

THE PREPAREDNESS POST

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
YEAR 7, ISSUE 1

Ricin Scare in Bear River

by Keith Larsen, Emergency Service Director, Bear River Health Department

At approximately 10 p.m. on Oct. 2, 2013, several agencies including, the Bear River Health Department, were called to a home in North Logan. A resident in a basement apartment in the home reportedly attempted suicide by “cooking” and ingesting ricin.



Initial ricin response

Residents in the upstairs section of the home were evacuated and sent to a local hospital emergency department for evaluation. The patient was removed from the apartment, decontaminated, and taken to another local hospital for treatment. Testing of the apartment by the Cache County Hazardous Materials Task Force indicated that ricin was present and the apartment was secured until further testing and characterization could be carried out.

The Utah National Guard Civil Support Team arrived the following

day and conducted further testing to determine the extent of any contamination. No traces of ricin were found in the upstairs section of the home and the occupants were allowed to return. The presence of ricin in the downstairs apartment was confirmed and the health department denied occupancy.

Under the auspices of pending agreements with the Utah Department of Health and the FBI, a joint interview was conducted with the patient by the FBI, local law enforcement, and the local health department to determine the nature and extent of any potential threat to the community. No external threat was determined, the apartment has since been decontaminated by a private contractor, and the patient has recovered.

Keith Larsen, Emergency Services Director for the Bear River Health Department, said, “More than 20 agencies and organizations were involved in the response and successful mitigation of this incident,” which was reported by media across the nation. “It was a tremendous example of cooperation and the great partnerships we have formed at the local, state and federal level,” said Larsen.



Ricin test kit

U-TRAIN	
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Giving Back

by Mike Stever

Thanks to people like our very own Rich Foster, 14 refugee families along the Wasatch Front received a firsthand taste of American generosity for Christmas. Rich spearheaded the EMS and Preparedness efforts as part of a Department of Workforce Services statewide Sub-for-Santa program for Utah refugee families. Gifts of new day-to-day functional items, age-appropriate toys, and personal holiday treats were anonymously collected, wrapped, and delivered.

The families are struggling in almost every way. Due to losses in distant wars and political unrest including torture and execution, most refugee families are void of adult males for roles as fathers, uncles, and older brothers. Finally, at the end of long and difficult treks, these new Utah families are financially destitute and stressed to adjust culturally. Most of the receiving families are not of the Christian faith so the giving witnessed through the Sub-for-Santa program is a deep demonstration of sincere, unconditional holiday generosity.



Nowhere in Rich's performance plan is there a Sub-for-Santa objective listed. It's all above and beyond the call of duty. That said, Rich is quick to share that this program is one of dozens of organized programs that are supported by UDOH employees and countless unseen individual acts of generosity.

New Course Offered at Salt Lake Community College

Now more than ever, our communities need professionals trained in Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Strengthen your leadership and response skills with a degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management at Salt Lake Community College in as little as 18 months (4 semesters).

Salt Lake Community College is offering the only A.A.S. degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HS/EM) in Utah and throughout the Intermountain West. This program addresses the growing need for knowledgeable and skilled leaders and responders in HS/EM from a variety of sectors, including, public safety; law enforcement; criminal justice; emergency service organizations; and public and private institutions.

Students will:

Learn and/or improve skills for responding to both manmade and natural disasters using the "All Hazards Approach"

Develop a multi-discipline, multi-agency approach to the protection of citizens, property and critical infrastructure

To get started or learn more, visit our website at www.slcc.edu/homelandsecurity or call [801-957-5330](tel:801-957-5330).

Yes, It Could Happen Again

By Mike Stever

Pandemic

Our 5th floor conference room was recently turned into a POD (Point of Dispensing) for flu shots. We set up a patient waiting section, administrative processing spot, screening division, and treatment area. The place even smelled like a clinic, complete with air permeated by the smell of rubbing alcohol. What a perfect place for Utah Department of Health (UDOH) employees to gather and talk about emergency preparedness while waiting for their annual flu shot.

When talk turned to the movie "Contagion," one of the visiting flu shot nurses asked me if events portrayed in the film could really occur. "Absolutely," I replied. Then I just couldn't help myself and the emergency manager inside me took over. "It may already be occurring," I said. "We just don't know it yet." I faked a cough....

Really?

Yep. Stop and think about it. If Mother Nature sends three or four global pandemics every century or so, there is no reason to believe that all of a sudden she's going to stop. If anything, pandemics may be more severe, more encompassing, and faster moving. In the Chicken Little world of emergency management, pandemic is as real as anything.

It's happened before. Google "1918 flu in Utah" to read the plethora of information about conditions that, to a degree, may mirror a modern pandemic and help us understand how we might prepare to deliver the service we are sworn to. No Utah community was untouched. Surge hospitals were created, filled with Army surplus cots, donated sheets and blankets, and staffed by volunteer nurses and residents. The American Red Cross asked business leaders to give employees a day off if they volunteered to serve in hospitals during the night. Mass gatherings were banned. Even funerals were limited to immediate families and could last only half an hour, later reduced to 15 minutes. Social distancing rules were enforced by police. Many towns imposed quarantines. Railroads were warned to not accept passengers who did not have a written doctor's note stating they didn't have the flu. In the end, many suffered and 2,343 died.

