



# National Health Security Strategy and Implementation Plan Strategic Messaging Guide for Local Health Departments



September 2016

# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*



## Table of Contents

---

4	Introduction
5	Overview and Background
7	Strategic Objective 1: Build and Sustain Healthy, Resilient Communities
9	Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the National Capability to Produce and Effectively Use Both Medical Countermeasures and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions
12	Strategic Objective 3: Ensure Comprehensive Health Situational Awareness to Support Decision-Making Before Incidents and During Response-and-Recovery Operations
15	Strategic Objective 4: Enhance the Integration and Effectiveness of the Public Health, Healthcare and Emergency Management Systems
18	Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Global Health Security

# Introduction

---

## Strategic Messaging Guide

In 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services released the National Health Security Strategy (NHSS) and Implementation Plan, 2015–2018, outlining a vision for the nation’s health security. The strategy and plan aim to minimize the health consequences of emergency incidents and disasters—such as extreme weather, deadly epidemics, hazardous material catastrophes, and terrorist attacks—by supporting the local and national promotion of community health and resilience.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) developed this strategic messaging guide as a resource for local health officials to advance national health security in the communities they serve. This guide provides local health department (LHD) staff with readily accessible mechanisms to effectively communicate with media outlets and other stakeholders about national health security and its connection to ongoing public health activities.

This guide includes themes and messages that clearly illustrate the importance of health resiliency for communities across the nation. As a result, it will help LHDs craft impactful messages that speak to the concerns of audiences within their communities and convey the steps they are taking to make their communities more resilient.

## Why NACCHO Created This Messaging Guide

At its core, national health security is about the nation and its people being prepared for, protected from, and resilient in the face of incidents with negative health consequences.

National health security is also directly tied to the day-to-day operations of every LHD across the United States. The connection is simple: All LHD efforts aim to improve the health of the communities they serve, and healthier communities are more resilient in the face of disasters and recover in a shorter period of time.

Specific examples of LHD work geared towards improving both community health and national health security, include:

- Offering vaccination clinics.
- Running community-wide disease prevention campaigns.
- Tracking disease outbreaks.
- Connecting people with personal health services.
- Engaging in healthcare coalitions to plan and prepare for public health emergencies.
- Developing and training the health and emergency response workforce (i.e., staff and volunteers).

Due to LHDs’ integral role in advancing health security in their communities, it is critical for their staff is to be knowledgeable and prepared to effectively communicate about NHSS and their respective roles, particularly when addressing the media and the general public. By incorporating the content of this guide within your messaging strategy (e.g., communication plans, speeches, sound bites and print or digital collateral), you and your staff will be equipped to effectively raise awareness about national health security across diverse audiences. As with any subject, the more time you spend actively thinking about national health security, the more it will organically work its way into your world.

This guide is designed to help you talk about National Health Security and how its core concept of community resilience fits into the work you already do every day. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter will help you make the connection between national health security and your current programmatic activities.

# Overview and Background

## What's in this guide?

This guide is made up of five chapters, each focused on one of the NHSS Strategic Objectives:

1. Build and sustain healthy, resilient communities;
2. Enhance the national capability to produce and effectively use both medical countermeasures and non-pharmaceutical interventions;
3. Ensure comprehensive health situational awareness to support decision-making before incidents and during response-and-recovery operations;
4. Enhance the integration and effectiveness of the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems; and
5. Strengthen global health security.

Each chapter begins with a messaging goal that conveys what you can achieve by talking to the media and community members about that particular objective. Several lead messages follow, which are meant to introduce the topic to your audience. Each lead message has supporting messages you can use to expand on the topic being addressed.

Each chapter also includes examples of how LHDs are currently contributing to national health security. Finally, each chapter closes with discussion questions meant to encourage you to consider how your agency is meeting each of the strategic objectives.

## Why is it important for NACCHO and its members to provide consistent messaging about local health departments' roles in promoting national health security?

When the media covers the risks or the aftermath of large emergencies, their first consideration may not be to highlight the ongoing role that LHDs play in national health security. They also may not understand how a flu vaccination campaign or a mobile health clinic cannot only improve individuals' health but also make the community as a whole more secure.

