

# PROWERS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

## RISK COMMUNICATION PLAN

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The goal of any terrorist attack is to induce widespread fear and panic. Effective education and communication, consisting of clear and concise information, will help assure the public that the situation is being addressed competently and quickly. Prowers County Public Health's (PCPH) communication goal is to disseminate accurate, consistent, timely, and easy-to-understand information.

Specific objectives are to:

- ❖ Instill and maintain public confidence in PCPH and local government's ability to respond to, and manage, a public health threat by providing accurate, rapid, and complete information to address their questions.
- ❖ Rapidly provide the public, health care providers, policy-makers, and the media access to accurate, consistent, and comprehensive information about public health threats and how the situations are managed.
  - Minimize as much as possible, public panic and fears.
  - Address, as quickly as possible, rumors, inaccuracies, and misperceptions.

### Department Spokespersons (G1 M1 I2v)

The Director and the Deputy Director are the spokespersons for PCPH and have received risk communication training through CDPHE. Documentation of completed communication courses can be found in COTRAIN and also personnel files. They are responsible for providing information to the citizens of Prowers County about how to protect themselves, what actions are being taken to control the epidemic, and when the epidemic is over. They may direct some of these activities to appropriate PCPH staff and will work closely with Prowers County's Public Information Officer on all official news releases. If the need for an additional spokesperson (mayor, governor, state public health representative, law enforcement representative, etc.) is deemed necessary, the Director will coordinate with that person.

### Health Alert Network (HAN)

In 1999, with congressional support and funding, CDC launched the national Health Alert Network (HAN) to improve information access and training for local health departments. HAN is a nationwide, integrated information and communications system, which serves as a platform for the distribution of health alerts, dissemination of prevention guidelines, distance learning, and national disease surveillance and electronic disease reporting. The HAN links local health departments to one another and to other organizations critical for preparedness and response: community first-responders, hospitals and private laboratories, state health departments, and other federal agencies. The HAN has greatly enhanced the rapidity by which local health agencies can receive and, in turn, report urgent health information to the local medical community, media, and general public.

As a responsibility of the HAN system, Emergency Preparedness Staff is required to maintain an up-to-date fax list that includes:

- ❖ Prowers County officials
- ❖ Municipal officials
- ❖ Health care facilities and providers (including pharmacies)
- ❖ Federal/state emergency personnel
- ❖ Colorado Emergency Management personnel
- ❖ Colorado local health departments and nursing services
- ❖ Local media

At least four (4) times per year, Emergency Preparedness staff will conduct a test of its broadcast fax to maintain its current state of readiness and reliability.

## **Public Information**

PCPH will use the CDC's "Threatened Bioterrorism Incident Information Sheet for Potentially Exposed Persons" as a model for the development of materials, which can be shared with community members. Fact sheets will contain information explaining signs, symptoms, and treatment protocols for biological agents considered most likely to be used in an attack (i.e., anthrax, smallpox, clostridium botulinum, pneumonic plague, etc.).

## **Internal PCPH Communication Strategies during Crisis**

- ❖ Direct face-to-face communication is preferred for all staff interactions whenever possible.
- ❖ Directives from PCPH officials will be written and sent via e-mail and hard copy to all staff as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Conference calls will be held frequently to include all key staff and colleagues.
- ❖ Key staff will meet at least twice daily for communication briefings and to report findings.
- ❖ All official communication will be maintained in a central location in the PCPH Operations Center, which will be fully equipped with phones, computers, and radios. All communications will be logged by date and time specific numbers and maintained in an incident communication log.
- ❖ Cell phones will be utilized when electrical power is unavailable. PCPH staff cell phone numbers are included in the agency call down lists.
- ❖ All key disaster staff members are expected to carry a cell phone
- ❖ Specified cell phones be available to staff assigned to disaster activities outside the department for "real time" communication to PCPH's Operations Center.
- ❖ PCPH maintains two radios, one is installed in a PCPH vehicle and the second is portable and will be located in the PCPH Operations Center. It provides direct communication between the Prowers County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the field.
- ❖ If all above communications channels are impeded, PCPH staff may enlist the assistance of the EOC.

## **Local Communications and Response Networks**

PCPH has determined in advance who may need to be communicated to during an emergency. Contact lists are reviewed and updated four (4) times per year and include:

- media organizations
- local health agencies
- laboratories
- healthcare organizations and providers
- mental health services
- schools, including community colleges
- sources of antidotes, vaccines, and other therapeutic agents
- first responders (including local emergency medical response agencies) and public safety officials
- state and local emergency management agencies
- state-based contacts to federal agencies (e.g., FBI Weapons of Mass Destruction program)
- veterinarian practices

## **Material Development and Dissemination**

Media messages (e.g., fact sheets and news releases) relating to general infectious disease prevention and specific critical agents have been prepared and are available for distribution to media outlets and community groups. Fact sheets and news releases will be maintained by the PCPH staff.

