



Kansas Preparedness Times

Kansas Public Health Preparedness Partners Attend Summit

by Sonia Jordan, Preparedness Systems Program Director

→ Act Now. Know How.

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2
Spring 2011



As the state's environmental protection and public health agency, KDHE promotes responsible choices to protect the health and environment for all Kansans.

Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.

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The public health preparedness community was presented with an opportunity to learn more about current activities, best practices, and national initiatives at the annual Public Health Preparedness Summit. The summit, held Feb. 22-25 in Atlanta, drew a large and diverse group of attendees, with representatives from local and state health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“Kansas had a strong showing at the conference, with staff from the Bureau of Public Health Preparedness attending along with representatives from a wide variety of local health departments,” stated Michael McNulty, Operations Director with the KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness.

The array of topics discussed at the summit ranged from volunteer management during an incident, to countermeasure tracking and dispensing and quality improvement in preparedness. The most hotly discussed topic, however, was the release of the 2011 CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant and the deliverables that will be expected of local and state health departments. The new grant will kick off a five-year project cycle, and was still in the clearance stage at the time of the summit. The grant is expected to be released in April 2011.

The summit concluded with a keynote address from CDC Director Thomas Frieden, M.D., MPH. He emphasized that public health plays an important and underappreciated role in keeping the country prepared and that these efforts must continue despite challenges, especially with in the current climate of economic uncertainty.



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A Minute with Mindee

by Mindee Reece, BPHP Director



Mindee Reece,
Director
Bureau of Public
Health Preparedness

This weekend I noticed the daffodils in my yard have broken through the earth – a sure sign that spring is almost here. While I am very thankful that the bleakness of winter is fading, I also realize that the prime season for thunderstorms, tornadoes and floods is almost upon us.

While I'm well-versed in telling others how to prepare for the possibility of Mother Nature's wrath, I don't always do the best when it comes to my personal preparedness. Perhaps you are perfect at practicing what you preach, but in case you are a little less than fully prepared, please join me this spring by remembering the following safety tips:

- **Thunderstorms** – If you can hear thunder, lightning is a danger. Take shelter if skies look threatening. Stay inside and away from doors and windows. Because lightning can travel through electrical lines, turn off or unplug all electrical appliances.
- **Tornadoes** – Tornadoes are often accompanied by heavy rain, thunder, lightning or hail. In threatening weather, listen for authorized watches and warnings. If a tornado warning alarm sounds, take cover in a basement or first-floor interior room without windows. Never stay inside a mobile home or take shelter beneath one; go to the nearest shelter or take cover in a ditch or depression in the ground away from the home.
- **Floods** – Floodwaters are extremely powerful - just two feet of water can sweep away a car, and as little as six inches can cause unstable footing. Remember that flood conditions change rapidly and water can be much deeper

than it appears. If your home floods, turn off utilities and keep them off until authorities say it's safe to turn them on. Don't pump water out of your basement until floodwater recedes.

- Please also join me in creating a **home disaster kit**, if you haven't already done so. A disaster kit is essential in severe weather or other emergency. Here are some basic items that should be kept together in a safe, waterproof and easy-to-access area:
 - First aid kit, including your family members' medications
 - Canned food and a can opener
 - Bottled water
 - Clothing
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Flashlights and extra batteries
 - Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas and water

Poet Anne Bradstreet's words are eloquent at this time of year, "If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

***Do you have news
about your agency's
preparedness efforts?***

If you would like to include it in the next issue of the Kansas Preparedness Times, please e-mail your news to Mike Heideman at mheideman@kdheks.gov.

An Interview with Dr. Robert Moser

by Mike Heideman, Communications & Training Specialist



*Dr. Robert Moser
KDHE Secretary,
State Health Officer*

Governor Brownback recently appointed Dr. Robert Moser as the new Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Moser has also taken on the role of State Health Officer. With previous experience in the medical field, he has the excitement and experience to make big strides within KDHE.

“I am really excited about coming in and getting involved,” explained Moser. “I hope with my health care professional perspective I can bring a breath of fresh air to KDHE. This is a great agency to be a part of and I know we have some great days ahead of us.”

Moser has direct experience in public health emergency preparedness and response. Prior to 9-11, he was involved in disaster medicine in western Kansas, and was aware and focused upon the need at the time for increased emergency planning and exercise by hospitals. Later, he helped to design and implement improved evacuation procedures in Louisiana, based upon lessons learned following Hurricane Katrina. Soon afterward, those procedures were tested by Hurricane Gustav and found to be very successful.