Officials and spokespeople from local health departments can make sure to include at least one key message about national health security whenever they speak publicly about their departments' day-to-day work and special initiatives. Our issues compete with many others for the attention of audiences. To be successful in communicating with media, policymakers, and the public, we need to quickly engage audiences with clear messages about the value of local health departments. The role of local health departments in building community resilience is one of those messages.

## Who are the target audiences?

This messaging guide is designed to support local health departments in effectively communicating on national health security with policymakers, media outlets, and the general public.

The stories at the end of each chapter illustrate how a diverse set of local health departments are actively contributing to national health security and underscore the importance of keeping LHDs fully

staffed and funded. Use examples from your department to highlight your agency's contributions to national health security.

## How can local health officials use this guide?

The guide aims to prepare health officials to make public appearances, craft official statements, or respond to media requests. The following steps will be helpful in navigating this guide:

1. Identify which of the five strategic objectives is most relevant to the statement you are making or media inquiry requested.
2. Select a lead message to introduce the topic, ensuring it will resonate with the target audience.
3. Select a supporting message to further explain your statement.
4. Consider using an example highlighting your work relevant to the topic at hand. Use the stories included at the end of the respective chapter as a guide. Stories and examples help people understand your message by demonstrating its real-life impact.
5. Before using the messages you have selected, ensure there is a clear connection between the lead and supporting messages and that the overall statement is easy to understand by a lay (external to public health) audience. This is best done by practicing the delivery of the message.
6. Be prepared to answer follow-up questions about any of the content included in the statement(s) you have made or the examples you have introduced.

## What else do local health officials using this guide need to know?

While this guide discusses the National Health Security Strategy's five strategic objectives, it does not give a full overview of them. For more information on these objectives, visit the Department of Health and Human Services' Public Health Emergency website.

# 1

## Strategic Objective 1: Build and Sustain Healthy, Resilient Communities

---

### Messaging Goal

To educate the public and policymakers about the critical role local health departments play in building community resilience, or the sustained ability to handle, withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity.

### Lead Messages

1. Local health departments promote good health as the foundation of community resilience.

OR

2. Local health departments promote social connectedness to enhance both individual and community health resilience.

OR

3. Local health departments work with their communities to plan for emergencies so that the community as a whole can withstand the impact of an incident and recover swiftly.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 1

- A healthy community is one best able to respond to emergencies. By improving the health of individuals and raising the baseline of health during non-emergencies, local health departments reduce the amount of assistance individuals will need during emergencies and the level of harm that likely would be inflicted.
- Every action taken by a local health department contributes to the health security of its community.
- Funding for local health departments is funding for health security. Communities that invest in comprehensive health education and promotion activities enable their local health departments to promote a state of readiness that fosters greater community health and resilience.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 2

- Local health departments promote activities that foster greater social connectedness—both the number and quality of relationships—and enhance individual and community resilience. A tighter-knit community is more likely to act as one, and this encourages an atmosphere in which everyone cares about the common good and the health and wellness of each community member.
- Local health departments work with their communities to foster a culture in which people are mindful of their health and resilience. Those informed individuals, as a matter of habit, are more likely to take actions that improve their health and resilience as well as that of their families, neighborhoods, and the community at large.

## Supporting Messages for Lead Message 3

- Local health departments enhance the coordination of health and human services before, during, and after emergencies by building and maintaining partnerships. One aspect of this coordination is planning and exercising with community partners and stakeholders that have a role in a real emergency response.
- Local health departments offer information and training that empower individuals to assist their communities after an incident.

