



Communication saves lives.
www.nwcphp.org/research

What is NWPERRC?

The Northwest Preparedness & Emergency Response Research Center (NWPERRC) is one of nine PERRCs funded by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. NWPERRC researches how messages are communicated before, during and after emergencies, with the goal of building evidence-based strategies for improved preparedness and emergency response.

To accomplish this goal, University of Washington School of Public Health researchers collaborate with health practitioners and community organizations in the Northwest region.

NWPERRC is housed in the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) at the University of Washington.



Partnerships include:

Benton Franklin Health District · Casa Latina · Chinese Information & Service Center · El Centro de La Raza · Entre Hermanos · Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center · Kitsap County Health District · Language Line Services · Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services · Muckleshoot Indian Tribe · Multi-Service Center · New Futures · Public Health-Seattle & King County · Sea Mar Community Health Center · Seattle Indian Health Board · Snoqualmie Indian Tribe · South Seattle Community College · Valley Communications & Northeast King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency

Research that Matters

Emergencies are unpredictable. The confusing and dangerous nature of emergencies makes communication critical to saving lives.

NWPERRC research identifies how to communicate with different audiences using different technologies.

Findings have immediate practice implications, helping public health agencies improve their communications policies and practices.



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As part of the University of Washington School of Public Health, the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) provides training, research, and evaluation for state, local, and tribal public health in six Northwest states—Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. Visit www.nwcphp.org for more information.

NWCPHP houses the Northwest Preparedness & Emergency Response Research Center.



Before, during, and after an emergency,
communication saves lives.



Northwest Preparedness & Emergency Response Research Center





Imagine calling 911 and not being able to understand the operator...



How should public health reach health care providers?



For emergency updates text 4publichealth



Making CPR instructions accessible...



Limited English Proficiency & 911

Project 1 examines emergency communications with limited English-speaking populations, looking specifically at 911 callers.

An emergency call to 911 is stressful. Now imagine explaining your emergency to an operator who speaks another language.

This study aims to identify barriers and find effective ways to use phone-based emergency response systems with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities.

The research starts with focus groups and a telephone survey, and then analyzes reports from 911 calls to see if response is slower where there is a language difficulty. Audio-taped calls involving operator-identified language barriers are reviewed, and LEP callers are surveyed to assess how well they understood the operator-provided information.

Project 2 compares three channels for emergency communication between public health agencies and health care providers.

Health care professionals play an important role in public health's emergency preparedness and response infrastructure.

This study evaluates three means of communication (fax, email, text messaging) between public health and health care providers to determine the effectiveness of these message delivery systems in urban and rural communities. The study includes diverse health care providers – nurses, doctors, physician assistants, pharmacists and veterinarians.

The findings can be used to improve emergency preparedness and response systems by improving communications between public health and health care providers.



Time sensitive information and you don't know if it's been received...



Should your health department text?

Project 3 studies the use of text-messaging to reach diverse populations during and after an emergency.

This project is being led by researchers at Public Health – Seattle & King County. The primary aim is to learn about the texting needs of selected audiences to ensure that texting programs implemented by local health departments are as effective as possible. A second aim is to understand the logistical, fiscal, legal, and technical implications for a health department. Research activities include qualitative interviews, a broad-based phone survey, and piloting of texting programs.

Text messaging is an intriguing emergency communication channel. It is increasingly popular, it often works when regular phone lines get jammed, and it may boost the persuasiveness of a message.

Project 4 investigates communication strategies to guide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) people in performing CPR

This research examines cultural and linguistic barriers faced by Chinese and Latino communities and how to overcome these to increase and improve bystander CPR. One aim is to formulate evidence-based communication guidelines for 911-assisted CPR. A second aim is to develop culturally appropriate educational interventions.

Methods include focus groups, key informant interviews, surveys, a CPR simulation experiment comparing effectiveness of different 911 dispatcher guidelines, and field testing. Tested communication components include interpreter services, simplified language, elaboration and checking for comprehension.



Explain CPR over the phone...



How can operators communicate more effectively?



How do audiences use texting?

Public Health Seattle & King County



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