As a physician, Moser has, on several occasions, had to go through a certification process. He sees value for a similar process that is taking place in public health, in the form of accreditation.

“I like the idea of our public health departments having a core competency that’s expected, no matter the size. I’m excited about where public health is with that,” he stated. “I’d like to say that the medical community – all of our rural health clinics and doctor’s offices – [operate] in that same mindset.”

The most significant challenges to public health that Moser sees include maintaining continuity in service and education among the public health workforce, and he believes that the recent approval of the University of Kansas - School of Public Health is a

step in the right direction in this area. A second challenge that he noted involves identifying ways to be more efficient with public funds that are allotted for patient care in Kansas.

“If we’re all taking care of the same patients, then we can’t be ...competing for the same dollars. If a provider is already doing a particular service, then why should we be using additional dollars to provide the same service by another provider?” asked Moser.

When it comes to enhancing relationships among local health departments, hospitals, physicians and KDHE, Moser believes that his experience as a practicing physician will prove helpful.

“I want to use my working relationship with physicians and hospitals ...and be a lot more effective in what we’re trying to do,” he said, and stated that he expects the role of KDHE to evolve significantly over the next several years. Moser also sees technology playing an even greater role for KDHE in the future.

“Since we’re a regulatory agency, I look at that as also meaning that we’re an educational and a service organization, too. And so, how can we do a better job of providing service as a service-based organization?” he asked. “We’re going to take advantage of technology... [as well as the] working relationships around the agencies and provider specialties.”

Outside of work, Moser has several interests. In what little spare time he has, he enjoys woodworking and golf, and likes to rebuild old cars – an occupation that started at an early age.

“My dad was a mechanic ... so I spent from about fourth grade all the way through college working in the garage when I came back on breaks,” he stated, adding that he has completely restored two cars, starting during his college days.

Dr. Robert Moser is married to Dalene, his wife of 29 years, who works in a hospital laboratory and as a respiratory therapist in western Kansas. The couple owns and operates a bed and breakfast, along with several rental properties. They have two daughters.

When Is It Okay for a Hospital to “HERT?”

by Thomas Donnay, R.N., Emergency Department/Hospital Preparedness, Wesley Medical Center

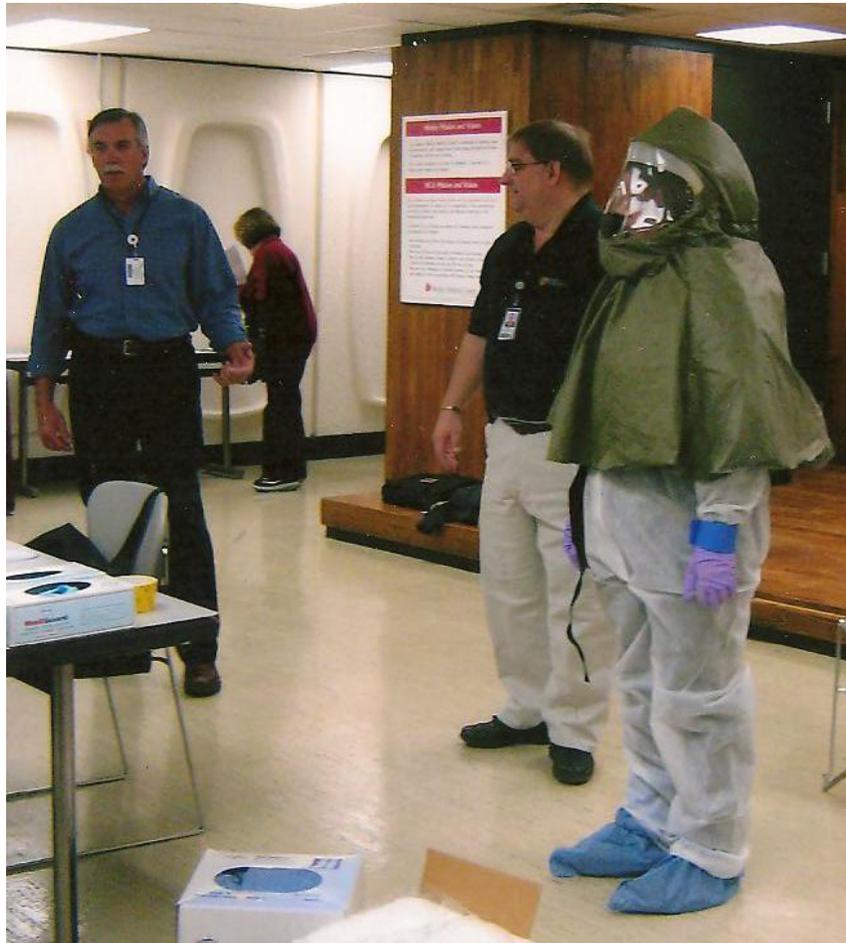
No, my spell check did not fail, although it does often get quite a workout. “HERT” stands for Hospital Emergency Response Team training. This is a two-day, 16-hour program that was created by the Center for Domestic Preparedness and sanctioned by FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security.

