



THE PREPAREDNESS REPORT

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CASPER Training at DSHS Region 2/3

On Wednesday, May 1, 2013 the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Region 2/3 Epidemiology Branch hosted a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) Training. David Zane and Tracy Haywood of the DSHS Community Preparedness Department in Austin and Dr. Duke Ruktanonchai, Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted the training.

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CASPER Training at DSHS Region 2/3

Johnathan Ledbetter

CASPER refers to set of tools designed to provide accurate and reliable population-based public health information about communities especially during a public health emergency (DSHS, 2012). It involves interviewing people in sampled households about their public health needs to help define the scope and magnitude of those needs. A report containing initial results and recommendations is usually provided to local officials within 48 hours after data collection so that they can make timely decisions and actions. Actions may include, but are not limited to, prioritization of resources, messaging, and enhanced health surveillance or public health interventions.

Potential Benefits during a Disaster Response may include:

- It provides situational awareness on how residents are coping.
- Informs situational awareness:
 - ◆ Confirms or contradicts what is believed known (i.e. “a gut feeling”),
 - ◆ Identifies immediate needs in the community such as water, food, etc.,
 - ◆ Identifies previously unknown needs,
 - ◆ Provides estimates on the scope and magnitude of those needs,
 - ◆ Helps in establishing priorities.
- Local officials use the results to strengthen relief efforts, such as management of available resources.
- The information collected can be easily adapted to capture details specific to the incident.
- It can monitor changes of community needs during the recovery period when conducted recurrently.
- It reassures residents that they are not forgotten.
- It provides an opportunity for field teams to distribute emergency management and public health educational materials in the community.
- It can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of response activities (DSHS, Benefits).

For More Information on CASPER

For more information about CASPER, visit:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/commprep/disasterepi/casper.aspx>

For a PDF of the CDC CASPER Toolkit, click [here](#).

Read About Completed Texas CASPER

For information on a CASPER conducted on Hurricane Ike in 2008 in the Houston area by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services visit: [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report - Hurricane Ike Rapid Needs Assessment --- Houston, Texas, September 2008](#)

An article describing the Liberty, Brazoria, and Galveston assessments appeared in the October 24, 2008 issue of the Texas Department of State Health Services' agency newsletter: [DSHS teams up with federal, local partners to assess post-hurricane needs](#)



Emergency Preparedness for Pet Owners

Ashley Rodriguez



Community Preparedness' Bulletin Board for the month of June focusing on Pet Preparedness

When disaster strikes, do you know what you'll do with your pet? Do you have a plan for their safety and shelter? Being prepared can save their lives.

In honor of Bring Your Pet to Work Month in June, the DSHS Region 2/3 Community Preparedness Team offered a tip booklet to any Regional employee that brought a picture of their pet by June 24th.



Image of Quick Series booklet issued to participants in June's Pet Preparedness Campaign.

The Community Preparedness Team would like to thank everyone that participated!

Here are some steps you can take to protect your pet in the event of a disaster:

Step 1 Get a Rescue Alert Sticker

This easy-to-use sticker will let people know that pets are inside your home. The ASPCA.org and RedRover.org both offer free window cling stickers you can request online.

Step 2 Arrange a Safe Haven

Arrange a safe haven for your pets in the event of evacuation. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND. Remember, if it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for your pets.

Step 3 Emergency Supplies and Traveling Kits

Keep an Evac-Pack and supplies handy for your pets. Make sure that everyone in the family knows where it is. This kit should be clearly labeled and easy to carry.

Step 4 Choose "Designated Caregivers"

This step will take considerable time and thought. When choosing a temporary caregiver, consider someone who lives close to your residence. He or she should be someone who is generally home during the day while you are at work or has easy access to your home & someone you would give a key to your home to.

Step 5 Evacuation Preparation

If you must evacuate your home in a crisis, plan for the worst-case scenario. If you think you may be gone for only a day, assume that you may not be allowed to return for several weeks.

Step 6 Geographic and Climatic Considerations

Do you live in an area that is prone to certain natural catastrophes, such as tornadoes, earthquakes or floods? If so, plan accordingly.

For more information visit: www.ready.gov/caring-animals

Regional Tabletop Exercise

Brenda Hart



Public health partners discuss the processes during a public health emergency.

A regional tabletop exercise was conducted on May 29, 2013 at the OSHA Training Institute Southwest Education Center. The building, which is operated by TEEEX, opened in 1996 and includes offices, classrooms, and a multipurpose auditorium. The purpose of the exercise was to provide Health Service Regions (HSR) 2 & 3 partners and stakeholders an opportunity to assess specific local and regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) plans, procedures, and processes. An infectious disease (plague) outbreak scenario was used for the discussion.

The Exercise Planning Team consisted of representation from rural local health departments, rural jurisdictions that do not have a local health department, urban municipalities, and metropolitan local health department jurisdictions. The following objectives were developed by the planning team:

- Identify and discuss implementation of control measures during a public health emergency and sharing of epidemiological data between disciplines to include local health departments and emergency management staffs.
- Discuss activation of medical operations centers (MOC) and emergency operations centers (EOC) and triggers for resource requests.
- Discuss integration of public health information plans during a public health emergency.
- Discuss distribution and security strategies for medical countermeasures.