So what does it all mean to us in emergency management? Accept public health and pandemic preparedness as a standard, constant, and consistent part of your program. Build strategic alliances and partnerships with all stakeholders before you need them. Focus on improving relationships with your local health department and regional coalitions.

Create a corporate culture of a healthy workplace and healthy employees. Encourage 100% participation in vaccinations. Provide for and encourage the use of hygiene precautions and policies by providing plenty of hand sanitizer, disposable tissues, disinfectant, etc. Post current flu and public health information. Champion individual, family, and workplace preparedness.

Absenteeism could be as high as 40%, so plan for staffing shortages. Pandemic means traditional mutual aid may not be a viable resource. Brush up on COOP plans and annexes. Look to reprioritizing, repurposing, and reassigning employees to mission-essential tasks.

Disaster Essentials for Healthcare Professionals (DEHP)

By Debbie Kim, ICDP

A unique collaboration between the Intermountain Center for Disaster Preparedness (ICDP) and the University of Utah has resulted in an 8-hour course on the essentials of disaster health care. Initially, the course was developed with the University of Utah College of Nursing (CON) for students in their final year of the Baccalaureate program. Beginning in the fall of 2013, the course was added to the IPE Course catalog at the University, and the opportunity was extended to all students within Health Sciences. Students are asked to complete a two-hour Incident Command System (ICS) module prior to coming to class (IS-100). Classes are held at the ICDP, a 4,200 square foot facility comprising classroom and patient care space. Students



Granger High School Student volunteers for the "Shock and Awe" Mass Casualty Simulation—Oct. 2013

participate in both the health care provider and 'victim' roles. Local high school students with an interest in disaster care also participate in the DEHP as patients for mass casualty simulation. Kevin McCulley, Healthcare Preparedness Program Manager, Utah Department of Health (UDOH) provides instruction on government response to disaster. In 2013, 168 students, including medical (81), nursing (66), physician assistant (20), and medical toxicology (1) students completed the course.

The ICDP has four missions: Provide disaster training and education for first responders and first receivers (hospital providers); Establish, improve, conduct research, and practice mass casualty care methodology; Serve as a center for medical triage; and serve as an acute care surge facility.

The DEHP course includes lecture, discussion, and immersive simulation teaching methodologies. Class content includes SALT/START triage, triage tagging, triage methodologies, mass casualty patient surge strategies, patient evacuation from a partial structural collapse, pandemic infection and surge, personal protective equipment use, the Hospital Incident Command System (HICS), government response to disaster, and ethical considerations in disaster scenarios.

Faculty members from both the ICDP and the University of Utah recently submitted abstracts on the unique course experience to several national and international disaster and medical simulation meetings. To date, two abstracts have been accepted – and one is pending review. The first presentation of the DEHP course will be at the International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare (IMSH) in January, 2014.

The Intermountain Center for Disaster Preparedness is one of many projects supported by the UDOH Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP). This valuable public/private partnership is designed to meet the HPP grant goals of ensuring a trained and skilled health care workforce to respond to disasters, increasing medical surge capacity in the state of Utah, and creating opportunities for partnership and collaborative development of first responders and first receivers.



Preparedness Training information:

<https://www.utah.train.org>



Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness

What a Year

By Terry Begay, SST Regional Coordinator, UEMA Board Member-at-Large

I can't believe it's already the end of an amazing year. As 2013 has come to a close, I'd like to look back at accomplishments by our partners in emergency management, public safety, health system preparedness, and other partners in the Utah Emergency Management Agency (UEMA).

In May, the Northern Medical Surge Region held a Mass Casualty/Mass Fatality exercise that involved partners from police, fire, EMS, emergency management, and health care. The exercise scenario of a plane crash at the Ogden Airport tested patient medical surge and fatality management. That was followed by a real event in November when the area faced hurricane-like winds that caused widespread power outages as well as property damage from Centerville to Ogden. All emergency responders and utility providers did a tremendous job of ensuring the public's safety, restoring the power in a timely manner, and quickly removing debris.

The Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Region (SST) held an exercise to test the region's response to a mass casualty incident and beta-test the new Utah Burn Surge Plan. The Icy Hot exercise scenario began with a small plane crashing into the Energy Solutions Arena during a packed Jazz game. Later in the evening, a mock meth lab explosion next to a large skilled nursing facility caused numerous injuries with severe burns that required decontamination and treatment of many patients. Again, first responders, first receivers, long term care facilities, and military medical teams participated in the exercise, resulting in a statewide template that can be used by any region or community wishing to conduct a similar exercise.