## Stories/Examples of Building and Sustaining Healthy, Resilient Communities

- When disaster strikes in communities, thousands of people are needed to respond. Volunteers are crucial to implementing an effective emergency response plan. Whether responding to a disaster, helping develop a community response plan or ensuring residents are healthy and resilient, engaging volunteers can help local health departments maintain capacity for each of these important preparedness activities. Nearly 1,000 volunteer emergency response teams across the country play this role, and among the most active is the Macomb County Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) in Michigan. Macomb's MRC strengthens the community by recruiting and training non-medical and medical volunteers, who can be ready and able to provide organized assistance to the health department and surrounding communities in the event of a countywide public health emergency, large-scale disaster, terrorist event, or disease outbreak. MRC volunteers also support community events throughout the year such as flu vaccine clinics, health department emergency exercises, and first aid booths.
- He's been called "Fred's driver." He's been called "that guy." Michael McNulty, emergency operations director for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, says that's OK because Fred the Preparedness Dog is the one spreading the message of safety and resilience. After Fred, McNulty's German Shepherd, took shelter in the bathtub on a stormy day, his owner gave him a backpack with emergency supplies and promoted a picture on social media. Fred became so popular that he and McNulty now spend much of their time visiting schools, fairs, and other community events to teach kids about preparedness and encourage them to take the message home. "They'll go to their parents and say, 'there was a dog at school today, and he had all this stuff. Why don't we have stuff?'" McNulty says. Fred the Preparedness Dog is just one example of how a local health departments is making emergency preparedness accessible to all and fostering a culture in which people of all ages are mindful of their health and resilience.

## Questions to Ask Yourself as You Prepare Your Messages

- What is my department doing that creates a foundation of good health and improves resilience?
- What is my department doing that promotes social connectedness?
- How are members of my community working together to plan for emergencies?
- How is my department planning and exercising with governmental agencies, community partners, and other stakeholders that have a role in a real emergency response?
- What new investments does my department need to foster a culture in which people are mindful of their health and resilience?

# 2

## Strategic Objective 2: Enhance the National Capability to Produce and Effectively Use Both Medical Countermeasures and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

---

### Messaging Goal

To educate the public and policymakers about the important work local health departments are doing to create and coordinate a comprehensive suite of countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks, and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

### Lead Messages

1. The innovation and application of countermeasures to address public health needs that arise during emergencies are a fundamental part of what local health officials do for their communities.  
  
OR
2. Local health departments are working to ensure access to and speedy dispensing of medical countermeasures, such as medications and other pharmaceutical remedies that lessen and prevent the spread of disease during an outbreak. These medical countermeasures include vaccines, antimicrobials, and antitoxins, as well as non-pharmaceutical medical devices and approaches, such as ventilators, diagnostic equipment, and personal protective equipment.  
  
OR
3. Local health departments coordinate with state health departments, schools, workplaces, and others in the community to put in place non-pharmaceutical interventions that aim to prevent the spread of disease. Non-pharmaceutical strategies include actions taken by individuals, such as hand hygiene and covering one's mouth when coughing, and by communities, such as closing schools and asking people to work from home.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 1

- Medical Countermeasures are one of the many ways that a community can respond to a public health emergency in which a large number of people require medication over a short period of time.
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions aren't only for emergencies. For example, public health initiatives such as vaccination and hand hygiene contribute to routine public health needs by reducing the incidence of infection.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 2

- Identifying and initiating strategies to dispense drugs or vaccines to treat or prevent disease during an outbreak can ensure that a disease is contained as quickly as possible and reduce the number of people who fall ill, pass the disease to others or die.

- Local health departments are working to ensure that medical countermeasures are developed and tested appropriately to address the needs and priorities of all segments of the population, including first-response personnel and people with access and functional needs.

### Supporting Message for Lead Message 3

- Ensuring that non-pharmaceutical interventions are developed and tested will encourage their effective use. Local health departments rely on funding and community support to enable them to identify effective interventions for particular situations, to plan and rehearse their use and to determine how well they are working.

### Stories/Examples of Enhancing the National Capability to Produce and Effectively Use Both Medical Countermeasures and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

