

RC/PIO News & Notes 3-15-2024



FROM Eric Jens, GA DPH Risk Communicator
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News and Notes

The March meeting for the State Board of Health was held this week. There is also a Crisis Care Plan exercise, final updates to meetings scheduled for next week, and more to highlight.

State Board of Health meeting



At the monthly state Board of Health meeting Tuesday, Dr. Cherie Drenzek told the board about the recent decline in respiratory illnesses in Georgia. She said CDC recommendation changes are a scientific-founded approach to prevention and control, although vigilance is still needed to continue recent trends. Dr. Chris Rustin told the board the WIC program is one of the core public health functions that is receiving a greater focus. Nancy Nydam along with Ernst and Young representatives provided an overview of the campaign to encourage all those eligible for WIC to consider taking advantage of the benefits.

Crisis Care Plan Exercise



Roles and responsibilities were identified and discussed at a tabletop exercise for the state DPH Crisis Care Plan. The plan is used in preparation for situations in which resources including personnel become rapidly scarce for those providing care. The Thursday exercise this week was held at the state DPH EOC with about 60 in attendance and many more joining virtually.



Meetings in Albany

Risk Communicators meeting

We're looking forward to a strong turnout and great participation at next week's annual DPH statewide Risk Communicators meeting. It will be at the Dougherty County Health Department March 19 in Albany. This is the first in-person meeting for the group since April 9, 2019 in Macon.

Media / CERC training

We have 61 registered to attend the March 20, DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication class at the Dougherty County Health Department. While we are close to capacity, don't hesitate to reach out directly if you are available and interested in taking part.

Dennis Jones

A celebration of life event was held last weekend for Dennis Jones, the original Healthcare Preparedness Program director for Georgia. Thanks to former DPH EP Epidemiologist Wendy Smith for the pictures and comments:

A nurse, among other things, by training, Dennis was very well connected to the healthcare community. Through his innovative approach, planning guides were developed and widely dispersed. Many issues were addressed including planning for bioterrorism or pandemic events in the healthcare setting. At that time, there had not been a system wide approach to planning for these scenarios, and Dennis brought partners together to prepare the healthcare community.



- *Jeff Jeffries (second PHEP Director), Lee Smith (original PHEP Director), myself, Mark Palen (One of original ECs), Calita Richards (original pharmacist for SNS), Katherine (Tuggle) Stringer (previous interim HPP Director) and Dr. Pat O'Neal; it was nice to see everyone, although sad circumstances.*

Next Week Preview

Tuesday is the annual statewide DPH Risk Communicators meeting in Albany, followed by the DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training at the same location on Wednesday. Thursday is the annual Fulton County Board of Health Emergency Preparedness Summit. Spring starts at 11:06 PM Tuesday.

About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training, and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov