

Program Update

Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response (EPR)

Washington State Department of Health (DOH)

September 2015

The Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Program News Update is provided as a way to share current information about the preparedness program. This News Update is intended to be shared with local, regional, and tribal partners; please forward it to others who may be interested. We are currently in Budget Period 4 of a five-year cooperative agreement.

Our fiscal period is July 1 – June 30 each “year.”

State and National Updates

A word on recent fire response from the Chief of Preparedness – Michael Loehr

- I want to commend my staff and all our partners on the recent wildfire response
- Requests came in, we distributed 15 air scrubbers to Eastern Washington, where we had 0 before
- In the future DOH will be more proactive, and plan for a longer-term response
 - We now have 30 beds staged in Spokane
 - For the upcoming flu season: we will work on making our stockpile more rapidly available to provide antivirals to healthcare facilities

New Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Staff – Lori Van De Wege

Kevin Wickersham

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Kevin joins the team from the other side of the country, most recently working two jobs; one in critical care transport at Boston Children’s Hospital, and Emergency Management at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He just finished his master’s in healthcare emergency management from Boston University School of Medicine.

Kevin will be lead coordinator for our public health Ebola work. He loves long walks on the beach with his wife, he is a newlywed ☺.

Program Updates

Reminder: Please review DOH Draft Basic Emergency Response Plan – Sue Smith

- Emailed to statewide partners 9/10/15
- Please send comments to susan.smith@doh.wa.gov by Wednesday, Sep. 30

Healthcare Update – Erika Henry

- Working on statewide Disaster Medical Coordination Center (DMCC) agreement
- Will send out for review in early October

- Oct. 16 from 1:30-3:30 we'll hold a statewide healthcare coalition leadership call; planning toward healthcare system resiliency and how we prepare

Training Update – Dianna Lahmann

- Emailed to statewide partners 9/18/15
- Will plan to update partners each month
- Because these are not all DOH trainings, please double-check whether you are eligible to attend, and discuss any fees
- Trainings are generally free to attend, minus your time and travel; still double-check with the organizer

Wildfire Response Update

Bill Joseph – Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for tribal health programs, Colville Tribes

The fires affected the entire Colville Reservation, 1.5 million acres, and that brought up many healthcare challenges. The biggest challenge for ESF 8 the requirement to maintain the same level of care for the public as in pre-disaster levels.

As big and resourceful as the Colville Reservation is, it didn't take long to exhaust local resources. The tribes almost immediately requested supplies from the Region 7 health care coalition (HCC). Then as the fires grew we also needed resources from the Region 9 HCC.



We needed Alternate Care Facility (ACF) supplies to support our Elders who were moved from our Tribal Convalescent Center to our shelter at Lake Roosevelt High School in Coulee Dam. Within a few hours Mary Small, Region 7, had two ACF trailers at our shelter. One from Moses Lake and the other from Ellensburg. It seemed like the personnel who brought the trailers dropped everything they were doing to get the equipment to us and for that we are very grateful.

The good news is tribal health is well prepared and plans for vulnerable populations. Tribal health keeps an updated client list of all the tribe's people special needs and elders. Our tribal health personnel were busy checking on people, and our Tribal Health Officer requested more nurses to assist.

Those nurses came in the form of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Specifically, from Public Health Seattle King County and from the Spokane MRC unit. We were also in contact with Snohomish County MRC. There were about 12 total MRC personnel and they visited 60-70 homes on the reservation, with Tribal Health and Area Office on Aging personnel.

The MRC assisted us in distributing pharmaceuticals donated from Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, and St. Peter Hospital in Olympia. For several days visibility was about 100 yards so the supplies were much needed. The pharmaceuticals were:

- 80 albuterol inhalers
- 500 nebulizers
- 20 vials of epinephrine with ancillary supplies

We learned to tailor MRC resource requests as the response continued to accommodate the unique geography of the reservation, to ensure volunteer safety, and leverage operational periods to best serve the affected

community and evolving needs. We also learned something about accounting for travel time when requesting (and budgeting) resources.

The Tribal Health Officer brought in extra behavioral health personnel for the response staff and public affected by the fires.

The Colville Tribes want to thank Region 7, for also delivering masks to the Reservation. We also want to thank Region 9 for masks, and for sending an observer. We know the tribes were not the only ones needing regional healthcare coalition assistance since the fires were affecting the whole North Eastern Washington.