- If an infectious disease outbreak threatens Waukesha County, Wisconsin, the county's Public Health Division is prepared to respond by setting up mass clinics or a Point of Dispensing to distribute vaccines or medications. The county will communicate with residents in a variety of ways including television, radio, newspapers, special hotlines, 211, Facebook, and the Public Health Division website. Messaging released via these channels ensures community members are aware and take advantage of the free medication available to all, without proof of identification and/or immigration status. Announcements will also include information about the specific disease and its symptoms, who is at risk, where to go for preventative medication or vaccine, and where residents should seek medical attention if they become ill. To facilitate rapid medication dispensing, the health department also has a "head of household" dispensing policy. When activated this policy allows one person to pick up medication for everyone else residing in their household and family members residing outside the household.
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions may sound like a complicated term, but in the context of public health preparedness, it really boils down to one word: prevention. Clay Horton, Environmental Health Director at the Green River District Health Department (GRDHD) pinpoints the importance of preventative measures which make up non-pharmaceutical interventions in the context of local health: "They go hand in hand with treating chronic diseases, improving our resilience, and laying the foundation on which we build our community's health." When asked to elaborate, Horton explains that a healthy community is a more resilient community. "In our community, populations with high levels of chronic illness are the most vulnerable in the face of disasters." In fact, this link guides GRDHD preparedness efforts to focus on two main goals: (1) preparing to meet the needs of their most vulnerable residents; and (2) working to address the root causes of those vulnerabilities before disaster strikes. For example, GRDHD used Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to conduct a diabetes education campaign, targeting pre-diabetic or diabetic community members. Each individual or family was provided with information about the disease and/or ways to prevent it. This initiative not only increased community awareness about a serious chronic condition, but reached those who will likely benefit the most as a result. Horton added: "These interventions may ultimately enable our department to spread our resources more broadly throughout our community during an emergency, providing assistance to all those who need it."

## Questions to Ask Yourself as You Prepare Your Messages

- What is your department doing to create and coordinate a comprehensive suite of countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks and outbreaks of infectious diseases?
- How is your department working to ensure your entire community has quick access to medical countermeasures during an emergency?
- What processes has your department set up to help community partners disseminate information about non-pharmaceutical countermeasures and make decisions about steps such as quarantine or closures during an emergency?
- Who is your department partnering with to coordinate and test large-scale countermeasures that would be needed during an emergency?

# 3

## Strategic Objective 3: Ensure Comprehensive Health Situational Awareness to Support Decision-Making before Incidents and during Response-and-Recovery Operations

---

### Messaging Goal

To educate the public and policymakers about the important role local health departments play in using biosurveillance to contribute to health situational awareness and inform communitywide decisions before incidents and during response-and-recovery operations.

### Lead Messages

1. There is no such thing as being “too prepared” for a health emergency. Local health departments constantly monitor, identify and assess threats to community health. In doing so, they provide a solid foundation for decisions and actions that efficiently use limited resources to prevent and mitigate emerging threats to health security in each community and across the nation.

OR

2. Monitoring and identifying threats is a collaborative process. Local health departments work with many partners to coordinate the collection and analysis of data regarding health threats, population health, health system and human services resources, health-related response assets, and other considerations that inform decision-making.

OR

3. Health departments use a strategy known as biosurveillance—the process of gathering, interpreting, and communicating essential information related to threats or disease activity—in order to inform overall situational awareness of the health consequences of an emergency. Biosurveillance also contributes to early disease detection and warning, supporting the overall public health response.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 1

- For communities to make decisions that mitigate the impact of health emergencies, they need up-to-date, integrated information about human health, environmentally spread illnesses, and animal diseases.
- Early detection of a problem makes it more likely that the situation will be handled safely and damage will be minimized.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 2

- Local health departments work year round to share information about disease and illness with a host of partners, including healthcare providers and facilities, health systems, agricultural agencies, law enforcement, schools, community organizations, businesses, and other health

departments (e.g., state, local, tribal, and territorial). This ongoing communication ensures information will be shared with all relevant stakeholders during an emergency.

- Human and animal disease surveillance systems and outbreak information must be shared across states, counties, and other sectors, especially for animal-borne, environmental, and food- and water-borne illnesses.
- Improved information sharing gives communities the ability to identify threats early and devise strategies to prevent diseases, respond to them, and lessen their impact.

## Supporting Messages for Lead Message 3

To accurately assess health threats and effectively respond to them, local health departments and their community partners need the resources to collect information before, during, and after an emergency.

- A community's data-collection system needs to be flexible and adaptable, giving stakeholders the ability to refine data sources throughout the life cycle of an incident and to include contextual information.
- To respond effectively and efficiently, local health departments must work collaboratively with partners at local, state, and federal levels, and across jurisdictional lines.

