

From the Director



Welcome 2017!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the World Café PHEP strategic planning session in November. The data gathered will be used to help revise grant duties, and refine reporting processes and activities, like after action reports. A summary will be brought to the PHEP Oversight Group meeting for discussion in February.

You may have heard that changes are in store for the Workspace! It has served us well, but is nearing the end of its technological lifespan. I want to reassure you that a transition plan is being developed; you'll find more details below. We plan to provide you quarterly progress reports via this newsletter.

Super Bowl 52 will be held in Minneapolis in February 2018, and preparedness planning is already well underway. I'm pleased to be a part of the Health and Medical group, which is being led by Pam Blixt, Public Health Preparedness Manager at the Minneapolis Health Department. Our group is meeting regularly and includes public health, and health care partners from around the region.

Lastly, as we enter the next CDC PHEP grant project period I want to remind of the emphasis on *partnerships, evaluation and demonstration of readiness* through drills and exercises. I look forward to working together to build on our past successes in the new five-year project period.

Cheryl

What's up with the Workspace?

As referenced in the Director's update, the Workspace is nearing the end of its life and plans are underway to ensure a smooth transition to a new system. A migration team began meeting in January and has started working through key issues around the directory, documents and messaging.

The migration team includes technical and content experts from MDH programs that frequently push information out via the Workspace, including EPR and IDEPC. The team also includes representatives from local public health who will ensure that the needs and perspectives of end users are taken into account. The team will meet monthly until the migration plan is completed late in 2017. The team will share quarterly updates through this newsletter.

Updates for this quarter: A decision has been made to use a software package, called MIR3, to manage the directory and provide messaging services, after the Workspace has been phased out. MIR3 has the advantage of already being in use at MDH. It's known for its reliability, and it has some features that end users may find to be improvements over the Workspace. A key first task of the transition team will be to review the 33 roles currently in use in the Workspace to determine which roles should be carried forward into MIR3.

Don't forget! The Workspace is still in use until further notice. Please continue to use it and keep your contact information in it up-to-date. Thank you!

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MNTrac System Performance Drill

During a full-scale exercise MDH conducted in March, the MNTrac system experienced major performance issues which resulted in users being kicked out of the system during the exercise. MDH, along with the MNTrac Advisory Committee worked with the MNTrac software vendor ImageTrend to ensure the different applications throughout the system were optimized to be able to handle the future volume of users and tasks Minnesota health care providers need during system-wide incidents.

Our January 11, 2017 drill was done to test the new improvements to the system, and to attempt to overload MNTrac again so the software vendor could monitor for additional future improvements. We successfully managed to take MNTrac down immediately after over 15,000 devices were issued Alerts.

Thank you to all who helped us test the limits of MNTrac; we were able to get very important information about the system that we can now use to further-enhance MNTrac's capabilities. Although it may have been a frustrating experience during the initial fifteen minutes of the two hour drill, for many, we accomplished what we set out to do .

Don't forget the bug spray!



Minnesotans are well acquainted with mosquitos, but not in the winter. Yet, many of us travel to warm weather destinations this time of year. Many popular winter travel destinations have documented local Zika transmission. Minnesota reported a substantial number of travel-associated Zika virus cases during 2016. MDH wishes to remind "sun seekers" - *especially pregnant women and couples planning a pregnancy* - to take steps to reduce their risk of becoming infected and prevent Zika associated birth defects .

Local public health and health care partners can help by sharing Zika prevention information for travelers, available on the CDC's Zika prevention website (<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/plan-for-travel.html>).

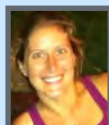
Useful Resources

Functional Needs Planning Toolkit

This is a Minnesota resource for how to integrate access and functional needs populations into emergency plans including sheltering and evacuation. The toolkit includes a resource list of agencies and organizations that work with access and functional needs populations.

Check out the Functional Needs Planning Toolkit for Emergency Planners (<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/access-functional-needs/Documents/functional-needs-planning-toolkit.pdf>) today!

Meet the Staff



Alexandra Bambrick—Public Health Preparedness Consultant—Metro

Alexandra Bambrick is the new Metro Region Public Health Preparedness Consultant (PHPC). Alex, who received her Master of Public Health from George Washington, began working for MDH Emergency Preparedness and Response in March 2016. Since that time, her work has been focused on Ebola and other highly infectious diseases, specifically planning for the transportation of these patients. We are very pleased that she can now switch gears and join the MDH team of PHPCs!

Before coming to MDH, Alex worked as an ICU RN in several systems across the U.S. and abroad as a nurse educator for the Rwandan Ministry of Health. She volunteered in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and maintains her role as a responder for the National Disaster Medical System.

Important Dates

February 7-9, 2017 --- 2017 Governor's HSEM Conference --- Brooklyn Center, MN -- <https://www.regonline.com/2017HSEM>

February 22, 2017 ---- 15th Annual Preparedness Practicum -- Brooklyn Center, MN -- <http://www.metrohealthready.org/>

April 25-28, 2017----- 2017 Preparedness Summit----- Atlanta, GA----- <http://preparednesssummit.org/>

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