The original program was designed for large facilities dealing with mass casualty incidents or weapons of mass destruction events.

The class being presented in south-central Kansas has been tailored by Charles Keaton, South Central Region Hospital Preparedness Coordinator and me (as the lead instructor) to apply more to the Critical Access Hospitals that make up the majority of the facilities in Kansas. We incorporated a great deal of input from participants of the class.

HERT focuses on preparing hospital emergency responders for any type of mass casualty incident, especially those involving a decontamination event. The intent is to prepare facilities and agencies to conduct a safe and effective emergency medical response to a mass casualty incident or chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive event.

The course also assists the healthcare responder in understanding the relationship between a Hospital



Charles Keaton (left), Thomas Donnay and a spokesmodel display the latest in personal protective equipment.

Incident Command System (HICS), an on-scene Incident Command System (ICS) and other incident management systems used by municipal Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) during all manner of emergencies.

The program also addresses personal protective equipment requirements and presents guidance in the design, development and training of a HERT team. This is a hands-on course, and the class culminates with the application of the training in small group, facilitated practical exercises on the second day.

There are continuing education credits available for nurses and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

This two-day class has been presented in Wichita, Winfield, Great Bend and Medicine Lodge to positive reviews. Each class has a tabletop exercise component that is tailored to the local area by incorporating the Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for the community. This class is being scheduled through KS-TRAIN (course #1020160) and will be offered in Salina on March 30, Wichita on April 6 and Scott City on April 21. If this type of training sounds like something you would like to have offered in your area, please contact Charles Keeton at Charles.Keeton@Wesleymc.com or me at Thomas.Donnay@Wesleymc.com.

Hospital Tabletop Exercise Update

by Cait Purinton-Day, Exercise & Training Coordinator

The materials for the upcoming hospital tabletop exercise (TTX) have been finalized, and hospitals that wish to participate can now register their respective location on KS-TRAIN.

The exercise, titled “KDHE-BPHP: White Matters...Interagency Coordination,” incorporates an anthrax-based scenario designed to engage multiple community partners, including various hospital personnel, public health, law enforcement, emergency management and others.

The TTX is posted on KS-TRAIN under course #1026145. Participation in this exercise will fulfill the exercise requirement for hospitals participating in the Budget Period 10 (BP10) Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant.

TTX Registration

The exercise is posted on the KS-TRAIN calendar for the week of April 18-22. However, hospitals are not required to conduct the exercise during this week. In fact, it is strongly recommended that hospitals **do not** conduct the exercise during the week of April 18 because the Core Public Health Program and the Governor’s Public Health Conference are taking place that same week and may limit public health sector participation.

To register, please e-mail the following details to Cait Purinton-Day at cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov.

- **Facility name** and **address** of where the TTX will be hosted
- **Date** of the TTX
- Scheduled **beginning and end times** for the TTX
- Primary **point of contact** for the TTX. Please include name, facility, e-mail address and telephone number.

Instructional Webinars

To assist in facilitating the exercise, KDHE is hosting two live webinars to familiarize everyone with the Situation Manual and other Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP) documents created for the exercise. The webinars will include instruction on how to modify the scenario and materials

to meet local needs, as well as provide background information on how the scenario details were developed with the input of various subject matter experts, including those with laboratory, epidemiology and hospital backgrounds.

Participation in the webinar is not required to register for the TTX. However, there is a lot of technical detail in the exercise scenario, so it may be helpful to participate in the webinar to gain additional guidance and recommendations from subject matter experts.