## Story/Example of Ensuring Comprehensive Health Situational Awareness to Support Decision-Making Before Incidents and During Response-and-Recovery Operations

- When an emergency strikes Fort Bend County, Texas, the community is ready thanks to the Fort Bend County Department of Health and Human Services, its many partners, and the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response program (CASPER)—a pre- and post-disaster survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help public health departments quickly assess community needs. CASPER enables Fort Bend County's public health practitioners and emergency management officials to prepare for emergencies and to prioritize their response and the distribution of resources during a disaster.

Using the survey, "You can scale up and scale down quickly," says Kaila Thompson, public health information specialist for the county's Department of Health and Human Services. When reaching out to residents for the survey, the health department is able to increase residents' knowledge about the services it provides during an emergency, Thompson says.

- Information is key. Just ask Bill Stephens of Tarrant County Public Health Department in Fort Worth, Texas. Actually, Bill will tell you that accurate information is key. Well, accurate information that is collected in a timely manner, and, of course, is interpreted correctly. "You can look at information and reach a decision, only to find that an additional bit of information would change your thought process altogether," Stephens says. When asked why bother at all, Stephens points to the impact that biosurveillance—the process of gathering, interpreting, and communicating essential information that might relate to disease activity—can have during an emergency. Take H1N1, for example. Tarrant County Public Health used biosurveillance to track the progress of the disease in real time, and then to identify illness "hot spots"—areas with higher concentrations of residents most vulnerable to the flu. "By mapping the disease progression against our known demographic information, we were able to target our education and outreach in the areas that needed it the most," he explains. According to Stephens, the power of biosurveillance comes from multi-stakeholder collaboration across jurisdictional lines. "When everyone works together and shares information, you are able to get the most accurate picture and respond accordingly."

## Questions to Ask Yourself as You Prepare Your Messages

- What does your department do to constantly monitor, identify, and assess threats to community health and provide a solid foundation for decision-making?
- What partners does your department work with to monitor and assess threats? How is your department's work with those partners coordinated?
- What is your community doing to integrate systems that collect information on different kinds of threats to community health, such as human and animal illnesses and environmental, food-borne, and water-borne diseases?

# 4

## Strategic Objective 4: Enhance the Integration and Effectiveness of the Public Health, Healthcare and Emergency Management Systems

---

### Messaging Goal

To educate the public and policymakers about the overlapping roles of the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems and the importance of ensuring that the three systems are integrated and can quickly respond to crises using established processes, practices, and technologies.

### Lead Messages

1. Communities are best prepared to respond to emergencies when all systems—public health, healthcare, emergency management, and others—work together.  
  
OR
2. Integrating the expertise and specialized equipment found in the public health, healthcare, emergency management systems, and other community partners will enhance a community's resilience without duplicating services or strategies.  
  
OR
3. The most effective emergency response strategies are flexible ones. Integrated public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems are able to adapt to new circumstances, such as the size of events or the particular needs of a vulnerable population.  
  
OR
4. Trained and well-prepared nonmedical volunteers and healthcare workers play an integral role in a community's preparation for and response to emergencies.

### Supporting Message for Lead Message 1

- Integrating efforts of diverse groups that serve the health security of the community allows each group to understand what the others provide, to complement their services, and to coordinate not just when providing routine assistance but also when their efforts are needed most.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 2

- Health resilience is fiscally prudent, especially in communities with tight budgets. Integrating services ensures a quick response to community needs while also saving valuable funds by not duplicating services.
- The ability of a community to respond to a public health emergency depends on strong partnerships during preparedness planning—before a disaster strikes.
- Hospitals can contribute to community health resilience by addressing issues in their community's health needs assessment.

## Supporting Message for Lead Message 3

- Ensuring that infrastructure is in place to support information sharing and exchange—both when delivering routine services and during large-scale emergencies—will go a long way toward improving overall system integration and flexibility.

