Emergency Preparedness and Response in Maryland

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Purpose

• To learn about the Office of Preparedness & Response

• To participate in its assessment of emergency preparedness in Maryland’s 24 Local Health Departments (LHDs)
Today’s lesson plan...

• Background
• Disaster Management Tools: NIMS and ICS
• 2008 Pandemic Influenza Plan and Exercise
• 2008 LHD Preparedness Survey
• Closing
On November 25, 2002 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is established.

DHS incorporates 22 previously independent agencies.
Disaster Management Tools
In 2004 DHS creates the National Response Plan

- An effort to align federal coordination structures, capabilities, and resources into a unified, all-discipline, and all-hazards approach to domestic incident management.
- Now called “National Response Framework”
- An important part of the Response Plan is NIMS: the National Incident Management System
NIMS

• A structured framework used nationwide for both governmental and nongovernmental agencies to respond to natural disasters and/or terrorist attacks at the local, state, and federal levels of government.
NIMS core principles...

Flexibility:
Provides a consistent, flexible and adjustable national framework within which government and private entities at all levels can work together to manage domestic incidents.

Standardization:
A set of standard organizational structures, as well as requirements for processes, procedures and systems designed to improve operability among jurisdictions and disciplines
NIMS components...

- Preparedness
- Resource Management
- Communications and information management
- Training
- Command and Management
  - The Incident Command System
Incident Command System (ICS)

...is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management tool. It is meant to solve common weaknesses in incident management:

- Lack of accountability; unclear chains of command
- Poor communication, resulting in duplication of efforts or gaps in response
- Lack of orderly, systematic planning process
- No existing standardized methods for integrating multiple-agency responses into a single, scalable management structure
ICS concepts...

- Unity of Command
- Common Terminology
- Management by Objective/Incident Action Planning
- Flexible/Modular Organization
ICS is useful for...

- Emergency Medical Situations
- Hazardous Materials Spills
- Terrorist Attacks
- Natural Disasters
- Man-made disasters
- Search and Rescue Operations
- Hostage Crises
Pan Flu Preparedness Exercise
June 17-20, 2008
Maryland 2008 Statewide Pan-Flu Exercise

• Headed by the Office of Preparedness and Response
• Tested several priority operational areas and functions

DHMH Coordination/Command Center and Continuity of Operations Plan
Health and Medical Surge (Facilities, Personnel, Equipment and Supplies)
  Medical Surge – Alternate Care Sites
  Strategic National Stockpile/Receipt Staging and Storage
  Enhanced Surveillance
  Governor’s Wellmobiles
  Laboratory Surge
  Countermeasure Response Administration
  Emergency Medical Services – Emergency Medical Dispatching
  Emergency Medical Services – Transport Diversion Protocol

Emergency Medical Services On-Scene Triage and Assessment Protocol
Personal and Community Preparedness (CERT)
  Critical Infrastructure
  Internal Countermeasure Distribution
  Educational Facilities
  Volunteer Activation
  Joint Information Center – Public Information

Interoperable Communications
Mass Fatality Management
Vulnerable Populations
Some Key Strengths...

- Incident Command Systems were effectively established at local health departments and health care facilities across the state.
- The process of receiving the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) materials by the State at the Receiving Storage and Staging (RSS) site, receiving supply requests, filling requests, and shipping material to the local level proved to be a well planned and efficient operation.
- DHMH and all partners (health departments, hospitals, EMS, Emergency Management Agencies, private critical infrastructure organizations etc.) were able to maintain situational awareness by way of the conference calls and statewide email alerts.
- WebEOC is a valuable asset to the state and all local jurisdictions. It provided real-time tracking of resources, requests, and events.
Areas for Improvement...

• Although there seems to be a high level of Incident Command System (ICS) knowledge across the state, there is some confusion when it comes to Incident Action Plans; how to complete and how to communicate it to personnel.

• Many systems across the state have begun or completed planning for vulnerable populations however; there is a gap at the operational level with such issues as: documents in multiple languages, translators, accommodations for deaf and blind, and handling of an influx of physically disabled citizens.

• Mass fatality management is an area that Maryland, local jurisdictions and healthcare facilities need to complete and finalize policies, procedures and formal plans, train necessary personnel, and exercise.
Local Health Department Preparedness Assessment
LHD Assessments

- Started in 2005, with many variations since 2008
- 2008 version evaluates LHD preparedness in 12 domains
- Information is self-reported and subsequently verified using a site visit
Survey Domains

1. Demographics
2. Management Oversight
3. Staffing and Incident Command
4. Preparedness Training
5. Surveillance and Epidemiology
6. Pan Flu and All-hazards Planning
7. Public Health and Medical Surge
8. Vulnerable Populations/Special Needs
9. Interoperable Communications and Equipment
10. Risk Communications
11. Information Technology Equipment
12. Exercises
How the LHDs stack up on Vulnerable Populations...

Question:
Is the LHD addressing preparedness for vulnerable and special needs populations?

Response:
Check yes, no, or not applicable for each category
I would like to thank...

DHMH
- Dr. Isaac Ajit
- Karen Stafford
- Tracy Bryan

JHSPH
- Dr. Frangiscos Sifakis
- Dipti Shah, MPH
- Joanna Zablotsky
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