Last year was bad for fires in Utah and the SST Region was no exception, with lightning-caused blazes in two of the three counties. Summit County's Rockport Fire burned approximately 2,000 acres and destroyed 14 homes, displacing 250 residents. The Patch Springs Fire in Tooele County charred 31,000 acres, incinerating several mobile homes. Because of the great efforts by firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency managers, there was no loss of life, and several homes were saved that could have been lost.

In February, the Utah/Wasatch Regional Coalition conducted a full-scale exercise. The Red Hot Radiological Dispersion Device exercise was developed to test the ability of the participating agencies to collaborate, understand, and carry out capabilities involving medical surge response and coordination during a mass casualty event.

The Central Medical Surge Region conducted active shooter and hazmat drills to ensure that their first responders and first receivers are familiar with equipment, procedures, personal protective equipment, and incident management teams. The Central Utah Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is also very active with a total of 164 volunteers. In April, the MRC partnered with regional CERT teams to host a regional conference. The conference provided training on disaster morgue operations, with most of the sessions conducted by members of the Region VIII DMORT team.

Partners in the Southeast Region ran an active shooter drill in May. Utilizing one of the high schools, it tested EOC coordination, medical surge, and information sharing. In June, lightning-sparked fires challenged response agencies. Firefighters, law enforcement, emergency management, and others behind the scenes worked tirelessly to put out the blazes and protect the public. The Dark Canyon Fire near Blanding burned some 350 acres and threatened the safety of hikers and backpackers in the popular area. The Lackey Fan Fire near the Manti-La Sal National Forest burned more than 900 acres. The Rock Creek Fire, 15 miles east of Carbon City, charred 181 acres in steep, rocky terrain.

The Southwest Medical Surge Region conducted a February exercise on its Mass Fatality Plan. The event helped clarify responsibilities for a pandemic mass fatality event. Public health officials learned that one key role will be death certificate processing. County emergency managers also identified key leadership roles.

These are only a few examples of dozens of exercises and real events that took place in our state during 2013. As a member of emergency management, Regional Medical Surge Coordinator, and UEMA Board Member-at-Large, it makes me very proud to be part of a state filled with professionals who are willing to do what needs to be done to ensure safety in their communities. Thank you all for a great year and your hard work in keeping our state, cities, towns, and neighborhoods safer.

Terry Begay, SST Medical Surge Regional Coalition Coordinator, tbegay@slco.org

Calendar—2014 Training

Date	Event	Location	Cost	Information
Feb. 14-16	EMS New Instructor Course UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness		\$150	UTRAIN #1027032 Cindy Huish chuish@utah.gov
Feb. 27th	Children in Disaster Conference Healthcare Coalition Utah/ Wasatch Co., Timpanogos Regional Hospital & UCHD	Utah Co. Health Department 151 So. University Ave. Provo, UT	None	Link to Register: http://www.utahcountyhealth.org/childrenindisasters Jan Rogers janr@utahcounty.gov Marilyn Watts marilynwa@utahcounty.gov
Mar. 7	Current EMS Coordinator UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness	1731 S Convention Center Drive St. George, UT	\$50	UTRAIN: #1025235 Cindy Huish chuish@utah.gov
Mar. 7-8	Current EMS Instructor UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness	1731 S Convention Center Drive St. George, UT	\$50	UTRAIN: #025960 Cindy Huish chuish@utah.gov
Mar. 7	Current EMS Training Officer UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness	1731 S Convention Center Drive St. George, UT	\$50	UTRAIN: #1025962 Cindy Huish chuish@utah.gov
Mar. 27	SNS Functional Exercise UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness, SNS Program	UDOH-Cannon Building 288 N 1460 W Salt Lake City, UT	None Approval Required	UTRAIN: #1047770 Brett Cross, bcross@utah.gov
Apr. 2-4	SST Terrorist Conference SST Region Coalition	Larry H. Miller Campus Sandy, UT	None	TBD Terry BeGay, tbegay@slco.gov
Apr. 8-9	SNS RSS Training UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness, SNS Program	South Towne Exposition Center 9575 S. State Street Sandy, UT	None Approval Required	UTRAIN: # 1048277 Brett Cross, bcross@utah.gov



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness

Calendar—2014 Training

Date	Event	Location	Cost	Information
Apr. 10-11	HPP Summit UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness, ASPR-HPP Program	Davis Convention Center	None Approval Required	TBD Lanette Sorensen lanettesorensen@utah.gov
Apr. 17	Shakeout—UDOH COOP TTX UDOH-Bureau EMS & Preparedness - Preparedness Program	UDOH-Cannon Building 288 N 1460 W Salt Lake City, UT	None	Mindy Colling mindycolling@utah.gov
Apr. 24	UHA COOP Workshop (Pending) UHA / UDOH HPP / ASPR Program	St, George, UT		
May 20-21	Public Safety Governor's Summit Division of Emergency Management and Safety	St. George, UT		Link to Register: publicsafety.utah.gov Judy Watanabe judywatanabe@utah.gov Patrice Thomas pthomas@utah.gov

UDOH Web sites:
health.utah.gov (main)
health.utah.gov/preparedness
health.utah.gov/ems

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