One of the webinars will be recorded and made available on KS-TRAIN as a webcast for those who cannot attend one of the live sessions. Register for the instruction webinars in KS-TRAIN under course #1026143. Both live sessions and the recorded webcast will be posted under that course number, and are scheduled as follows:

- Session 1 - Wednesday, March 23, 9-11 A.M.
- Session 2 - Thursday, March 24, 9-11 A.M.

If you have any questions about the TTX or the instructional webinars, please contact Cait Purinton-Day, Exercise & Training Coordinator, at cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov or 785-296-1984.

Dickinson County Offers Drive-Thru Flu Clinics



Gina Anguiano of the Dickinson County Health Department assists a client with the drive-thru flu clinic process in September 2010. This was when the Dickinson County Health Department first offered such a clinic, which was conducted as a point of dispensing exercise.

Kansas Medical Reserve Corps Leadership & Training Summit

The Kansas Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) will host a statewide leadership and training summit for Kansas MRC volunteers. The summit will take place April 8-9, and focus on how volunteers assist in preparedness, response and recovery to support the State of Kansas.

Kansas MRC volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in informational sessions, build partnerships, continue to establish sustainable teams, and much more. The Kansas MRC program has applied for Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) credit.

Breakout session topics include the New Madrid Seismic Zone, psychological first aid, and sheltering operations. A discussion will be led by panelists on personal preparedness surrounding animals, the Kansas Vulnerable Needs Planning System, and the MRC volunteer experience.

The summit will be held at the Kansas Highway Patrol Training Academy in Salina. Reservations can be made at the Salina Ramada Inn, 1616 W. Crawford

St. in Salina by calling 785-823-1739. Rooms are held under “Kansas Medical Reserve Corps Training Summit.”

Registration is free and available through KS-TRAIN at <http://ks.train.org>, course #1025550. For more information, contact Emily Nickel, Kansas MRC State Coordinator, at 785-296-5201 or enickel@kdheks.gov.

Upcoming Trainings & Exercises

HSEEP Training

Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP) training is being offered around the state. Register on KS-TRAIN for course #1023667 for any of the following locations:

- March 29-31: Wichita
This class is full, but you can sign up to be on the waiting list if people withdraw from the course.
- April 26-28: Salina
- May 3-5: Erie
- May 24-25: Kansas City metro
This course was originally scheduled for Hays. Due to demand, the location has been moved to Kansas City. Another class will be scheduled for Hays later this year.

A second training will be scheduled for Wichita later this year. Dates for the second Wichita course and the Hays course have not been selected so please watch for announcements from KDHE and KDEM.

If you have any questions about the HSEEP trainings, please contact Cait Purinton-Day of BPHP at CPurinton-Day@kdheks.gov or Michael Paz-Torres of KDEM at michael.paz@us.army.mil.

ICS Training

KDHE and KDEM are sponsoring an ICS-300 and ICS-400 training this spring in Topeka.

- ICS-300 is scheduled for April 5 and 6. KS-TRAIN course #1005593
- ICS-400 is scheduled for May 4 and 5. KS-TRAIN course #1005594

If you have any questions about the ICS trainings, contact Michael McNulty at mmcnulty@kdheks.gov.

**Wilson County Fit Tests
N-95 Masks**



Todd Durham (left), Wilson Co. Health Department Administrator, Marsha Loftin, Bioterrorism Coordinator and Rick Brown, Wilson Co. Emergency Manager, prepare to fit test N-95 masks. The testing was done using Porta Count Pro equipment, an asset of the Lower 8 Region. Employees will be issued a card to identify the specific mask they should use during and incident, since not even “universal” masks will fit all facial types.

Ahmed Joins Preparedness Team at KDHE



*Farah S. Ahmed, Ph.D., MPH
Environmental Health Officer*

Farah S. Ahmed, Ph.D., MPH, has recently joined the preparedness team at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) as the new Environmental Health Officer with the Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics. Farah holds a master’s degree in international and family health and a Ph.D in epidemiology, both from The University of Texas

School of Public Health (UTSPH) in Houston. While working on her Ph.D., Farah was a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) trainee, and much of her research interests lie in occupational and environmental health.

She is the principal investigator of a study through UTSPH examining work-related asthma among dental and radiography professionals. Prior to joining KDHE, Farah worked for Shell Oil in the Epidemiology Department. Farah has published papers in the *Annals of Epidemiology*, the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* and the *British Medical Journal*.