## **Public Education**

General public education activities include media campaigns on infectious disease and emergency preparedness topics.

Communication Channels to be considered include:

- Radio (Spanish & English)
- Television (Spanish & English)
- Telephone Hotlines (Spanish & English)
- Web Site Prowers County with Links to others
- Personal Distribution (door-to-door etc.)
- E-Mail/List-Serve
- Sirens

Message/Communication Distribution Points:

- Schools/College
- Stores (incl. supermarkets and liquor stores)
- Restaurants
- Churches
- Community Centers/Senior Center Organizations
- Libraries
- Businesses
- Homeless Shelter
- Lodging Facilities (Hotel/Motel/B&B)
- Mental Health Centers

## **Response Activities**

### ***I. Evaluate Need for Public Communication***

The Director along with key staff of the PCPH, Prowers County Commissioners and the County Public Information Officer will evaluate the need to communicate risk information or any other information about the event to the public.

#### **1. Evaluation Criteria**

- a. Is the event and/or risk to the public contained in one small locale or spread across multiple jurisdictions?
- b. Is the biological agent highly infectious or relatively difficult to transmit?
- c. Is the biological agent extremely deadly, relatively benign, or dangerous only for specific, vulnerable subgroups?
- d. Is there any indication of criminal/terrorist activity?
- e. What is the extent of media coverage, if any? Are media reports accurate?
- f. Have there been inquiries from the public about the event?

### **II. Initial Public Communication Activities**

Depending on the perceived severity of the threat and the level of independent media activity, the Director and other key staff along with Prowers County Commissioners and the County Public

Information Officer will determine the need for and scope of public communications.

Communication activities at this point may include any, all, or none of the following:

1. Evaluate the severity of the threat and level of independent media activity.
2. Contact local Office of Emergency Management if additional support needs are likely (sirens, law enforcement personnel)
3. Contact press or issue press release.
4. Designate public health media spokesperson (Director or Deputy Director or other as determined by Director).
5. Hold press briefing.
6. Activate statewide communications systems (e.g., HAN).
7. Monitor media reports.
  - a. broadcast
  - b. print
  - c. Internet
8. Initiate rumor control activities.
9. Set up phone lines for public inquiries.
10. Set up phone lines for press inquiries. Contact CDPHE Office of Communications

### **III. Reassessment of Resource Needs**

As the investigation progresses (and the perceived severity or scope of the emergency changes), program staff will enlist the support of additional key players.

1. Communicate with relevant entities.
  - a. CDPHE Disease Control and Environmental Epidemiology Division
  - b. FBI
  - c. Local Office of Emergency Management

### **IV. Additional Public Communication Activities**

As necessary, the Director and the County Public Information Officer will initiate any, all, or none of the following:

1. Contact media or issue press release.
  - a. Provide new or additional information about the event.
  - b. Dispel false rumors.
  - c. Correct any misinformation reported by the media (damage control).
  - d. Communicate new or additional risk information to the public.
  - e. Issue an "all clear" news release if the incident is contained.
2. Designate public health media spokesperson (Director, Deputy Director or other staff that is designated by the Director).
3. Hold press briefing.
4. Activate statewide communications systems (e.g., HAN).
5. Monitor media reports.
  - a. broadcast
  - b. print
  - c. Internet
6. Initiate rumor control activities.
7. Set up phone lines for public inquiries.
8. Set up phone lines for press inquiries.
9. Contact CDPHE Office of Communications

### **V. Joint Information Center (G1 M1 I2i)**

A JIC may be set up at any point after the initiating event, once it becomes apparent that multiple agencies will be engaged in response activities and ongoing public communication will be necessary. The JIC may be established by PCPH or by another key player.

1. Once a JIC is established, PCPH will:

- a. Identify a lead public health spokesperson to participate in the JIC and to serve as a liaison with local public health. (Director or Deputy Director or other designated spokesperson.)
- b. Assure that the JIC is staffed during all operational hours (potentially 24-hours/day).

#### ***VI. After-action Review***

An after-action review will be conducted after each incident. Any problem areas identified should be addressed by key management staff of public health.

#### ***VII. Considerations for Special Populations (G1 M1 I2i)***

All special populations within Prowers County will be contacted using the methods as described above unless otherwise noted below.

