



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

News and Resources

Emergency Course for Nurses

Heartland Centers offers a course to help nurses learn how to effectively respond to emergencies. "Introduction to Emergency Preparedness" helps nurses define a disaster and describe their role in the response. It includes information on individual and family preparedness, stress management and mental health issues.

www.heartlandcenters.slu.edu/

Human-to-human Transmission

A new study by the University of Washington reveals that eight members of an Indonesian family suffered human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 avian influenza virus last year. One researcher says the study should encourage all of us to be more vigilant in our preparedness.

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/08/31/2021231.htm

Failing Grade

In a report released to the Senate September 6, the U.S. Government Accountability Office says the Department of Homeland Security has failed to meet half its performance expectations since it was established in 2003. The report says they made the least progress toward improving emergency preparedness and eliminating bureaucratic and technical barriers to information sharing.

www.emergencyemail.org/newsemergency/anviewer.asp?a=244&z=1

Creating a Symphony to Encourage Individual Preparedness

Recent local disasters such as the January ice storm and the June flooding are solemn reminders of the need for individual preparedness.

As first responders we understand the importance of individual preparedness, yet we constantly find ourselves struggling to convince the public to take action.

A recent survey done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified seven different ways people feel about preparing for pandemic influenza.

1. Disbelievers—I don't believe it's a problem.
2. Unengaged—It's not important enough.
3. Fatalists—Preparing won't help anyway.
4. Avoiders—I can't deal with it.
5. Unable—I can't do it.
6. Influencers—It's not my job.
7. Preparers—I've already done it.

The survey also showed that individuals need seven different touches to change. In other words, they need to hear the same message from seven different points of contact—family member, friend, church leader, television, newspaper, social group, etc.—before they will take action to overcome a barrier and start preparing.

Based on this research, the CDC is establishing a practice called "Creating a Symphony" to implement the "seven touches" concept.

In a symphony you have all different musicians, playing all different instruments. When they play individually, their music often conflicts, but when they play as a group, their music creates a beautiful sound that people respond positively to.

The CDC will ask businesses, clubs and groups who influence people to become part of a large symphony, encouraging people to change.

The very same concept can be applied locally, and is already being done to some extent by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Ready in 3 campaign. It asks individuals to take three simple steps — create a plan, prepare a kit and listen for information. Groups such as schools, churches and businesses have been invited to participate in spreading the word, and materials are available to anyone at no cost at www.dhss.mo.gov/Ready_in_3.

In addition, www.Ready.gov offers a similar program. They provide templates, checklists and instructional videos in English and Spanish to help people follow three simple steps to become better prepared — get a kit, make a plan, be informed.

September is National Preparedness Month. Why not adopt the "Creating a Symphony" concept locally? Invite churches, businesses and social groups in your community to help spread the word — to help become one of the "seven touches" that will move individuals to change.

Then take one more step. Become one of the "seven touches" yourself by talking to all the people in your life that you influence. Encourage them to prepare today.

Let's use September — National Preparedness Month — to make a difference in our communities. Together our efforts can create a beautiful symphony that will resonate across southwest Missouri and move people to start preparing. ■



Four State Conference Offers Learning Opportunity

Plans for the 9th Annual Four Corners Emergency Management Conference are being finalized. A major focus this year will be on applying the principles presented the first two days in a tabletop exercise to be held the third day.

"We are trying something different involving a catastrophic event exercise with seminars prior to the exercise," says SEMA Area Coordinator Candy Adams. "I think it will be very rewarding for all of those involved."

Sue Evers, from FEMA Region VII, will open the conference with a presentation on the history of the Nemaha Fault. Other presentations will focus on mass care, medical surge and public health, emergency public information, EMAC and communication issues. In addition, the National Weather Service will provide project updates.

The conference allows partners from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma to discuss planning, response and recovery issues.

Additional Monies to Help Prepare for Pandemic

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announces the availability of another \$75 million to help states, territories and metropolitan areas strengthen their capacity to respond to pandemic influenza.

The funding will be used to establish or enhance stockpiles of critical medical equipment and supplies; continue development of plans for maintenance, distribution, and sharing of those resources; plan for and develop pandemic alternate care sites; and conduct medical surge exercises.

Comments Invited on New FEMA Document

FEMA's Incident Management Systems Division seeks feedback on its new guidance document for public information officers.

The document contains the NIMS ICS approach to managing information and a Joint Information Center during a crisis, as well as information management in non-crisis times. It includes actions for preparedness, recovery and federal help.

Visit www.dhs.gov/xprepresp/publications/ to view a draft of the document, entitled "NIMS Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (PIOs)."

"The group has grown to include not only emergency managers, but first responders, health departments and hospitals, communications officers, amateur radio operators, and volunteer agencies," adds Adams.



Missouri's Homeland Security Director, Paul Fennewald, fields a question from Jackie Miller, Regional Coordinator for southeast Kansas.

Attendees say the strengths of the conference include sharing ideas, hearing about best practices, gaining a better understanding of how other disciplines work and networking with peers from neighboring jurisdictions.

The conference is scheduled for December 5-7, 2007 in Branson. Registration is \$75 if paid by December 1, 2007. To register, or for more information, visit www.4cornersEM.com. ■

The one-time pandemic influenza response planning grants will supplement the \$430 million HHS announced on June 28, 2007 to strengthen the ability of hospitals and other health care facilities to respond to bioterrorist attacks, infectious diseases and natural disasters that may cause mass casualties.

Missouri will receive more than \$1.4 million out of the \$75 million supplemental funds. For more information, visit www.pandemicflu.gov/news/allocation.html. ■

The Incident Management Systems Division would like the document to be valuable and user-friendly. They encourage responders to review the guidance and provide specific comments and feedback about the its content and layout.

Comments must be submitted by Friday, September 14, 2007 via email to FEMA-NIMS@dhs.gov. A comment form is available by request at the same email address, but is not required.

Learn more about NIMS and the NIMS Integration Center at www.fema.gov/emergency/nims. ■

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

