

Office of Public Health Nursing

2008-2009 *Accomplishments*



Office Overview

The Florida Office of Public Health Nursing (OPHN) supports the mission of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), "Promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida." The Office addresses public health nursing practice issues, provides technical assistance and consultation, and participates in disaster preparedness and response activities. The Office of Public Health Nursing supports education, collaboration, and research for more than 2,800 nursing staff and other clinicians in 67 county health departments, 22 Area Children's Medical Services offices, and one state hospital. The Office of Public Health Nursing leads ESF-8 Health and Medical Logistics Staffing.

Public Health Nursing Practice

The Nursing Practice Team is responsible for **leadership, workforce development, and consultation**. These core functions are designed to facilitate the delivery of essential public health services to meet the needs of the community and missions of the department and office. Each function is guided by the office's mission encompassing excellence in public health nursing **practice, education, research, and evaluation** to support and facilitate the delivery of high quality services to citizens and visitors to Florida.

Major Accomplishments Of The Past Year That Support The Practice Team Priorities

Leadership And Workforce Development

Nursing Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee- The State Surgeon General established the Nursing Workforce Ad Hoc Advisory Committee in December 2007 to identify and develop a sustainable discussion encompassing the nursing professional shortage being experienced in the state and to identify potential strategies and solutions. The Office of Public Health Nursing provided support and served as an advisory body to identify critical areas and possible actions to be taken and assisted with development of policy recommendations and final committee report.

Consultation and Technical Assistance- The Office of Public Health Nursing provides technical assistance and consultation for each county health department, Children's Medical Services area office, and central office unit. In 2008, the office provided technical assistance and consultation on Florida's approach to preparedness and sheltering to Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, New York, Tennessee, and Texas.



PHN Orientation Modules- In 2008 the training was revised and made available as a self-directed training on CD ROM and via Trak-It. The orientation consists of five modules and continuing education contact hours are provided upon completion. The updates include the Introduction of the State Surgeon General, Quad Council PHN Competencies, and the Minnesota DOH PHN Intervention Wheel.

PHN Leader Orientations- The quarterly orientation introduces new Public Health Nursing leaders to Florida Department of Health Central Office Divisions/Bureaus and their leaders and provides the opportunity for them to meet OPHN staff and learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the office. Twenty-one new nurse leaders received orientation during the fiscal year.

PHN Leaders' Nursing Conference- The conference theme was "Preparing and Thriving in Uncertain Times". The goal was to provide PHN leaders with resources to support public health excellence. Fifty of the sixty-seven Florida counties participated, one hundred and nine Florida PHN leaders attended and nineteen of the twenty-three speakers/presenters were PHN leaders.

Mentoring the Next Generation of Public Health Workforce- Mentoring and leadership opportunities were provided to undergraduate and graduate nursing students as well as MPH students from the three major state universities. A total of 12 students were mentored.

Continuing Education- The Office, through its CE provider number, assisted the Florida Department of Health Central Office, county health departments, and other state agencies by awarding 7,738 Continuing Education contact hours for 120 courses to 2,186 participants.

Public Health Nursing Competencies- The Office has produced a three-part professional development program (competency overview presentation, a self-assessment tool, and the construction of an individual development plan) based on the Quad Council Public Health Nursing Competencies. Three hundred nurses have participated in the program and Florida Public Health Association and Florida Association of Public Health Nurses recognized the program in their newsletters.

Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program- Over \$1.6 million was distributed to assist 422 nurses working in priority healthcare settings to repay nursing education student loans. The Office received a Davis Productivity Award for the program's improved customer service process.

Florida Public Health Institute- The Office, in conjunction with the Florida Public Health Institute led the planning and oversight of the two-week Masters course, "Introduction to Applied Public Health." Four universities and the Florida Department of Health were host sites with a total of 55 participants in attendance. Of the total participants, 12 received continuing education credits with a total of 70 CE available for nurses and other health professions. Three universities supported three master level course credits and 18 participants took advantage of this offer. Evaluations were excellent.

Public Health Preparedness

The Preparedness Team implements community infrastructure programs that increase preparedness planning and disaster resiliency, especially for vulnerable populations. The Preparedness programs and projects are: Florida Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Network, the State Emergency Responder and Volunteer in Florida (SERV-FL) Registry, Special Needs Shelter Program (SpNS), and Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP). Additionally, staff participates in Target Capabilities strategic planning, with direct office administrative oversight of 11 projects.



Major Accomplishments Of The Past Year That Support The Preparedness Team Priorities

The **Florida MRC Network** is responsible for developing a statewide system of MRC sites by coordinating efforts and providing resources, guidance, and technical assistance. The Network provides the statewide connectivity necessary to build capacity and readiness. MRC volunteers are trained to supplement and provide relief support during all-hazards response and public health activities. The majority of MRC volunteers are licensed health care volunteers.

- The Florida Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Network increased to 31 local sites, covering 57 of 6 counties, and exceeded the recruitment goal of new volunteers by 25%, from 3,578 to 4,953.
- Florida launched the first in the nation web-based training program on the MRC Core Competencies and offers continuing education credits (CE).
- A web-based training was created for ICS 100A and NIMS 700A through the Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (AHEC). CE is provided.
- Five MRC representatives participated in the MRC Federal Deployment Training.
- A resource modeling toolkit was launched for use by local MRC sites.
- A state MRC identification badge was implemented for MRC volunteers.
- A Quality Improvement Assessment process was established for assessing local MRC units.
- MRC State Coordinator participated in a national committee to develop curricula.
- Monthly volunteer counts were assessed and compared to recruitment strategies.
- Three poster sessions were presented this year at national conferences.
- The Florida Medical Reserve Corps Team was a recipient of a Davis Productivity Award for innovative volunteer recruitment.

