

Preparing Mass Fatality Plans for Pandemic Influenza and including MRC Volunteers Assistance

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Introductions

- Name, Title
- Health Department, City/State
- Rural/ Metro?
- Do you have an active MRC?
- What is the “type” of MRC volunteers that you have?

Introduction

Traditional mass fatality plans

vs.

Mass fatality plans for pandemic flu
or natural death surge plans

Perspective from Rural KY

- Situation in Green River District, KY
- Situation in Lawrence County, KY
- Coroner/legal issues
- Input from professional associations
 - National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO)
 - International Association of Private Funeral Home Directors
 - CDC/ASPR

National Review of Mass Fatality Plans

Different types of state and local plans:

- Mass fatality plan not specific to pandemic flu
- Short appendix with pandemic flu implications
- Mortuary surge plans
- Central Collection Points vs. County specifics

Concepts for a new Natural Death Surge Plan in Kentucky

- Reasons
- Goals
- Requirements: NIMS-compliance
- State buy-in

Historical Perspective

- Practical
- Historical events
- Precedents set
- Public Perspective
- Public Education

MRC Challenge

- Educate
- Educate
- Educate
- Be realistic on the capabilities and capacities of your MRC.
- Identification
- confidentiality

Step 1: Review your jurisdiction's Legal Authority

- Coroner's role and authority in mass fatality events
- Difference between accidents/homicides/terrorism vs. mass influenza deaths
- Declaration of death and issuance of death certificates

Step 2: Engage Traditional and Non-Traditional Partners

- Types of partners needed
- Engagement strategies
- Barriers to working with specific partners

Step 3: Conduct Background Research

- Identify funeral homes, cemeteries and crematoriums
- Assess mortuary capacities
- Build relationships with influential leaders
- Research mortuary products
- Identify facilities
- Understand NIMS

Identify funeral homes, cemeteries and crematoriums

- Identify all facilities and plot on a map
- Understand 'market share' of each funeral home and identify the largest
- Be cognizant of building positive relationships and mutual understanding
- Understand politics

Assess mortuary capacities

- Cold body storage
- Body bags
- Embalming supplies
- Staff
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Vehicles
- Facility space

Build relationships with influential leaders

- Who are key stakeholders?
- Who is necessary to carry out plan?
- Who enacts the legal authority to activate the plan?
- Who will communicate with the public?

Research mortuary products

- Cold storage: trucks, ice rinks, Polar King™, private sector resources
- Body containment: body bags, BioSeal™, vaults, zigler cases, biodegradable caskets
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Identify Potential CCP facilities

Requirements for a Central Collection Point (CCP):

- Mutual aid agreement with funeral home
- Large enough space for human remains processing
- Away from public view, if possible
- Facilities for staff: bathrooms, kitchen
- Office space for administrative work

Identify Potential FAC facilities

Requirements for a Family Assistance Center (FAC):

- Parking
- Capacity for privacy/social distancing: small rooms or partitioning
- Admin space, bathrooms and break rooms
- Capacity for a phone bank
- Website
- Normal function will be closed during pandemic: workforce available

Understand NIMS

- Stakeholders may need training in NIMS
- More information: www.fema.gov

Step 4: Planning Operations

- Transport of human remains from homes and facilities
- Identification of remains
- Declaration of death and death certificates
- Securing valuables
- Security needs
- Body storage
- Temporary interment/burial and tracking
- Family Assistance Centers

Transport of human remains from homes and facilities

- Closed funeral homes: use their vehicles and staff
- Home deaths: use of volunteers, family members and hospice
- Call EOC for additional assistance
- Special concerns: obese decedents, homeless and live-alone populations, others?
- Training volunteers on body handling
- Conflicting info on disease spread from decedents
- Risk communication is key!

> Not an EMS function!

Identification of remains

- DNA sampling
- Positive ID from family or physician
- Special concerns: homeless and live-alone populations

Declaration of death and death certificates

- Understand legal authorities
- Explore ideas to expand numbers of those able to do these functions
- Special concerns: tourists, foreigners, homeless populations
- Suspicious deaths

Securing valuables

- Plan to store and track valuables removed from bodies
- Mutual aid agreements for storage
- Recommend that valuables not be stored at CCP
- Staff issues: is this a role MRC could assist with?

Security needs at CCP

- Managed by CCP Coordinator
- Police vs. unarmed security
- 911 if necessary
- Credentialing of all staff and volunteers
- Keep out media!

Body storage

- Identify cold storage resources
- Make plans for additional storage beyond current cold storage capabilities
- Expedite interment
- Staff/volunteer training
- Risk communication

Temporary burial and body tracking

- Containers for burial
- GPS markers and tracking
- Private cemeteries vs. public land
- Grave spacing: ~1 acre/1,000 bodies
- Costs to family and government

Family Assistance Centers

- Volunteers needed
- Numerous tasks that MRC can handle
- Insurance and estate issues
- Grief counseling/mental health
- May manage home death calls, decedent pick-up requests
- Must have walk-in service and website
- No media!

Step 5: Plan Execution Phases

- Awareness
- Alert
- Activation

Communication is always a problem,
MRC may be able to help spread the
word to community areas.

Overview of Region 3 Natural Death Surge Plan

- NIMS-compliant plan
- 2 Central Collection Points
- Family Assistance Centers at local colleges
- Use of home hospice for provisional death certificate issuance and possibly transport
- Use of public land for temporary and permanent burials; will later become a memorial site
- Public engagement meetings and exercises

Resources

NACCHO's Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Template

- Conduct your background research
- Use tool to prepare a tabletop exercise
- Download tool at

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/pandemictabletop.cfm>

Resources

- Resource and additional information provided in the folder.

Thank you!

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