Regional Vet, Dr. Stonecipher speaks to EMC Tonya Hunter.

Regional Tabletop Exercise Continued

Brenda Hart



Judge Davis discusses Haskell County's response.

Major strengths identified by participants during the tabletop discussions included:

- Good relationships and collaboration among jurisdictions within the health service region.
- Positive benefit from current training efforts.
- Quality of volunteer organizations

Primary Areas for Improvement Identified by Participants:

- Information sharing and methods of sharing are critical components that need further evaluation and coordination. Public information officers need additional help during widespread crisis. Participants recognized the criticality of informing the public and countering rumor and misinformation from social media.
- Additional training and exercises are needed to improve overall expertise.
- Local and regional SNS plans should be reviewed. Among the considerations for review are points of distribution (POD) locations and the availability of sufficient law enforcement and volunteer personnel to establish and operate PODs.

A formal After Action Review is in development and will be distributed to all participants within the next few days. Health Service Region 2/3 would like to thank everyone who participated. This exercise was a testament to the continued commitment our partners share to public health emergency response and the health of Texans.



Region 2/3 Preparedness Manager Terry LaFon leads Eastern Region 3 partners in discussion.

Command Assistance Team (CAT) Training

Brenda Hart

Members of the Command Assistance Team (CAT) gathered in Austin to participate in annual training on May 14-16, 2013. The CAT is a deployable public health trained Incident Management Team that can respond anywhere in the state to assist or supplement the regional or local response during a man-made or natural emergency situation. DSHS maintains three teams of 22 members comprised of staff from DSHS Health Service Regions and Central Office/Austin. One team is on-call each month. The on-call team must be able to respond to an event within 24 hours. Each team is able to fill command and general staff roles within a Regional Operations Center or local health department operations centers.

The training this year consisted of a set-up and take-down of a ZUMRO as well as simulation of hurricane response activities. A temporary local health department operations center was set up

in the ZUMRO. The ZUMRO is a deployable temporary building that can be set up as an operations center or shelter during an emergency. It is supported by low pressure compressed air providing 860 square feet of interior space. It comes with generators, a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, as well as interior lighting.



The ZUMRO, a temporary operations center set-up.

Each CAT participated by staffing the State Medical Operations Center (SMOC) or a local health department operations center. Incident Action Plans were developed and teams practiced decision making as well as routing of resource requests. Newly purchased communications equipment was also tested during the training.



The State Medical Operations Center (SMOC) Exercise in Action.



All of the Members of the Command Assistance Team (CAT) Teams.



DSHS Role in DDC District 22 Sherman



DDC Chair Lt. Hank Sibley.

David Post, EMS Disaster District Committee (DDC) Liaison for DSHS Region 2/3 attended the orientation meeting at the new Sherman DDC on June 24, 2013. The DDC Liaison is responsible for responding to the DDC 24/7. Their primary function is act as a liaison between DSHS Region 2/3, other local agencies, and the State Medical Operation Center for information sharing and situational awareness, and resource coordination related to a public health emergency response. Mr. Brad Britten, District Coordinator, DDC District 22 in Sherman facilitated the meeting. Additional speakers were Mark Fox from National Weather Service, Ft. Worth, and Lt. Hank Sibley with TX DPS and the DDC Chair.

Mr. Britten briefed the group on the geographical area covered by DDC District 22; Fannin, Cooke, and Grayson counties. Mark Fox from National Weather Service (NWS) spoke on the history of severe weather events in the North Texas and Oklahoma area.



Sherman Area DPS Sergeants.



Attendees at the DDC.

Lt. Hank Sibley, DDC Chair, gave a brief self-bio. Lt. Sibley has been in law enforcement for 35 years, starting in Louisiana, and later joined the Texas DPS becoming a patrol sergeant, and later promoted to his present rank. The DDC in Sherman is located at the Grayson County Courthouse and equipped with computers and flat screen TVs.

WANT TO READ MORE OF OUR REPORTS?

All DSHS REGION 2/3 Newsletter Editions, Epi Data Reports, & VPD Reports can be found here:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/Region2-3/programs/commprep/epirptarchive.shtm>

Upcoming Trainings & Events

7/24/2013

HAM Radio Exercise with Tarrant County: All Community Preparedness HAM radio operators will be participating in a communication exercise with Tarrant County. This will be the first opportunity for our staff to practice their newly acquired HAM radio skills and test communication processes between partners. For additional information, please contact Tim Walker at: tim.walker@dshs.state.tx.us

7/25/2013

Region 2 SNS Meeting in Abilene: Region 2 SNS partners will meet in Abilene at the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District to discuss current SNS activities and initiatives. To add a topic to the agenda or for additional information, please contact: Matt Honza at matt.honza@dshs.state.tx.us

