❑ Resources– APC provides technical assistance
- ❑ Training materials developed –EDS, All-Hazards plan
- ❑ Exercises–Pandemic Flu, PEER, LENS, TAR and soon to be implemented MAVEN



Local Perspective -Lessons Learned

- ❑ Collaboration is essential for successful work in Emergency Preparedness.
- ❑ Using the APC and academic centers as resources and partners has assisted local health departments with the ability to save money and not duplicate work that has already been done.
- ❑ Working with other health departments, the APC and HSPH-CPHP has given locals the opportunity to do more than we ever could independently.



Impact of Collaboration – Advanced Practice Center

- ❑ Growing ability to work across community boundaries
- ❑ Increasing participation of communities at all levels
- ❑ Broad recognition of public health role in preparedness
- ❑ New collaboration partners and ideas
- ❑ Products and Practices for local health departments



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program: Observed Benefits

- ❑ Identify gaps and redundancies in community planning
- ❑ Build and strengthen relationships
- ❑ Underscore roles and assets specific to PH
- ❑ Opportunity to engage broad range of partners to increase reach and ensure standard preparedness training



Evaluation in the HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program

- ❑ Evolved over time
- ❑ Use of trained evaluators
 - Evaluator training ongoing
- ❑ Checklists
 - Delphi process used to identify domains
- ❑ Self-assessment tools for table participants
- ❑ Web-based surveys
- ❑ Review of electronic records



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program: Evaluation Results

- ❑ Content analysis of after action reports has identified a number of recurrent systems challenges including:



- Lack of understanding of individual and agency roles and responsibilities
- Inconsistent coordination among responders, especially between disciplines



HSPH-CPHP Exercise Program: Evaluation Results (continued)

- Limited communications capabilities, especially with regards to sharing information about health risks
- Significantly limited integration of public health expertise into the response community's decision making
- Insufficient knowledge of the capabilities and assets of responding partners

Biddinger PD, Cadigan RO, Auerbach BS, Burstein JL, Savoia E, Stoto M, Koh H. Using Exercises to Identify Systems-Level Preparedness Challenges. *Public Health Reports* 2008



Challenges

Ongoing Challenges – Local

- Decreasing funding
- Municipal budget cuts
- Increasing need to demonstrate measurable results

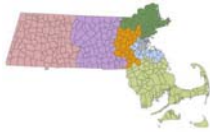


Ongoing Challenges – Advanced Practice Center

- Working with HSEEP requirements
- Continued capacity building
- Sustaining practices



Ongoing Challenges – HSPH



- What's the proper unit of measurement?
 - Given the fragmented structure of public health (city, county, region, state, multi-state metropolitan area, nation)
 - Health department vs. "community"



Ongoing Challenges (continued)

- Who decides appropriate standards?
 - Balancing risks, efficacy of interventions, and other opportunities for public health
 - *Use expert opinion to develop checklist*
- Who judges when standards are met?
 - Need for subjective, but reliable, measures of higher order capabilities
 - *Create corps of trained peer evaluators*



Further Opportunities for Academic-Local Partnerships

- ❑ Examine the key factors determining the quality and fidelity of PHEP exercises
- ❑ Refine domains of PHEP
- ❑ Test reliability and validity of individual metrics of PHEP
- ❑ Expand training and number of exercise observers and evaluators
 - Improve inter-rater reliability



Further Opportunities for Academic-Local Partnerships

- ❑ Give structured feedback about the realities of exercise conduct to state and federal exercise program officials and funders



Current Collaboration



MAVEN Functional Exercise

- Participants
- Objectives
- Logistics
- Future Plans
- Product Development



Discussion



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