We also want to thank the Wenatchee Red Cross chapter for sending a team of five to one of our shelters. They did an amazing job. And for sending a Public Information Officer (PIO), and a Community Partnerships Manager who still has at least two Client Assistance Team caseworkers helping fire victims get resources after their houses burned down.

Last but not least, we need to thank the Department of Health, Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response for loaning us three of their best and brightest to serve as liaisons. Those three helped the tribes and brought regional and state resources to bear for the tribes. They were on the reservation for about 13 days either in the field or the Tribal EOC, including during the earthquake.

Again, thanks to all partners involved – we needed all of you to get through these fire disasters on the reservation.

Mary Small – Region 7

Air Quality

- Worked with Air Resource Advisors to put out three-day information
- Worked on daily planning and advising with schools (coaches), tourists and the general public
- 82 cases of N-95 masks distributed to Okanogan Co.

Healthcare

- Regional lead hospital opened their Disaster Medical Coordination Center (DMCC) and started hosting calls twice daily, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- DMCC used WATrac for bed availability, and asked for facility updates
- Monitored hospital situations; evacuation levels and operational levels
- Evacuations impacted hospital staffing; many were evacuated and some could not travel in to work because of road closures
- Hospital transported patients **out** that were more than they could support; transferred out from Omak and Lake Chelan hospitals
- Clinics combined in one location until they could return to the evacuated area

Shelters

- Red Cross opened shelters in multiple locations, and supported the tribal shelters
- Several nursing homes were evacuated in Chelan and Okanogan counties, including the Colville Reservation
- Four of five Region 7 alternate care facility (ACF) trailers were deployed to assist at Red Cross shelters for nursing home residents
- ACF trailers were pre-positioned in case they were needed in Okanogan Co. for a medical surge incident

What worked well?



- Air Resource Advisors
- WA Smoke Blog for public information
- Getting additional air monitors up
- DMCC up and running
- WATrac for bed availability
- Had resources on hand to share

And what were challenges?

- Intermittent communications
- Hazardous air quality
- Road closures
- Confusion over air scrubbers
- Requested and rejected for an indoor air monitor; later rented from another source



Susan Sjoberg – Region 9

- Participated in public health and healthcare situational awareness, although neither public health nor county EOCs were activated, and air quality advising
- MRC activated
- Sent staff to observe and help, and staged and transported N-95 masks and medications
- Sent six RNs to Colville Tribes covering 2 weeks' worth of shifts
- Healthcare Coalition (HCC) was active, making daily check-ins and sharing information
- Region 9 offered to back up staff at the DOH Agency Coordination Center (ACC)

Partners

- NE Tri-County (Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille)
- Spokane
- Colville Tribes
- Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency
- Dept. of Ecology
- Schools/athletics
- Region 9 Healthcare coalition
- MRC
- WSU Extension
- Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center
- Media partners
- ESF 8 Desk at WA State EOC



What worked well?

- Email was consistent, sometimes texting
- Calls and communications were early and often, at region and at the state
- When people checked in and offered help before asked
- DOH offered policy on air scrubbers

And what were challenges?

- We need guidance on air quality; there are different scales/discrepancy between Ecology and EPA
- Cell phone coverage is spotty on the reservation and northern counties
- Road closures
- Lack of power, water
- Hazardous air
- Tourists

Grant and Technical Assistance Updates

--Summaries of each grant or full grant guidance available on request--

Special Project Update – Lori Van De Wege

Thanks to everyone who submitted their projects. They were reviewed. Final decisions and communications are pending as we close the books from the last budget period (BP3) and pin down how much funding is available.

Special projects are funded using unspent money from our *prior* budget period, that we are allowed to carry forward and spend down for one extra year. All special projects must be grouped and submitted as one application for federal approval.

Contractors with EPR – Lori Van De Wege

<attachments>

Based on some questions and comments we've been hearing, it's time to remind everyone about what DOH is doing (specifically the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response). Please review the attached documents:

- HPP and PHEP work plans
- PHEP **Ebola** work plan
- HPP **Ebola** project narrative, for Part A & Part B
- List of contractors working with/for EPR, with some explanations
- Current Organizational Chart, for the Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)
- List of Capabilities and EPR Leads, with contact info

If you have any information you would like to share with the public health preparedness community during a monthly update call please feel free to share your ideas with Dianna Lahmann (dianna.lahmann@doh.wa.gov or 360-236-4079).

EPR Program Update Calls are held the third Monday of each month from 2-3 p.m.

2015 Update Calls
Oct. 19
Nov. 16
Dec. 21