7/30-8/1/2013

HPP/PHEP Meeting: HSR 2/3 will have representatives present at the joint HPP/PHEP meeting. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn/NW Arboretum hotel in Austin. For additional information, visit: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/commprep/News-and-Events/contractormeetings.aspx> or contact Shannon Creekmur at: Shannon.creekmur@dshs.state.tx.us

8/17/2013

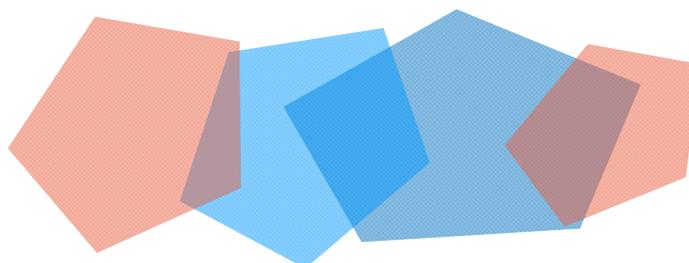
Texas Ranch Round Up: HSR 2/3 will have representatives present at this multi-state/county event that is focused on rodeo events with live music and fun for the whole family. This will be held at the Multiple Purpose Events Center in Wichita Falls, TX. Additional information can be found at: <http://texasranchroundup.com/>

8/5-8/15/2013

Chempack sustainment: We are currently updating the Chempack points of contact. The sustainment schedule has been distributed to all Chempack sites. Please have your DEA registrant letters and keys ready when CDC is on site. Although the dates for sustainment are firm; we ask for your patience on your scheduled date as the times are subject to change due to unknown circumstances at each site. For additional information, please contact Matt Honza at: matt.honza@dshs.state.tx.us

8/16/2013

Busted in Baylor Motorcycle Rally: HSR 2/3 will have representatives present at this event in Seymour, TX. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.bustedinbaylorcounty.com/>



Upcoming Trainings & Events

8/21/2013

Cities Readiness Initiative Contract Management Hotwash: Members of the Central Office Contract Management Unit will be at HSR 2/3 to discuss lessons learned during our first year of contract management with CRI contractors. This will be an opportunity for contractors to voice concerns and discuss improvement strategies for future contract management processes. For additional information, please contact Michael Felan at: Michael.felan@dshs.state.tx.us

9/10-9/12/2013

G-386 - Mass Fatalities Incident Response Training: Region 3 partners have identified Mass Fatality Planning as a gap and are working to develop a regional response plan for Mass Fatality Management. Dallas County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is partnering with the Dallas County Medical Examiner's Office to host a Mass Fatality Incident Response Course. Additional information can be found [here](#).

9/24-9/25/2013

SNS Face to Face Meeting: All Texas regional SNS Coordinators and Planners will get together in Austin to discuss current SNS initiatives. Topics to be included at this quarterly meeting include the status of the new inventory management system and federal directives for medical countermeasure distribution. Any new information received at this meeting will be discussed with Region 2/3 partners at upcoming SNS meetings.

Protect yourself from the West Nile virus with the 4 D's.

FIGHT THE BITE

- 1 Stay indoors at Dusk and Dawn.** This is the time of day that mosquitoes are most active.
- 2 Dress** in long sleeves/pants, loose and light-colored clothing when outdoors.
- 3 Defend** yourself from mosquitoes by using an insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Follow label instructions.
- 4 Drain** standing water in your yard and neighborhood. Also make sure that flower pots, water dishes, bird baths, and wading pools are properly drained so they are not breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

TEXAS Department of State Health Services www.txwestnile.org

Extreme Heat: An Avoidable Threat

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging people to prepare for extreme heat this summer by **staying cool, hydrated, and informed**. Extreme heat can lead to very high body temperatures, brain and organ damage, and even death. People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and cool themselves properly.

According to CDC's Environmental Tracking Network from 1999 to 2009 three states, Arizona, California, and **Texas** accounted for approximately 40 percent of all heat-related deaths in the United States.

Here are some facts about which people are at greatest risk for heat-related illness and what protective actions to take to prevent illness or death:

People who are at **highest risk** are the elderly, the very young, and people with chronic diseases or mental illness. But even young and healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.

Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. If a home is not air-conditioned, people can **reduce their risk for heat-related illness** by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned.

You can take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths during hot weather:



Keep your body temperature cool to avoid heat-related illness.

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible.
- Find an air-conditioned shelter.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device.
- Avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Check on those most at-risk twice a day.



Because your body loses fluids through sweat, you can become dehydrated during times of extreme heat.

- Drink more water than usual.
- **Don't wait** until you're thirsty to drink more fluids.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Remind others to drink enough



Stay updated on local weather forecasts so you can plan activities safely when it's hot outside.

- Check local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips.
- Learn the symptoms of heat illness.
- For more information, please click [here](#).

IT'S HOT OUTSIDE!
STAY COOL.
STAY HYDRATED.
STAY INFORMED.

For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/>

All information taken directly from the CDC's Extreme Heat website.

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