Farah is currently working on several projects, many of which are in conjunction with other bureaus. In collaboration with the Bureau of Public Health Preparedness and the Bureau of Environmental Health, she is working on population monitoring and surveillance after a radiation incident. As the principal investigator of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, she has recently been working on preparing for the upcoming blue-green algae season.

Farah’s other long-term projects include establishing the frameworks for statewide surveillance of asthma and occupational health.

Mallonee is BPHP Director of Administration and Evaluation



Tabetha Mallonee, Director of Administration and Evaluation

Tabetha Mallonee is the Director of Administration and Evaluation for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Bureau of Public Health Preparedness (BPHP). She has been employed with the State of Kansas since November 2007. She graduated from Washburn University in 2007 with a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

Tabetha has been with BPHP since October 2010. Prior to serving at BPHP, she worked as an internal auditor for the Kansas Department of Transportation.

Tabetha enjoys spending time with her family, music, jigsaw puzzles and gardening.

Gordon Joins BPHP as Program Consultant



Kelsey Gordon, Program Consultant

Kelsey Gordon originally was hired as a summer intern for the Bureau of Public Health Preparedness and is now serving as a part-time Program Consultant. Her duties include tracking after-action reviews, researching for future projects and helping with the WebEOC system.

Kelsey grew up in Overland Park and graduated from Blue Valley West High School. She lives in Lawrence and attends the University of Kansas full-time, majoring in community health. In her spare time, she works as a resident assistant on the KU campus.

Agency Relationships Key to Preparedness Efforts in Republic County

The relationship among local health departments, hospitals and emergency managers is one that is critical to the success of preparedness and response efforts. In Republic County, officials understand the value of a good working relationship.

“We keep open lines of communication all the time,” stated Marcia Hansen, administrator of the Republic County Health Department. “If we hear of something that we think needs attention, we’re quick to pick up the phone or send an e-mail and rely on each other’s expertise. We feel like we’re a team.”

During the recent point of dispensing (POD) exercise that was lead by the health department, Republic County Hospital Preparedness Coordinator Stevie Swiercinsky served as an evaluator, while County Emergency Manager Raymond Raney assisted with planning the exercise and supplied maps, diagrams and aerial photos of POD sites. Raymond also served as Logistics Section Chief during the exercise.

“I try to support the local health department’s plan and response and coordinate my response with theirs. I have ... easier access to the local physicians ... so it is easy for me to coordinate a meeting with those who will be directly responding to healthcare needs,” said Stevie.

Raymond said that his role in exercises and planning helps him to better understand what resources the hospital and the health department might require during an emergency.

“It’s important to keep a good working relationship, to be more knowledgeable of what the hospital and local health department would need and how Emergency Management could fill the gap,” he stated.

The relationships among the agencies have also proven valuable in response to actual incidents. After flooding that occurred in the town of Scandia in recent years, Raymond asked the health department to provide tetanus boosters to responders. Marcia quickly established an on-site clinic.

During the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic response, the three agencies communicated early and often with one another. They worked together to prioritize vaccinations, develop media releases and conduct other

response activities. The hospital hosted educational meetings for local medical staff and community partners, including clinics, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Currently, the local health department, hospital and emergency management office in Republic County are collaborating on implementing an 800 MHz communications system. The agencies are also working together to update local response plans, including those for foreign animal disease. The hospital and health department participate in the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

As in many smaller communities, Marcia, Stevie and Raymond have been acquainted with each other over many years. Raymond’s wife Jane used to work in the hospital with Stevie, as did Marcia. Stevie also briefly worked at the Home Health Program that was overseen by Marcia. The health department was housed at the hospital for several years, until it outgrew the location.

Marcia, Stevie and Raymond appreciate the good working relationship that they and their agencies have with one another.

“Public health emergency preparedness is a tough job, and we need all the help we can get. There are state people to help, but we can’t expect them to be here in five minutes,” said Marcia. “When we’ve been required to purchase certain pieces of equipment, we’ve always gone to Raymond for advice on the types to purchase. And, if there is some important piece of information that Stevie hears at a meeting, she sends it on to me.”

“My belief is that we are in emergency preparedness together,” Stevie said. “No one is more important than the other; we are a team. We help one another respond as a community, not just an individual entity.”

Raymond also summed up his beliefs on the importance of effective relationships.

“Overall, whether it’s an incident or an exercise, there is a lot more coordination ... in the fact that when you see somebody, you know who they’re affiliated with, what they do and what they need,” he stated.

Bureau of Public Health Preparedness Staff

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