



Public Health

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Overview

The Northwest Oregon Health Preparedness Organization (HPO) is a regional planning collaboration of regional hospitals and health systems, local and state public health, county emergency management, emergency medical services, medical societies, safety net clinics, and behavioral health. The HPO works to ensure that Northwest Oregon is prepared and responds effectively and efficiently to large-scale health emergencies that have impacts across institutional and jurisdictional lines.

A steering committee of planning partners guides the HPO's public and private health preparedness activities. HPO activities are funded by the federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) via the State of Oregon Health Security, Preparedness, and Response Program. The HPO steering committee allocates annual federal HPP funds to hospitals, health systems and other related entities in Oregon Healthcare Preparedness Region 1 (Clatsop, Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Tillamook counties). Public and private partners from Clark County, Washington also actively participate. The Multnomah County Health Department provides administrative support to the HPO.

Accomplishments

- ◆ The region's 18 hospitals have surge plans to care for a 15-20% increase in patients in the event of a large-scale health emergency. All hospitals have purchased equipment, trained staff, and conducted exercises of their surge plans. In addition, they have mass fatality, evacuation, and alternate care site plans.
- ◆ All hospitals in Region 1 and two hospitals in Clark County, Washington signed a regional hospital/health system Memorandum of Understanding to provide mutual aid during a large-scale health emergency.
- ◆ Planning for burn, chemical, trauma, EMS, and behavioral health surge.
- ◆ Private and safety-net clinics have received emergency preparedness materials, staff training, and individual consultation to help them respond to a large-scale health emergency.
- ◆ The completion and testing of a pilot project to improve community health through more effective emergency communications with selected culturally-specific communities.
- ◆ Implementation of a CDC funded project to develop a model for the ethical delivery of essential healthcare services in a severe pandemic influenza event, including the development of a Health/Medical Multi-Agency Coordination Group (H/M MAC) to create regional policy recommendations and allocate scarce resources. The H/M MAC Group convened multiple times in response to the H1N1 pandemic in 2009.
- ◆ Integrated a regional health and medical coordination system with county emergency management to ensure that health responders have a centralized information coordination center with open lines of communication. Outputs are the development and distribution of regional situation reports, support of hospital resource requests for the Portland tri-county area, and support of the H/M MAC Group.

Current Initiatives

- ◆ Solidify H/M MAC Group and Healthcare System support via County Emergency Coordination Centers
- ◆ Develop Pediatric Surge Plan
- ◆ Work towards meeting all HPP Capabilities

Funding

Region 1 has received and implemented ~\$13M in federal Hospital Preparedness Program (formerly HRSA) funding. The Multnomah County Health Department receives HPP funds to administer the program.

Best Practices

- ◆ The HPO utilizes a unique organizational structure that best utilizes participants' time and expertise; work is divided between a Public/Private Executives Group, Steering Committee, and time-limited, topic specific work groups
- ◆ The Steering Committee (Regional Health Preparedness Board) makes decisions by consensus; this has served well in fostering trusting, supportive relationships between organizations.
- ◆ The HPO's overall planning approach is to first develop consensus on which response results in the best and most effective community health impact; then to create implementation plans that are integrated with emergency management and public safety agencies; and finally to exercise, refine, and integrate with related plans.
- ◆ We support public and private health providers to function semi-autonomously in a surge event rather than attempting to direct a regional healthcare response.
- ◆ The RAND Corporation studied the HPO as a model for integrating local public health department and hospital preparedness programs.
- ◆ The development and successful implementation of a Regional Health/Medical MAC Group received a "Model Practice" award from NACCHO in 2011.
- ◆ Cornerstones of the HPO culture:
 - ✓ The establishment and maintenance of trusting relationships at multiple organizational levels among public and private sector participants
 - ✓ Effective, consistent communication
 - ✓ Emphasis on efficient, successful use of facilitative leadership
 - ✓ "Strawman" drafts as basis for discussion; no attachment to the outcome other than what is best for the community
 - ✓ Follow-through on commitments

Additional Information

If you would like more information about the NW Oregon Health Preparedness Organization, please contact Kathryn Richer.

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