

The World of Online Training

Knowledge at our fingertips

Over the past 20 years, the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice's (NWCPHP) principal activity has been to provide just-in-time training and ongoing learning resources for public health professionals to stay current and build capacity. NWCPHP was born around the same time as the

Internet and has grown with it, developing and offering online courses to practitioners throughout the region.

Today, NWCPHP offers 19 online courses on topics ranging from public health law to epidemiology to program evaluation. These online courses, called modules, are self-paced online classrooms. They can be taken by anyone, anywhere, over any

amount of time. Most of

them can be completed in 1-2 hours.

NWCPHP is able to provide these online courses through two major sources of federal funding. In 2000, NWCPHP became a Center for Public Health Preparedness through funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Associated Schools of Public Health. NWCPHP had been receiving funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services, but in 2000 it became a HRSA Public Health Training Center. These two grants expanded NWCPHP's capabilities to provide practice-based training.

NWCPHP contracts with public health agencies to produce a wide variety of courses and is always considering new course topics. If you have suggestions for future online modules, please contact us.

"I am finding E-mail quite useful for on and off-campus communication, especially for communications across time zones. There is software available to triage incoming messages to keep CEOs from getting swamped. Let me know if you would like to discuss further. If you prefer not to deal with it directly, your secretary can download and print incoming messages so you can read hard copy and jot down notes for someone else to send replies."

— Mark Oberle memo to Dean Gil Omenn
March 27, 1992

NWCPHP Online Training Modules (available online at no cost to the public)

- Cause and Effect (2007)
- Data Analysis Modules 1-5 (2008)
- Data Collection for Program Evaluation (2009)
- Data Interpretation (2006)
- Disaster Behavioral Health (2006)
- Emergency Risk Communication (2006)
- Environmental Health Communication (2007)
- Infectious Disease (2006)
- Logic Models (2007)
- Measuring Risk (2008)
- Outbreak Investigation (2006)
- Pharmacy (2008)
- Program Evaluation (2007)
- Public Health Law (2005)
- Screening in Public Health Practice (2009)
- Study Types (2008)
- Surveillance (2006)
- What is Epi? (2007)
- Workforce Resiliency Modules 1-3 (2008)

Take courses at
www.nwcpHP.org

Bringing experience to the tabletop

A tabletop exercise is a training tool used in preparing for and responding to emergencies and disasters. It is characterized by:

- A fictional scenario of a large scale disaster or emergency (e.g., floods, food borne outbreaks, pandemic influenza)
- A facilitator who leads participants (called "players") through a discussion about a series of incidents depicted in the scenario
- A debriefing to further explore and agree upon issues identified
- An after action report that documents the status of plans and policies with recommended corrective actions

NWCPHP Tabletop Exercises:

- Bioterrorist Attack on Food
- Emergency Preparedness: Business Continuity
- Essential Services of Environmental Health
- Pandemic Influenza
- Recognition and Initial Response to SARS
- The Anarchist — Strategic National Stockpile Activation

Hot Topics

Hosting the discussion since 2004

By Paul Wiesner, moderator

When I visited the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) in April 2004, I was seeking a way to ease into retirement after a long career in public health at the national, state, and local levels. “Maybe,” I thought, “I could find something to do to just to keep my hands wet.”

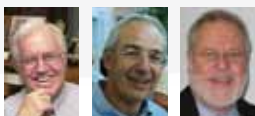
Jack Thompson and Andy Stergachis suggested that I might be interested in starting up a new monthly Web-conference called Hot Topics in Preparedness (HTIP), which was supported by a cooperative agreement award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We wanted to provide a forum where experts and practitioners in the field could share insights about best practices in response to urgent issues facing public health. The initial emphasis was on planning for, responding to, and recovering from public health crises.

HTIP is now one of the mainstays of NWCPHP’s connection to the practice community. But we didn’t know how well-received HTIP would be when we first launched it. Our first session took place on April 27, 2004. Jeffrey Duchin from Public Health — Seattle & King County presented on preparing for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

Thinking about our first session five years and 67 sessions later, I realize that the ingredients for the success of HTIP were evident in that very first session: great speaker(s); enthusiastic participants; an interactive platform (iLinc); outstanding staff; an active network of state training coordinators; an engaged advisory committee; plenty of challenging topics; and the freedom to innovate and make improvements.

The NWCPHP staff deserves a few special comments. Each of the successive logistical coordinators (currently, Sarah Paliulis) has done a masterful job of coordinating with the regional trainers, doing all the behind-the-scenes work required for a live, monthly broadcast, orienting the speakers to iLinc and the nuances of effective distance learning, convening the advisory committee, trouble-shooting the system during the presentations and promoting objective evaluation with an eye toward improvement. Our coordinators have worked closely with staff instructional design professionals who ensure quality and organization of the presentations. Presenters (many of whom are experienced professionals on the speaking circuit) regularly comment about how much they learned about distance teaching or slide presentation from their experience with HTIP.

Search our Web site and you will see that the HTIP archive is a treasure trove of information about virtually every major issue facing public health over the past five and a half years. We have introduced stories from the field that vividly elucidate the talent of public health staff from all states in the region. We have broadened the lens on preparedness by introducing topics that have long-lasting effects on the infrastructure of practice—topics such as ethical decision-making, the art of dialogue, health care reform, and collaborative leadership. Each audience is eclectic, its composition driven both by the topic presented and by the popularity of the speaker.



Paul Bud Pat

Thank you Paul & welcome Bud and Pat!

NWCPHP thanks Paul Wiesner for his years of wonderful leadership. A revolving moderator schedule began in 2010, with Wiesner, Bud Nicola, and Patrick Libbey.



Tabletops at NWCPHP

After September 11, 2001, public health agencies became aware they were underprepared to respond to large-scale emergencies. Not surprisingly, this increased awareness led to increased interest in preparedness trainings.

NWCPHP has been able to productively respond to this interest by creating and facilitating tabletop exercises. Tabletop exercises go beyond testing individual knowledge; they teach planning.

Carl Osaki, a NWCPHP faculty member, has been identified as a national resource for developing, facilitating, and evaluating tabletop

exercises. When he was Director of Environmental Health at Public Health — Seattle & King County, Carl Osaki reported to the county’s emergency operations center, participating in a number of real life emergencies as well as training exercises. With NWCPHP, he conducts numerous tabletop trainings and exercises for local, state, and tribal public health agencies.

NWCPHP has received national recognition for its tabletop trainings. Bioterrorist Attack on Food: A Tabletop Exercise was ranked first among public health tabletops in a technical report published by the RAND Corporation in 2005.*

*Shugarman, L.R., Eiseman, E., Jain, A., Nicosia, N., Stern, S., and Wasserman, J. 2005. Enhancing public health preparedness: exercises, exemplary practices, and lessons learned. RAND Corporation technical report. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2005/RAND_TR249.pdf