The Florida MRC Network utilizes the responder management system, **SERV-FL (formerly FEHVR)**, a local tool for managing responder assets including credentialing, training, and skills with the benefit of being interconnected into a single state Registry. It provides the state with a uniform advance registration database for large scale disasters and mission tracking and is compatible with state emergency operations center systems. It links with state and national credentialing systems to verify health care licenses and specialties. SERV-FL is part of the national Emergency System for Advance Registry of Volunteer Health Professionals web system.

- Three statewide tabletop exercises, HSEEP compliant, were conducted utilizing SERV-FL.
- SERV-FL participated as one of two state programs in the ASPR national exercise.
- SERV-FL now links with FDENS, for additional notification capabilities.
- Reporting capabilities were expanded to support national reporting requirements, thus streamlining the reporting process.
- Through SERV-FL, hospital privileges are now verified for licensed health care volunteers.
- SERV-FL was expanded to support Central Office ESF-8 staffing, Behavioral Health Teams, and State Medical Response Teams.

The **Special Needs Shelter (SpNS) Program** is charged with developing a standardized, comprehensive, county, regional and state operational approach to sheltering vulnerable populations. Currently, 140 shelter locations statewide are prepared to ensure service continuity and quality care to residents with special needs and their care givers. SpNS Program and regional consultants coordinate with diverse community partners and state agencies to assure shelters of last resort for citizens who are unable to vacate during emergencies due to complicating health conditions. The Community **Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Program (NEPP)** is responsible for organizing and educating neighborhoods to increase their level of preparedness and resiliency in handling all types of health-related emergency incidents. NEPP mitigates the massive surge on medical resources and roads.

- The first statewide shelter deployment exercise was conducted with over 100 participants and with the involvement of all seven regions.
- Continuing education on managing chronic diseases was implemented through University of Miami.
- Training was completed on sheltering operations and management, focusing on vulnerable populations.

- Refresher skills courses were provided to 180 health care professionals who work in shelters.
- Public Health Preparedness Training was provided to participants by training level: Awareness Level – 167, Operations Level – 110, and Leadership Level – 56.
- Emergency Response to Terrorism Training was provided to 621 paramedics, law enforcement, Veteran’s Administration and other hospitals, fire and rescue professionals. A variety of adult learning options are available for completing this course: two-day face to face; one-day web-based followed by a day of competency based hands-on training; and a web-based refresher course. This was coordinated through a contract with University of Miami.
- NEPP expanded to nine counties with 24 communities completing community preparedness plans and impacting at least **13,343** Florida residents.
- NEPP executed 24 Memorandums of Agreement with participating communities.

Goals for the Office of Public Health Nursing for FY 09/10:

- By December 1, 2009, establish a network of MRC and NEPP mentors for building local projects.
- By January 30, 2010, develop a SpNS discharge planning tool and update all operation guidance.
- By March 30, 2010, two HSEEP statewide exercises will be conducted for MRC and SpNS.
- By June 30, 2010, increase new and active MRC volunteers by 25% from the previous year.
- By June 30, 2010, 10 Quality Improvement Assessments of MRC sites will be completed.
- Establish 12 new NEPP communities by June 30, 2010 resulting in 36 NEPP communities.
- By June 30, 2010, SpNS consultants will train 50% of NEPP communities on Home Care.
- By June 1, 2010, SERV-FL will be expanded for use of all ESF-8 staff for missions.
- Explore and expand distance learning capability and methodology for delivery of trainings and conferences due to funding and travel limitations.
- Continue to support the eleven Public Health Preparedness Projects administered by the Office.
- Facilitate and promote effective communication among the Central office Divisions, Bureaus, and Offices and County Health Departments.
- Facilitate the uniformity and revisions of County Health Department QI Tools and Process.

Major initiatives/conferences and focus of the Office of Public Health Nursing for the next 12 months:

- Lead the Central Office staffing for H1N1 vaccination planning.
- Lead for safety training for H1N1 mass vaccination campaign.
- Expand the use of SERV-FL to support all ESF-8 staffing and logistics statewide.
- Attend national, required ASPR conference on MRC and volunteer registries.
- Achieve statewide coverage of Florida MRC Network.
- Guide established NEPP communities for conducting HSEEP exercise workshop/tabletop.
- Utilize the Interagency Committee for developing community guidance on vulnerable populations.
- The office is working collaboratively with the Florida Public Health Institute to offer Grand Rounds learning opportunities to public health staff and beyond.
- Update and deliver training programs that assure effective emergency response.
- Manage the Healthcare Workforce Surge (HWFS) Project contract. HWFS project is intended to support a statewide healthcare workforce disaster response across numerous agencies. This project is the first of its kind in the Nation. The project will be conducted in phases with a goal to develop an operational HWFS Plan to serve as the mechanism for a unified response of a multidisciplinary workforce to disaster sites throughout Florida. The HWFS Plan will become an integral portion of the Health and Medical Annex (ESF-8) of the State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
- Home Care series provides preparedness education and training for communities. The goal of the Home Care Series is to provide communities with educational resources to shelter at home, thereby keeping the “worried well” out of acute care facilities. The series consists of three trainings courses: *Home Care Training Course* for a general audience, *Home Care for Children: A Training Guide for Caregivers*, and *Home Care for Seniors Training* for an audience of older adults and caregivers. PHP Trainers and SpNS Consultants will provide the trainings.