

Emergency Preparedness and Response Fact Sheet

The Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Division coordinates emergency preparedness and response activities for the Minnesota Department of Health. It provides guidance to local public health agencies, tribal governments and healthcare organizations as they develop plans and protocols for responding to public health threats. EPR maintains a 24/7 on-call system to take calls from federal agencies, local government, and other state agencies about emergency events. EPR is the applicant for federal funding for public health and healthcare grants, including financial and activity reporting of all activities supported by the federal funds. EPR manages and tracks activities and funding of approximately \$12 million in preparedness funds that are used by local public health, tribal governments, and healthcare systems for emergency preparedness and response efforts. EPR prepares and supports the MDH Department Operations Center, and the use of the Incident Command System which is used by MDH to coordinate the comprehensive response to events.

Communications

- The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) work together to ensure timely, coordinated communication between local public health, healthcare organizations, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), emergency management, and other response partners across Minnesota. Through eight regional Healthcare regions, the Regional Healthcare Preparedness Coordinators and the Public Health Preparedness Consultants facilitate information sharing, situational awareness, planning, training, and coordinated response activities before, during, and after emergencies.
- Minnesota's [Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#) disseminates urgent public health information to doctors, nurses, and others who need it. The distribution system is a "tree" that relies on local and tribal health departments to forward it to hospitals, clinics, and other partners in each jurisdiction.

Education, exercises, and training

- EPR provides education and training materials used to build the capacity of state and local public health professionals. Other resource materials include the Minnesota Preparedness Education and Training Plan, the MDH [Emergency Preparedness and Response newsletter](#), web-based and multimedia training materials, and conferences.
- [MN.TRAIN](#) is used to track the training of MDH staff and other partners.
- A comprehensive exercise planning group develops and integrates agency exercises and supports required and locally initiated exercises. After-action reports and improvement plans implement the lessons learned from exercises and events.
- EPR coordinates the public health All-Hazards Response and Recovery Plan which is part of the Minnesota Emergency Operations Plan and provides guidance to other health responders in their planning efforts.

Healthcare system preparedness

- The Hospital Preparedness Program coordinates emergency and surge capacity, behavioral health, and volunteer health planning among Minnesota's 139 hospitals, working with the eight Healthcare Coalition regions of the state.
- Funding is provided to the [Healthcare Coalitions](#) who then coordinate hospital, clinic, skilled nursing facilities, EMS, emergency management and behavioral health emergency preparedness planning.

Local public health preparedness

- Eight regional staff serve as technical content experts to support regional and local planning for emergency preparedness and response. The [Public Health Preparedness Consultants \(PHPC\)](#) are located across the state and interact with each jurisdiction's local public health department to connect the appropriate regional and state resources and share best practices. These staff also support coordination of public health, healthcare system, tribal health and other responder planning activities.
- Federal funds are granted to local and tribal health departments for planning, preparedness and response activities.
- The [Minnesota Responds Medical Reserve Corps](#) Program supports local recruitment and use of volunteer health professionals for emergency response.

Resource management and tracking

- EPR manages critical resources to prepare for and respond to events. The federal resources come from the Strategic National Stockpile that needs to be securely managed and distributed within hours of an event. A state stockpile is a resource for smaller events or in support of the federal resources.
- EPR trains and assesses the capacity of local health department plans and staff to be ready to receive materials and get them to the public quickly.
- EPR coordinates the development and exercising of procedures and protocols for mass dispensing clinics and alternative types of dispensing.

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