Blind and developmentally disabled; Use of sirens, radio, and emergency and law enforcement personnel.

Deaf; Use of cable channel with written notice or information.

Elderly; Notification by home health care personnel, SEP agency

Homeless; notification by homeless shelter staff and motel management; liquor store, food bank, library and bus station notices.

Mentally ill; notification by mental health center staff, treatment site.

Migrant farm workers; notification of area employers and farmers by emergency personnel

Physically disabled; notification by emergency personnel

Tourists; notification by lodging staff

# Prowers County Risk Communication

## Lists and Contact Information

Because Prowers County is a rural county with relatively small population all county contact information is on hand and well known within the agency for all contacts. The Prowers County Communication Center has the county call down list for all emergencies and will activate and notify. All lists are updated four times per year.

### PCPH staff responsible for crisis communication planning and response:

Name/Title	Contact Numbers
<b>Jacqueline Brown RN,MSN Director, PCPH</b>	Office: (719) 336-8721 Fax: (719) 336-9763 Home/Mobile: (719) 688-8721

Name/Title	Contact Numbers
<b>Patricia Bates RN, BSN Deputy Director, PCPH</b>	Office: (719) 336-8721 Fax: (719) 336-9763 Home/Mobile: (719) 688-4622

Name/Title	Contact Numbers
<b>Jo Lynn Idler, Business Operations Manager PCPH</b>	Office: (719) 336-8721 Fax: (719) 336-9763 Home/Mobile: (719) 940-3159

<b><i>Public Information</i></b>	
<b>Media</b>	Name: Jo Lynn Idler Position: PR Assistant, PCPH
<b>Public inquiries by phone</b>	Name: Michelle Hiigel Position: Case manager, PCPH
	Alternate name: Mary Jane Torres Position: Reception & Interpreter, PCPH
<b>Public information on the Internet</b>	Name: Kevin Rink Position: IT Director Prowers County
	Alternate name: Ryan Sneller Position: IT Prowers County

<b><i>Partners</i></b>	
<b>Local government officials</b>	Name: Jo Dorenkamp Position: Prowers County Administrator
	Alternate name: Jo Ann Trumble Position: Prowers County Deputy Administrator
<b>Emergency operations officials</b>	Name: Staffon Warn Position: Prowers County EOM
<b>State public information officer</b>	Name: Cindy Parmenter Position: Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Env, Director of Communications
<i>American Red Cross</i> (Southeast Colorado Branch)	Name: Jeanette Loven Position: Contact in Pueblo, CO
<i>Hospitals/EDs</i> Prowers Medical Center 336-4343	Name: Leslie Day, RN Position: ER Manager, PMC Hospital
	Alternate name: Linda Neuhold, RN Position: Infection Control, PMC Hospital
<b>Physicians/clinicians</b>	Name: Barry Portner, MD Position: Chief of Staff, PMC Hospital
<b>Police/sheriff department(s)</b>	Name: Jim Faull Position: Prowers County Sheriff
	Alternate name: Brian Phillips Position: Lamar Chief of Police
<b>Fire department/district(s)</b>	Name: Marshall Cook Position: Fire Chief Lamar
	Alternate name: Pat Leonard Position: EMS Manager Lamar Fire Department
<b><i>Stakeholders</i></b>	
<b>Elected officials (county)</b>	Name: Joe Marble Position: Prowers County Commissioner
	Alternate name: Gene Millbrand / Henry Schnabel Position: Prowers County Commissioners
<b>Elected officials (city)</b>	Name: Roger Stagner Position: Mayor of Lamar
	Alternate name: Leslie Baca Position: Mayor of Granada

	Alternate name: George Gotto Position: Mayor of Wiley
	Alternate name: Viola Melcher Position: Mayor of Holly

**PCPH staff that creates/obtains local public information products (press releases, web pages, Q/As for hotlines, letters to partners/stakeholders, etc.) before, during and after an event.**

<i>Press releases</i>	Name: Jacqueline Brown RN, MSN Position: Director, PCPH
	Alternate name: Pat Bates RN, BSN Position: Deputy Director ,PCPH
<i>Web pages</i>	Name: Kevin Rink Position: Prowers County IT
	Alternate name: Janet Lundy Position: Webmaster, PCPH
<i>Fact sheets/brochures/other publications</i>	Name: Jo Lynn Idler Position: Business Operations, PCPH
<i>Internal communications</i>	Name: Jo Lynn Idler Position: Business Office manager, PCPH
<b>Q and A documents for hotlines and other requests for information</b>	Name: Jo Lynn Idler Position: PR Manager, PCPH
	Alternate name: Michelle Hiigel Position: Case Manager, PCPH

