



Southwest Missouri Homeland Security Planning Region D Bioterrorism/ Emergency Response Team (BERT) Update

News and Resources

Investigation Handbook

FBI, CDC and DOJ joint venture provides an introduction to epidemiological and criminal terrorist investigations to give public health and law enforcement personnel a better understanding of each other's role.

www2a.cdc.gov/phlp/docs/CrimEpiHandbook2006.pdf

Isolation and Quarantine

This advanced practice toolkit from Seattle & King County walks through how to plan for and implement isolation and quarantine, and includes tools and resources.

www.ahrq.gov/research/mce/mceguide.pdf

ICS for Transportation

Free simplified guide to ICS for transportation professionals. #FHWA-HOP-06-004.

www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/ics_guide/index.htm

Avian Influenza

This U.S. Geological Survey site posts updates on suspected and verified occurrences of avian flu (H5N1) in wild birds, domestic animals and humans worldwide.

www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/avian_influenza/index.jsp

Masks and Respirators Recommended by CDC

In a document released in May, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer guidance on how and when to use a facemask or respirator to protect against pandemic influenza.

The CDC calls the guidance a "best estimate" to help guide individual decisions in the absence of clear science.

Facemasks are loose-fitting, disposable masks that cover the nose and mouth. They include products labeled as surgical, dental, medical procedure, isolation, and laser masks. They help stop droplets from being spread by the person wearing them, and they keep splashes or sprays from reaching the mouth and nose of the person wearing the facemask. They are not designed to protect a person from breathing in very small particles. Facemasks should be used once and then thrown away.

Consider wearing a facemask if

- You are sick with the flu and think you might have close contact with other people.

- You live with someone who has the flu (you therefore might be in the early stages of infection) and need to be in a crowded place. Limit the amount of time you spend in these crowded places and wear a facemask while you are there.
- You are well and do not expect to be in close contact with a sick person but need to be in a crowded place. Limit the amount of time you spend in these crowded places and wear a facemask while you are there.



Facemask. Courtesy: CDC



Respirator. Courtesy: CDC

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Regional Exercise Tests Epidemiology and Public Information Response

On May 11th, local public health departments in Region D participated in a regional epidemiology and public information exercise. The exercise sought to test communication between communicable disease or epidemiology staff and public information officers. It also tested the skill level of public information officers in the region and the joint information system they utilize during a public health emergency.

Participants were given the scenario that the first wave of pandemic influenza had passed and now approximately 200 people across the region were showing influenza like symptoms.

Representatives from 18 health departments in the region joined a conference call to share information. The group determined that a press release was needed, along with supporting materials.

A workgroup was formed to create the materials and ensure a consistent message. Then materials were shared with the whole group to personalize and send to their local media.

Several counties took the exercise a step further by contacting their surveillance sites, their partners and other stakeholders. Some even held tabletop exercises within their department or within their community to test additional pieces of their plan.

Communication via email during the exercise was cumbersome, but the group is planning in the future to utilize an Internet forum to more efficiently communicate.

Other issues identified in the exercise include —

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Respirators Recommended for Patient Care

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A respirator is designed to protect you from breathing in very small particles, which might contain viruses. These types of respirators fit tightly to the face so that most air is inhaled through the filter material.

To work effectively, N95 respirators must be specially fitted for each person who wears one. Usually N95 respirators are used in construction and other jobs that involve dust and small particles. Some healthcare workers, such as nurses and doctors, use these types of respirators when taking care of patients with diseases that can be spread through the air.

People who have heart or lung disease or other health conditions may have difficulty breathing

through a respirator and should consult their health care provider before using a respirator.

Like surgical masks, N95 respirators should be worn only once and then thrown away.

Consider wearing a respirator if

- You are well and you expect to be in close contact with people who are known or thought to be sick with pandemic flu. Limit the amount of time you are in close contact with these people and wear a respirator during this time. These recommendations apply if you must take care of a sick person at home.

For more information, visit the CDC online at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/MasksRespirators/>.

Language Translation Speed Surprising

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- Additional training needs were identified.
- Translation of materials into Spanish was done within minutes.
- Several PIOs worked well together to develop materials.
- 90% of local public health departments in the region participated in the exercise
- Relationships between LPHA PIOs in the region were strengthened.

- Communication between epi/CD staff and PIOs increased.
- Logistical and equipment needs were recognized.

The exercise was deemed a success, because participants learned from it.

LPHA PIOs will continue to meet frequently for training and exercises.

PIOs worked well together and relationships were strengthened.

New Just-in-Time Training DVD Tested

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department and its partners held a medication dispensing exercise at Walnut Grove High School May 3 to test a new just-in-time training DVD.

New volunteers watched the 5-minute DVD on what a dispensing site is, and were then matched

with seasoned, trained staff at specific stations. Supervisors provided volunteers with additional information about their specific job.

While nursing staff expressed a need for more detailed training, most volunteers said they felt adequately trained.



The Bioterrorism / Emergency Response Team (BERT) was formed in late 2002 when the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for bioterrorism preparedness. The grant divided Missouri into nine regions, following the Highway Patrol's region divisions. Southwest Missouri's Highway Patrol Region D became "Homeland Security Planning Region D." Region D was then further divided into four service areas, based on population and geography. BERT's goals are to improve preparedness for a bioterrorism event or other public health emergency. BERT members work with individuals and partner agencies on mitigation, planning and exercising a response to a bioterrorist attack or other public health emergency.

Southwest Missouri Homeland Security Planning Region D
 Bioterrorism/Emergency Response Team
 c/o Springfield-Greene County Health Department
 227 E. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, MO 65802

