

2008 Concluding Assessment - Alabama
 Strategic Goal: Protect Citizens

Appendix B.9 Ensure Communication Capability During Each Phase of a Pandemic		
Lead Individual name: Amy Coody		
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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
<i>Prepare</i>		
Sub-objective B.9.1 - Operating Plans for Two-Way Communications		
Does a plan exist for two-way communications through the State Emergency Operations Center between (1) State partners (e.g., health, emergency management, education, transportation, economic development) and (2) regional multi-agency coordination centers	1	Alert HAN system is in place. It does not allow for 2-way communication. Southern Linc network or HAM radios will be used for 2-way communications; however, these are limited and will not suffice for a broad response with multiple agencies and organizations.
Does the plan ensure a process to ensure redundant communications systems are in place in the event that primary communications systems are unavailable?	1	Some redundancy is built into the system, but much more would be necessary for a significant emergency.
Does the plan ensure a process to ensure that communication networks (equipment/hardware) between Command and Control locations and support agencies will be tested and exercised at least quarterly?	2	Test results indicate regular exercises; no corrective action plan evident.
Does the plan ensure a process for an intraState communication enhancement network to ensure that public health communicators at all levels of State and local government are interacting on a regular basis with uniform communications?	1	The HAN system enables 1-way alerts; it also enables users to access and edit the same documents. A limited capacity exists for 2-way communications. Applications would be strengthened with systems and a process to regularly discuss communications strategy, messages, distribution, etc.

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Does the plan ensure access to information systems that have been or are being evaluated for PHIN* compliance *All States are expected to have or to be working towards information technology systems whose implementation meets the PHIN requirements, as per	2	From their application: "Since "CDC is re-tooling the PHIN requirements and assessing the effectiveness of our certification processes and examining other models to determine their potential for use in public health," we are not able to say definitively that all of our information systems are PHIN compliant. ADPH is coordinating meetings with the CDC PHIN subject matter experts to discuss and if need be, demo our systems in order to identify any gaps between the functionality of our systems and the current PHIN requirements v2.0. If gaps are identified, we will work with the PHIN SMEs to determine the best course of action for mitigating these issues and ensure compliance."
Does the plan include a process for communicating preparedness messages to the public?	2	Plan exists, staff identified, but no indication that it has been exercised. There are plans to exercise communications processes, however. No change to Rating
Does the plan ensure that communication processes (working from the JIC) will be exercised at least bi-annually?	1	From the application: "ADPH's plans to routinely exercise our communication processes in all of our training and exercises, but not necessarily the JIC process." Quarterly, the Communication Unit will exercise and train CSC communication personnel and responder personnel in the use of the communication resources to be used during an incident. These trainings and exercises will be combined with related Emergency Preparedness exercises. The application would be stronger if the testing of the JIC communication strategy and message development/distribution were coordinated with the testing of telecommunications capacity by the Communication Unit.

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Activity Added by State		

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Sub-objective B.9.2 - Culturally-Appropriate and Language Specific Information		
Does the plan ensure a process for the development of culturally appropriate and language-specific essential information in appropriate media and in advance as part of the preparation for an influenza pandemic?	1	Applicant has identified audience needs and potential partners to help reach communities with tailored information. They indicate they have worked with audiences to develop tailored materials. However, more detail is needed to determine if the plan is complete and actionable.
Culturally-appropriate?		applicant states they are seeking information on revisions, but provides no detail about audience needs that led them to pursue revisions, who they are working with, or assets of organizations they are working with/would like to work with. Application would be stronger if these issues were addressed, and if a process to coordinate this activity were in place (and described in the application).
Pictograms?		ADPH provides pictograms to certain organizations; organizations are not listed, and a process to ensure pictograms are relevant and appropriate is not described.
Available to special needs populations (such as disability communities (including those that are hearing or visually impaired), citizens with low level English comprehension and individuals with English as a second language)?		ADPH states that they "work with a state Special Populations Task Force made up of several key organizations and meet with them on a regular basis to review and respond to special needs." A list of materials is also provided. However the process for developing these materials is not described, so it is not possible to discern whether the process is actionable or sustainable.
Identification of trusted leaders, liaisons, or other networks in communities for effective outreach and information dissemination?		Applicant states that these relationships exist and are active, but there is no supporting documentation or detail such as contact lists, process for developing and distributing information, or sample materials.
Activity Added by State		

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
<i>Respond and Recover</i>		
Sub-objective B.9.3 - Development and Dissemination of Essential Information		
Does the plan include a crisis communication and emergency risk plan (for public information and media, partner, and stakeholder relations) that addresses all phases of an influenza pandemic?	1	Plan exists, but there is no indication that it has been exercised. No change to Rating
Does the plan address how State and local health departments will work with other response organizations to educate the media, public, partners and stakeholders, specifically including:	1	
Designated line and staff responsibilities for the public information team		The plan presents responsibilities for media outreach in a general way (no detail is evident), but does not address who will oversee overall communications strategy, or how key messages will be coordinated across other channels that reach the public (ex. web, partner outreach) Processes are described in more detail than in original application. The process for developing communication strategy, and thus determining key messages and channels is still needed.
Information verification and clearance/approval procedures for public information releases		The plan lists which staff will approve news releases, but does not address who will develop them, the process they will use to determine key messages, and how the clearance process will be managed. In addition, clearance for non-media materials is not evident. See comments above.
Regional/stand and/or local media contact list with normal duty and after-hour contact numbers and addresses		Applicant states that contact list exists in a database, but the list is not included in the application, and cannot be reviewed.

