

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Preparedness

Contact Information

John Pittman, Exercise Program Manager
FL Dept of Health
Phone: 850.245.4444.3725 Fax: 850.245.4580
jack_pittman@doh.state.fl.us
FL Department of Health, 4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-23 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1748

Short Title: Public Health and Medical Emergency Preparedness Exercise

Program Location: Florida

Objectives and Goals:

To provide Florida counties and Domestic Security Regions with opportunities to validate their public health and medical operational plans and internal staff training with thought- provoking and challenging exercises with disease containment scenarios.

Methods:

The exercise program began at the county level and then advanced to multi-county, region, and cross-state border exercises.

Program Length:

The exercise program began in 2005 with county exercises and progressed through cross-state border exercises in June 2009.

Number of target population reached by effort:

All 67 FL counties participated in at least one exercise. All seven Florida Domestic Security Regions participated in at least one exercise.

Demographic Info:

County-level exercises included participants from County Health Departments (CHDS), Hospitals, County and local Law Enforcement, Fire-Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, County Emergency Management, Public Information, churches, and volunteer organizations.

Regional and cross-border exercises included all of the above plus regional and state representatives.

Overall Cost:

Field scale exercises (FSE) cost ~ \$90,000/year including responder salary costs. There were two field exercises conducted in multiple counties successive two years.

Tabletop exercises (TTX) cost ~ \$30,000/year. There were two tabletops in alternate years.

Funding Sources:

80 % Federal
10 % State
10 % Local
percentages ARE estimates

Outcomes:

The Beleaguered Bus FSE scenario was the sudden introduction of a highly contagious disease into a county from missionaries returning from overseas assignments. It provided an opportunity for all county responders plus CHDs and hospitals to conduct isolation/ quarantine, incident command, public information, and communications. Contagion Containment FSEs involved an H5N1 influenza scenario with simultaneous cases across two county lines. The emphasis on the second FSE was multi-county and county-state coordination. The third exercise in the series was a regional coordination in a multi-county pre-pandemic outbreak tabletop exercise (TTX). In 2009, the Formidable Footprint TTX series evaluated response to an outbreak along Interstate corridors (footprints) that crossed from Florida into Georgia and Alabama counties. All of these exercises engaged a wide spectrum of responders which set the stage for a H1N1 response that no one predicted.

Did you make any estimates regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented?

No quantitative estimates were made, but the efforts made to integrate public health and medical communities into the wider community emergency response network certainly contributed to working relationships that facilitated the H1N1 response across Florida.

Additional Information:

N/A

Future Plans:

Based on the success of the Formidable Footprint exercise series, additional funding has been planned for a continuing cross border exercises in 2010 perhaps expanding into FEMA Region IV and based on lessons learned from the H1N1 pandemic.