



## Hawaii Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) July 2017

Hawaii is the most isolated land mass in the world. Our state comprises 8 major islands separated by ocean and divided into 3 rural counties plus one mostly urban county, Honolulu, accounting for 70% of the population. Funding from the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Program and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) has been well used in Hawaii to protect our 1.4 million residents plus 200,000+ daily visitors. For public health, funding has directly supported our capacity to lead and coordinate Emergency Support Function #8, Public Health and Medical Services, for Hawaii.

The Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) understands and embraces its shared responsibility in using PHEP and HPP funds to build upon existing state and local resources, strengthen public-private collaborations, and work with our jurisdictional partners to build community resilience. This overview of PHEP and HPP activities offers a snapshot of ongoing efforts to effectively plan, train, equip, and coordinate HDOH and partners to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, disasters, and other events which threaten our public's health.

### Public Health Emergency Preparedness

PHEP funding is invaluable to growing and maintaining our state public health preparedness efforts and ability to effectively respond as needed. Recognizing the funding's finite nature, HDOH consistently seeks to increase state and local capabilities and promote community and individual preparedness responsibility.

Toward those ends, PHEP funds are helping to build and maintain vital health and readiness support to state and local efforts including:

- **Increasing biosurveillance and laboratory capacity.** Our state's disease outbreak control efforts including disease surveillance (including informatics technology), epidemiological investigation, and laboratory testing/identification can rapidly detect infectious disease threats. PHEP funding directly supports and assures these critical capacities and thereby our situational awareness so we may prevent and control diseases of concern, especially potentially high consequence illnesses.
- **Assuring medical countermeasure (MCM) supplies, logistics, and management.** PHEP staff plan, train, and exercise Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) receipt, staging, and storage as well as rapid transport and secure distribution of MCM. Partnerships with businesses; state, local, and federal agencies; and other organizations have been established in every county to conduct Points of Distribution (POD) to reach the entire state population in the event of terrorist attack or other public health emergency requiring MCM. These external partners will contribute the majority of POD staffing and logistical assets, while PHEP supports them with the planning, coordination, and management for overall operations.
- **Establishing incident management training, preparedness, and response capabilities.** PHEP administrates the TRAIN learning management system, which has assured over 2,000 HDOH employees (~75%) taking basic Incident Command System (ICS) training so they may be called upon for emergency response surge capacity through a searchable skills database. Key staff are prepared to assume Department Operations Center roles and responsibilities or serve as liaisons and Emergency Support Function representatives to county and state emergency management. They have responded to all-hazards incidents ranging from hurricane/tropical storm activations, dengue

fever outbreak, Zika preparedness, to Ebola and emerging infectious disease threats.

- **Enhancing public information and warning.** PHEP works with department communications to support timely, credible, and accurate information essential to public health and safety in disasters. PHEP has established the department's emergency public information and warning (EPIW) capability by conducting crisis and emergency risk communication training, developing alerting and notification systems, and EPIW plans.
- **Strengthening community resilience, outreach, and education.** Statewide preparedness efforts include educational outreach using various modes to reach diverse communities and individuals: print materials (flyers, brochures, posters, bus signs), online (websites, videos, social media), broadcast media (radio, television), in-person meetings, health fairs, and other community engagement opportunities. Content focus ranges from individual and family preparedness to organization/agency actions to state and county information and action material. Timely materials are produced to cover specific topics (outbreaks, seasonal hazards) and ongoing public health preparedness messages for disease prevention and disaster readiness.
- **Augmenting information sharing and management.** PHEP funding has immensely enhanced department communications interoperability and ability to issue rapid emergency alerts and notifications. Critical information sharing capabilities require continued support to assure situational awareness and informed decision-making and response. Cyber security threats and the constantly evolving information technology landscape require constant vigilance. Using state enterprise technology services and assets, HDOH leverages PHEP resources to better equip, sustain, and maximize crucial technological response capacities and effectiveness.
- **Supporting responder safety and health.** PHEP assists in protecting responders against infectious disease, hazardous materials, or other harmful effects through training, additional personal protective equipment (PPE), and other support as needed, including mental/behavioral health services.

### Hospital Preparedness Program

HPP funding has directly supported an essential and close public health and healthcare partnership. In particular, HPP funds have especially enabled the creation of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii Emergency Services Coalition (Coalition), a partnership of 160 healthcare providers that run the entire continuum of care, from hospitals to hospice providers. The Coalition is able to achieve an impressive amount of statewide coordination, information sharing, training and education, and preparedness activities for just \$1.1 million per year. The expertise in emergency and disaster preparedness the Coalition provides is critical for ensuring the safety of our state's residents, Pacific neighbors, and important defense sites located across the islands. Perhaps most importantly, the services provided by the Coalition are available to our rural islands' residents who have limited access to healthcare and emergency services.

The Coalition, which exists only through HPP funding, is a high-performing, efficient coordinating body providing irreplaceable and critical services for our state. It assures Hawaii's already challenged healthcare system may ably address our population's life-threatening needs during an emergency or disaster. Essential Coalition capabilities include:

- **Supporting our state's only portable hospital system.** The Coalition maintains a 150-bed portable hospital including beds, environmental and utility systems, pharmaceuticals, biomedical equipment, communication systems, and sanitation systems.
- **Assuring our ability to leverage healthcare resources, capabilities, and personnel in an emergency.** Given our rural neighbor island residents are separated from Honolulu and each other by the ocean, it is vital our hospitals and other essential medical and surgical providers work efficiently and collaboratively across institutions and other potential barriers during response to disasters.
- **Ensuring the capability of our state's only deployable, critical care medical team.** The team of over 100 medical providers and support personnel comprises our state's only disaster medical response team, vital to caring for the acute medical needs of our community following a disaster or major emergency. Additionally, they provide non-disaster critical care transports from the neighbor islands and the capability to move critically-ill infectious disease (e.g., MERS-CoV) patients under biocontainment.
- **Securing pre-positioned disaster medical supplies and equipment.** These are the only pre-positioned stockpiles in our state. Given most goods arrive by sea and large vendor warehouses are lacking, Hawaii's healthcare facilities only have sufficient supplies for just-in-time day to day services, making them extremely vulnerable to emergencies and disasters or even shortages or transport delays.
- **Supporting logistical, management, communications, training, and educational activities.** Many of these activities are unique and cannot be replaced or absorbed by other programs or organizations.

Through establishing the Hawaii Emergency System for the Advanced Registration for Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP), we and our partners in Pacific Islands jurisdictions can assure, mobilize, and track credentialed volunteers for deployment during a public health emergency, disaster, or event. Further assuring our community resiliency, a modest \$150,000 supports our over 900 members strong Hawaii Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), whose critical activities include:

- **Supporting shelters and events.** MRC volunteers have deployed to support response to tropical storms, hurricanes, and civic events to provide timely and needed basic and psychological first aid.
- **Providing surge staffing for public health responses and initiatives.** MRC volunteers regularly support mass vaccination (i.e., flu) clinics, medical countermeasure distribution exercises, public health education campaigns for disease prevention (e.g., mosquitoes and dengue), and public health assessments and investigations (e.g., during large scale outbreaks or events).
- **Assuring capacity to promote community resiliency through youth.** MRC partners with other groups to utilize and mobilize the asset we have in our youth to assure they are a strength for community resiliency and not a vulnerability.

In summary, PHEP-HPP funds have allowed Hawaii to make a modest investment in community and healthcare capacity which has contributed greatly to promoting individual responsibility and resulted in a tremendous return in our community's overall resiliency. Continued funding is crucial to sustaining our capacity to protect the health and well-being of our population.]