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Contact numbers/addresses for emergency response information partners (e.g., Governor's public affairs officers, local FBI public information agent in charge, American Red Cross and other non-government organizations)		Application includes names and phone numbers of key contacts in partner organizations, but their organizational roles day-to-day and during an emergency are not listed.
Procedures to join the Joint Information Center (JIC) of the State Emergency Operations Center (if activated)including a call-down list with contact information for primary and secondary staff members		The plan indicates there is a process in place to activate staff and partners for media outreach, but no other staff are included and no other channels are addressed. Contact lists are not evident, so cannot be reviewed.
Does the plan ensure that rapidly-needed public health recommendations and information can be provided to the public, partners and stakeholders during a pandemic, specifically including:	1	plans for some elements exist, though they are not adequate. No supporting materials evident in application.
Critical communication links to other intra-dept and inter-dept response officials		Applicant describes their HAN system which is designed to reach key public health officials. Supporting materials, such as a list of contacts, and sample HAN messages are not included.
Identification of vehicles of information dissemination to public, stakeholders, partners (e.g., e-mail, fax, Health Alert Network messages, brochures, PSAs, press releases)		Applicant states that media outreach is done via fax, email, and web. Public outreach is done via print materials; distribution channels are not described. No supporting materials are evident.
A contact list of additional persons outside the State health department who can be available as subject matter experts on pandemic health issues if needed		Applicant intends to access infectious disease specialists and other physicians who serve on the department's medical advisory councils for tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases. Names are listed, but title, organization, and contact information are not. In addition, it is not clear if these individuals have expertise in influenza.

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Support materials for public health issues that are unique to an influenza pandemic such as issues of isolation, quarantine, social distancing, and public health law have been prepared		Applicant states that: "ADPH's Legal Counsel, John Wible, has prepared pandemic influenza Emergency Orders for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclamation of State of Emergency • Fatality Management Issues • Altered Standards of Care • Vaccine Rationing • Isolation and Quarantine • Social Distancing – closing mass events." These documents are not evident in the applications, so cannot be reviewed.
Use of hotlines and other community resources to respond to local questions from the public and professional groups		Plan does not yet exist. Applicant is working with poison control centers and the 211 Association of Alabama to develop plans and messages.
Does the plan identify individuals responsible for development and dissemination of multi-media essential information to the general public and professional response partners (e.g., regional multi-agency coordination centers, State emergency managers, Sta	2	The plan lists departments responsible for mass media outreach only. Additional channels are not addressed. Specific roles, responsibilities, and processes are also not addressed - even for media outreach.
Activity Added by State		
Sub-objective B.9.4 - Culturally-Appropriate and Language Specific Information		
Does the plan ensure a process for the development of culturally appropriate and language-specific essential information in appropriate media and in advance as part of the preparation for an influenza pandemic?	1	Applicant has identified audience needs and potential partners to help reach communities with tailored information. They indicate they have worked with audiences to develop tailored materials. However, more detail is needed to determine if the plan is complete and actionable.

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Culturally-appropriate?		applicant states they are seeking information on revisions, but provides no detail about audience needs that led them to pursue revisions, who they are working with, or assets of organizations they are working with/would like to work with. Application would be stronger if these issues were addressed, and if a process to coordinate this activity were in place (and described in the application).
Pictograms?		ADPH provides pictograms to certain organizations; organizations are not listed, and a process to ensure pictograms are relevant and appropriate is not described.
Available to special needs populations (such as disability communities, citizens with low level English comprehension and individuals with English as a second language)?		Applicant lists some materials they have provided to special needs populations, but does not describe the process used to develop them.
Identification of trusted leaders/liaisons in communities for information dissemination?		Applicant states that these relationships exist and are active, but there is no supporting documentation or detail such as contact lists, process for developing and distributing information, or sample materials.
Activity Added by State		
Sub-objective B.9.5 - Media Spokesperson		
Does the plan include a list of trained spokespersons to work with the media?	2	Applicant lists at least one spokesperson for each of the state's public health areas. Title, organization, and contact information are not evident. It is not clear whether these contacts have been trained.
Does the plan include an up-to-date contact list of key stakeholders and media contacts?	2	A contact list for stakeholders is included, but it is not complete (lacks title information, emails, and secondary phone numbers)

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Supporting Activity	Rating	Comments
Does the plan include a process for regular briefings and updates with key stakeholders to develop working relationships in the event of a pandemic:	2	Regular briefings do occur, plan is in place, however there is no indication that it has been tested.
Ethnic/language-specific media		
Main media		
Special needs/at risk populations		
Activity Added by State		
SUM OF RATING	23/48	
CORRESPONDING PERCENTAGE	48%	
ASSESSMENT	Inadequate Preparedness	NOTE: Columns B and C are hidden