

Introduction

The University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness (UPCPHP) aims to support efforts to build a public health workforce that is competent in disaster and emergency response and that integrates the public health system with public safety, healthcare, and emergency management systems. The UPCPHP believes that recruiting, retaining, and training public health workers is a critical national security issue that requires extensive public-private support and collaborative efforts among government, academic institutions, businesses, foundations, associations, and nongovernmental service organizations.

Academic Centers for Public Health Preparedness Network

UPCPHP is part of the national network of academic centers for public health preparedness (A-CPHP) representing 23 schools of public health. The A-CPHPs were founded to improve the capacity of frontline public health and healthcare workers to respond to bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and other public health threats and emergencies.

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Association of Schools of Public Health, the A-CPHPs work with state and local agencies in improving national security.

University of Pittsburgh Center for Public Health Preparedness

Housed in the Center for Public Health Practice in the Graduate School of Public Health, UPCPHP has a satellite office at the Ohio State University School of Public Health. Through this effective partnership, UPCPHP serves more than 20 million residents (12 million in Pennsylvania; 11 million in Ohio) by providing preparedness training and engaging in collaborations with state and local health agencies.

UPCPHP leverages resources by offering public health workers existing training courses and materials developed by the UPCPHP, academic partners, and qualified instructors. Through cross-sector training, the center builds bridges among Pennsylvania's disparate public health agencies and healthcare delivery networks, and it improves access to available courses and modules. UPCPHP delivers expertise in leadership training, mentoring, and the train-the-trainer model.



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Center for Public Health Preparedness

Bridging the public health workforce preparedness gap through collaboration, leadership, and training

Center Priorities

UPCPHP promotes activities targeted to its core constituents:

Leaders

Pennsylvania Preparedness Leadership Institute (PPLI): In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH), UPCPHP supports the commonwealth's regional approach to preparedness by providing a state-of-the-art training program to improve the skills of leaders who are on the front line of response in Pennsylvania. PPLI delivers a yearlong three-part interdisciplinary training to teams comprising leaders from the nine Regional Counter-Terrorism Task Forces, which are held in conjunction with the Department of Health's Public Health Institute. PPLI provides full tuition to participants to attend the program. Teams work on special regional projects and then serve as mentors for subsequent groups of participants.



Students

Certificate Program in Public Health Response and Disaster Preparedness:

This 15-credit interdisciplinary graduate certificate program seeks to bolster the preparedness capacity of local public health

agencies and communities. The core curriculum includes courses on current issues in bioterrorism, emergency management and disaster response, risk communication, environmental and occupational health preparedness, and evaluation of emergency responses. UPCPHP places students in the certificate program in internships or field practice placements in public health or emergency management agencies. Additionally, the certificate program is available to professionals in the field.

Practitioners

Training: UPCPHP assesses training needs and offers customized training to meet the expressed demands of state and local health departments, rural health providers, and other practitioners. Training is based on the CDC's Bioterrorism and Emergency Readiness Competencies for all Public Health Workers and delivered through face-to-face sessions or the latest distance learning technologies. The center collaborates with the PADOH in recommending curricula that can be accessed on PADOH's online training Web site, the Learning Management System.

Pennsylvania Public Health Infrastructure

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's public health infrastructure is characterized by a centralized public health system with the Pennsylvania Department of Health located in Harrisburg as its main office. A network of six district offices and 57 community health centers deliver services throughout the commonwealth. Six county health departments (Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Erie, Montgomery, and Philadelphia) and four city health departments (Allentown, Bethlehem, York, and Wilkes-Barre) representing larger urban and suburban areas serve approximately 40 percent of the population. The governmental public health workforce in Pennsylvania is sparse, with a ratio of 37 workers for every 100,000 people in the general population—the lowest in the nation. Additionally, the commonwealth has one of the largest rural populations in the nation with nearly 2.8 million residents (23 percent of Pennsylvanians) living in rural-designated areas.