**The following PCPH staff will review and approve any and all public information products *during and following an emergency* before products can be released to the public, partners and stakeholders. (G1 M1 I2iv)**

<i>Approval authority</i>	Name: Jacqueline Brown RN, MSN Position: Director, PCPH
	Alternate name: Pat Bates RN, BSN Position: Deputy Director, PCPH
<i>Approval authority</i>	Name: Joe Marble Gene Millbrand Henry Schnabel Position: Prowers County Commissioners



	Alternate name: Jo Dorenkamp Position: Prowers County Administrator
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**List of local media outlets that should receive information from PCPH during an emergency and for routine communications. Contact list will be updated on an annual basis and following exercises or real events:**  
**(G1 M1 I2iii)**

<i>Media</i>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Day*</b>	<b>FAX</b>
<b>Newspapers</b>	Lamar Ledger (2 days /week)	P: (719) 336-2266	F: (719) 336-2526
	The Local Buzz (3 days/week)	P: (719) 336-9601	F: (719) 336-9643
	Pueblo Chieftain	P: (719) 544-3520	F: (719) 269-9730
	Denver Post	P: (303) 954-1201	F: (303) 954-1369
<b>Radio stations</b>	KLMR AM/FM Lamar	P: (719) 336-2206	F: (719) 336-7973
	KVAY Lamar	P: (719) 336-8734	F: (719) 336-5977
<b>Local TV stations</b>	Bresnan Cable	P: (719) 336-2560	F: (719) 336-4494
<b>TV stations</b>	Denver Channel 4	P: (303) 830-6464	F: (303) 830-6537
	Denver Channel 7	P: (303) 832-7777	F: (303) 832-0119
	Denver Channel 9	P: (303) 871-9999	F: (303) 698-4700
	Denver Channel Fox 31	P: (303) 595-3131	F: (303) 595-3131
	Pueblo/Colorado Springs Channel 13	P: (719) 575-6285	F: (719) 475-0815

**Media/public spokespersons for PCPH during an event:**

<i>Spokesperson</i>		<b>Day*</b>	<b>Night*</b>
<b>Jacqueline Brown RN, MSN Director PCPH</b>	Director of Public Health	P: (719) 688-8721	C: (719) 688-8721

**Other sources for prepared official public information on emergency health topics:**

<a href="http://www.cdphe.state.co.us">www.cdphe.state.co.us</a> <a href="http://www.bt.cdc.gov">www.bt.cdc.gov</a> <a href="http://www.dhs.gov">www.dhs.gov</a> <a href="http://www.dhhs.gov">www.dhhs.gov</a> <a href="http://www.epa.gov">www.epa.gov</a>	Others
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**Other experts who may contribute to public information/education activities during an event.**

<i><b>Spokesperson</b></i>		<b>Day*</b>	<b>Night*</b>
Dr. Sonia Seufer	PCPH Medical Advisor	P:(719) 336-8405	C:
<i><b>Spokesperson</b></i>		<b>Day*</b>	<b>Night*</b>
Keith Siensen	Environmental Health Director	P: (719) 336-8721	C: (719) 691-9869

**Resources needed to execute public information and health risk dissemination during an event.**

<b>Emergency Communications Resources</b>	<b>Emergency Communications Resources</b>
Prowers County Communications Center	
Prowers County Public Health Office	

**Channels of communication to the public, partners and stakeholders during an event.**

<b>Potential Communications Channels</b>	<b>Potential Communications Channels</b>
Prowers County HAN	
Prowers County Dispatch & Communication Center	
Prowers County E-mail System	

17. Obtain agreements regarding your department's participation in the local joint information center (JIC) established by the local emergency response management department (Note: Joining the JIC will multiply your reach and provide you 24-hour public information/media relations support).
18. Work with your state/local national pharmaceutical stockpile coordinator to ensure public information requirements are met if medicine or vaccines must be dispensed to the public (Note: See NPS checklist in tool kit).
19. Integrate your crisis communication plan into the all-hazards department emergency response plan.

20. Integrate public information response into local drills, exercises, and training. Note dates and attendance for drills, exercises, and trainings.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>
4/13/04	Table top Exercise	PCLEPC
5/25/05	Update of contacts	PC LEPC
5/1/06	Yearly Updates	LEPC Meeting
8/1/08	Update Contacts	LEPC Meeting
7/28/09	Contact Updates	Healthcare Coalition