## Supporting Message for Lead Message 4

- By recruiting and training Medical Reserve Corps and emergency response volunteers, local health departments are able to quickly and effectively respond to disasters and emergencies.
- By utilizing the strengths of Medical Reserve Corps and emergency response volunteers between emergencies, local health departments can build a reliable cadre of responders for when disaster strikes.

## Stories/Examples of Enhancing the Integration and Effectiveness of the Public Health, Healthcare and Emergency Management Systems

- The text from a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer arrived on a day that Therese Quinn will never forget: March 22, 2014. Quinn, the Medical Reserve Corps coordinator for the Snohomish Health District in Everett, Washington, was told that an emergency scanner delivered tragic news. A landslide had covered more than a square mile in mud, destroying a rural neighborhood and killing 43 people. Fourteen people were rescued immediately, but local health responders needed the Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to work the emergency call center, helping to feed information to all the organizations responding to the disaster. Quinn became the point of contact for the three hospitals that received victims, relaying information that would help hospital staff make identifications and reconnect families. Coordination between Snohomish Health District and their MRC ensure a timely and effective response to this disaster.
- One of the quickest and easiest ways a government agency can expand its capabilities is to partner with another agency that already houses that expertise. That's what the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene did, according to Division Chief Nicole Brown, when it combined resources with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to improve the state's health security. "It was something our office had already been looking at and working on," Brown says. "We realized this would be a great bridge to bring together health security and public health preparedness." One of the biggest appeals of working with the emergency management agency for the health department was its private sector integration program, which staff believed would be a great asset. "We're trying to be more efficient in how we function and operate," Brown says. "We're utilizing the resources that already exist in the health department and crosscutting with the missions of other health agencies."
- With over a decade of experience, Kentucky's Healthcare Area 4 Response Team (HEART) is more than equipped to plan and ensure a successful response to public health emergencies. Located in south central Kentucky, this regional healthcare coalition was formed in 2002 and is comprised of local health departments, hospitals, ground emergency medical services, air emergency medical services, psychiatric and rehabilitation hospitals, 10 emergency management agencies, local coroners, mental health agencies, long term care, Western Kentucky University, American Red Cross and other nongovernmental agencies. Since 2004, HEART has been involved in tabletop and functional regional exercises in preparation for avian influenza, earthquakes, hospital surge, natural death surge, material distribution, and drought. Using detailed after action reports, HEART has built upon their strengths and followed up on recommendations as a regional coalition and

as individual member organizations. These regional exercises have ensured effective information sharing and situational awareness during real public health emergencies. For example, during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, HEART seamlessly relayed information, assigned relevant roles, and responsibilities and exercises across multiple agencies due to their preexisting partnerships. According to Amanda Bogard, the chair of HEART, “Once the coalition was able to see itself and function as a unit, we were able to successfully share information and ensure a coordinated response to emergencies.”

## Questions to Ask Yourself as You Prepare Your Messages

- How do the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems in your community work together to improve their effectiveness?
- Is your department an active member of your local healthcare coalition?
- How is your community avoiding the duplication of services by coordinating the public health, healthcare, and emergency management systems?
- What is your department doing to recruit, train and coordinate the involvement of Medical Reserve Corps and emergency response volunteers when they are needed?

# 5

## Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen Global Health Security

---

### Messaging Goal

To educate the public and policymakers about the role local health departments play in strengthening global health security.

### Lead Messages

1. Local health departments often feel the impacts of global health issues. They play a vital role in lessening the effects of, preparing for, responding to, and enabling their communities to recover from disease outbreaks and other incidents that may begin abroad, but could adversely affect the health of people in their communities.

OR

2. Greater movement of people, animals, and goods—both in total numbers and in frequency—across international borders increases America’s risk of exposure to health threats originating outside the United States. In such an interconnected world, local health departments are constantly monitoring health threats so they can address them as early as possible and prevent the spread of disease.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 1

- Once an infectious disease has been identified as a global threat, interventions at the local level are imperative to contain its spread. Restriction of movement and quarantine and isolation protocols are just a few ways disease outbreaks can be controlled locally.
- While many outbreaks are viewed as large-scale events, communities and community members need to be part of the collective response. Local health departments work to ensure that community leaders and members of the public know their roles and take action.
- Local health departments work with their healthcare and emergency medical services partners to ensure their staff and volunteers are trained and prepared to respond to an outbreak.

