



First Responder Feasibility Study Senate Bill 1328

The purpose of the first responder feasibility study is to determine the feasibility of providing vaccines to first responders deployed to a disaster area. The study must consider if it would be beneficial and practical to provide first responders with the hepatitis b vaccine, tetanus-containing vaccines, and other vaccines or biologicals recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention during disasters.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) will, for first responders and/or their immediate family members:

- assess the vaccination status
- assess workplace immunization policies and insurance coverage
- make recommendations on providing education regarding available options to obtain immunization services, regardless of insurance coverage
- assess the ability of DSHS to provide vaccines
- identify and recommend funding sources for the procurement of recommended vaccines
- evaluate the potential use and cost of providing other biologicals to be used in conjunction with vaccines to prevent the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases

DSHS will work with the statewide wellness coordinator and other state agencies on this project.

Major Milestones:

05/30/10 – Contractor Hired

09/01/10 – Contractor Begins Work

01/31/11 – Completed Draft Report (indicating potential approaches to improve first responder immunization status)

02/28/11 – Present Findings (to TISWG, agency partners and others)

05/31/11 – Final Report Completed

09/01/11 – Submit Report to Legislature



Note:

Senate Bill 1409 amended the term 'first responder' to mean:

- any federal, state, local or private personnel who may respond to a disaster including
 - public health and safety personnel
 - commissioned law enforcement personnel
 - fire protection personnel (paid and volunteer firefighters)
 - emergency medical services personnel
 - emergency facility staff
 - members of the Nation Guard
 - members of the Texas State Guard
 - any worker who responds to a disaster in the worker's scope of employment
 - any related personnel that provides support services during the prevention, response and recovery phases of a disaster

Previous definition of 'first responder'

(1) "First responder" refers to a public safety employee or volunteer whose duties include

responding rapidly to an emergency. The term includes:

- (A) a peace officer whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency;
- (B) fire protection personnel under Section 419.021;
- (C) a volunteer firefighter who is:
 - (i) certified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection or by the State Firemen's and Fire Marshalls' Association of Texas; or
 - (ii) a member of an organized volunteer fire-fighting unit as described by Section 615.003; and
- (D) an individual certified as emergency medical services personnel by DSHS.