### Supporting Messages for Lead Message 2

- Early detection of outbreaks occurs at the local level. Reliable disease identification by local health departments is crucial to determining the spread and trajectory of an outbreak.
- When local health departments put processes and policies in place to track and contain diseases, they are not only protecting local health but also contributing to global health security by helping to keep diseases at bay.
- Local health departments work with federal, state, and regional partners and community stakeholders to enhance detection and reporting of public health threats affecting refugee and migrant populations.
- Local health departments work with federal, state, and regional partners to enhance early detection and alert systems at ports of entry, including border crossings and international airports.

## Story/Example of Strengthening Global Health Security

- Mac McClendon, the director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness & Response at Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services in Texas, is constantly on the lookout for global health threats. He scans daily reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other sources to see what's going on globally. When the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Africa appeared on the radar, McClendon's department began planning for the possibility that the disease might arrive in Harris County or elsewhere in the state or nation. The department assembled a readiness team that brought together staff from various offices, including communication, epidemiology, legal, public information, executive leadership, and preparedness. When an Ebola case emerged in Dallas, McClendon kept tabs on how the situation was developing there and how public health authorities were responding. He says being prepared for Ebola involved daily discussions and check-ins, training of staff on using personal protective equipment, and coordination with hospitals and emergency medical services units. The department also worked with its partners to develop a regional plan to transport anyone with Ebola-like symptoms to healthcare facilities. The department's legal team contributed knowledge of laws related to serving medical orders and declaring quarantines. The county's law enforcement officers were trained on how to safely serve Ebola patients with public health orders requiring them to go to a designated treatment facility. McClendon says his department has taken what it learned from Ebola and applied that knowledge to the latest outbreak, Zika. "We're following the same model internally as we did with Ebola," he says.
- Positioned near the nation's capital and home to Dulles International Airport, the Loudoun County Health Department (LCHD) is very familiar with the associated risks of a global epidemic emergency. In response to the growing health threat posed by the Zika Virus, LCHD is engaging its trained and experienced Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to keep their community safe and resilient. Loudoun County's MRC community ambassador project equips residents, especially those who are most vulnerable, with resources on how to protect themselves from the Zika virus. MRC volunteers go door-to-door, distributing mosquito repellent and educational materials (in English and Spanish). Through these outreach activities, volunteers are able to identify and mitigate possible mosquito breeding grounds in public spaces. The information they collect is also used to further the county's response capacity to hazards like Zika. MRC Coordinator Francis Rath further explains that the information collected by the MRC is also being used to "create an all-hazards approach for the Loudoun Health Department to improve our ability to reach all Loudoun County residents and mitigate risk, not only now but for anything that may also happen in the future." LCHD officials are also working with Dulles Airport staff and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Global Migration and Quarantine facility to disseminate Zika prevention brochures to the airport's incoming and outgoing travelers.

### Questions to Ask Yourself as You Prepare Your Messages

- What is your department doing to lessen the effects of, prepare for, respond to, and help your community recover from disease outbreaks and other incidents that could adversely affect the health of people around the world?
- How is your department working with federal, state, and regional partners and community stakeholders to enhance detection and reporting of public health threats affecting refugee and migrant populations?
- How is your department working with federal, state, and regional partners to enhance early detection and alert systems that identify global public health threats?
- What are the factors that might impact whether a global outbreak reaches your community (e.g., border proximity, migrant populations from affected countries, international airports, etc.)?

## Acknowledgments

---

This project was supported by Contract Number HITEP130012 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR). The National Association of County and City Health Officials is grateful for this support. The contents do not necessarily represent the official views of the sponsor.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

**Stephen Maheux, MPH**

Senior Program Analyst  
202-507-4267  
smaheux@naccho.org

**Sarah Getachew**

Program Analyst  
202-508-4253  
sgetachew@naccho.org

**NACCHO**

National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

[www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org)



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

1100 17th St, NW, 7th Floor Washington, DC 20036

P 202-783-5550 F 202-783-1583

© 2016. National Association of County and City Health Officials.