



DiversityPreparedness.Org E-Newsletter

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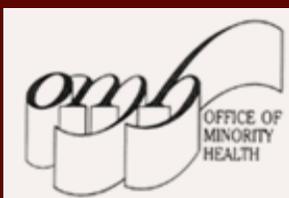
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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Fifth Issue of the DiversityPreparedness.Org E-Newsletter. This issue provides an update on the H1N1 outbreak and features Undocumented Immigrants, Non-U.S. Citizens, and Disasters as the Topic of the Month, providing links to a variety of resources, promising practices, and lessons learned. Additionally, Audra Rutens of Heartland Human Care Services discusses her organization's experiences working with culturally diverse populations in the Voices from the Field Section.

Director's Desk:

Thoughts from Dennis P. Andrulis, PhD, MPH, Director of the Center for Health Equality and Associate Dean for Research at the Drexel University School of Public Health.



Mid-2009 H1N1 pandemic and the vulnerability of diverse communities for the Fall flu season

In issuing its notice of pandemic flu the World Health Organization acknowledged the extensive geographic spread of the disease—a finding that is readily apparent in the US where cases have reached 1 million as of late June--rather than its severity. By its own description, WHO recognizes that differences in populations are significantly associated not just with spread but especially with how devastating pandemic flu can be. Some of the characteristics that describe vulnerability of particular populations—those with chronic conditions, HIV, tuberculosis and other diseases—are often higher in racially and ethnically diverse populations. Adding to these and other vulnerabilities, as well as the susceptibility of even healthier diverse communities, is lack of health care access, failure to effectively communicate and mobilize neighborhoods, and failure to plan and prepare for these events.¹

These summary statements are timely not only in the context of the current outbreak but as many anticipate a more virulent fall flu season this year. These WHO statements capture a set of points that once again reaffirm our **National Consensus Statement on Emergency Preparedness for Racially and Ethnically Diverse Communities**, as well as the importance of operationalizing the guiding principles on communication, engaging communities, information development and dissemination, training and other priorities that accompany the statement—an objective that will be completed this fall.

Effectiveness in reaching these populations and meeting these challenges for this fall must also work through modeling behavior using accurate and acceptable public messages and taking other steps to mitigate rumors linked to stereotypes, presumptions and misapprehensions about who is to blame such as immigrants, and Mexican or other Hispanic/Latino individuals. In so doing, we are working to increase the likelihood of an inclusive strategy that can strive to benefit all for the current pandemic or those we will face in the future.

1. WHO Considerations for assessing the severity of an influenza pandemic, May 29, 2009 Weekly epidemiological record, v 84, 197-212.
2. Swine Flue Issue Brief, Center for Biosecurity, UPMC, April 30, 2009.

Topic of the Month: Undocumented Immigrants, Non-U.S. Citizens, and Disasters



A report recently released by the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that there are approximately 11.9 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States, a population which comprises 4% of the Nation's population and 5.4% of its workforce. On top of the social, cultural, and linguistic barriers that confront diverse communities in the face of disasters, undocumented immigrants and non-citizens face a series of additional challenges that inhibit them from acting in accordance with emergency warnings and receiving post-disaster recovery services. Past disasters have shown that undocumented immigrants may be reluctant to act in compliance with evaluation orders due to fear of deportation and that non-citizens could be wrongfully denied recovery aid due to their immigration status or because they lost important immigration documents. The list of resources below is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather provide an overview of some of the legal and social issues unique to undocumented immigrants and non-citizens in disasters and guidance for public health professionals, emergency managers, and other key stakeholders.

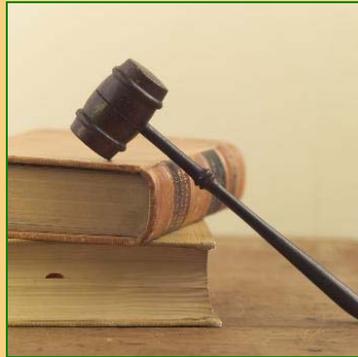
Planning:

- **Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Among Immigrants and Refugees:** Summarizes advice from an expert panel of public health scientists and service program managers on strategies to meet the needs of immigrants and refugees in an influenza pandemic.
- **Disaster Preparedness in Urban Immigrant Communities: Lessons Learned from Recent Catastrophic Events and their Relevance to Latino and Asian Communities in Southern California:** Explores the disaster experiences of Latino and Asian immigrant communities in Southern California and assesses the disaster-related services available to meet their needs.
- **Addressing the Needs of Immigrants and Limited English Communities in Disaster Planning and Relief:** The National Immigration Law Center has developed this resource which describes lessons learned from working with immigrant communities in disasters.
- **San Diego Firestorm 2007 Report- Fire Impact on Farmworkers & Migrant Communities in North County:** Documents the impact of the 2007 wildfires on farmworkers in North San Diego County and provides recommendations for future action.
- **Strategies for Improving Influenza Immunization Rates Among Hard-To-Reach Populations:** Discusses strategies for immunizing hard-to-reach populations, including undocumented immigrants.

- **Averting Disaster—What the California Wildfires Can Teach Us About Reaching Latinos in Times of Crisis:** Describes the impact of the 2007 California wildfires on Latino and immigrant communities, the implications of existing policies for undocumented immigrants, and recommendations for policy change.

Advocacy:

- **Memorandum- Non-citizen Eligibility for Disaster Related Assistance:**
Responds to requests for analysis of non-citizen eligibility for disaster-related government benefits.



- **National Council of Raza Warns of the Stigmatization of Immigrants in the Wake of Swine Flu Outbreak:** This press release describes the public health risks that accompany the stigmatization of a specific group following an outbreak.
- **The Eye of the Storm- How the Government and Private Response to Hurricane Katrina Failed Latinos:** Discusses how the Latino population was adversely affected during Hurricane Katrina because public and private disaster relief institutions did not respond to significant demographic changes in the Gulf region.
- **Preliminary Report- The State of Civil and Human Rights for Migrant Communities in San Diego County During the Firestorms of October 2007:** Explores irregularities that occurred during the initial week of the firestorms throughout San Diego County and presents an initial compilation of civil and human rights violations as documented by volunteer-based community organizations.

News Articles:

- **Hurricane Katrina Wrecks New Orleans Bangladeshi Community:** Provides empirical examples of how Hurricane Katrina affected Bangladeshi immigrants living in New Orleans.
- **Illegal Immigrants Opted to Stay During Hurricane Gustav:** Documents the reluctance of undocumented Hispanic/Latino workers to evacuate New Orleans due to fear of deportation.
- **The Unseen Victims of California's Wildfires:** Describes cultural and linguistic barriers to meeting the preparedness, response, and recovery needs of undocumented farmworkers in Southern California.
- **Ethnic Media Cover the Fires:** The article discusses the communication and trust issues surrounding undocumented farmworkers, many of whom are geographically and culturally isolated.

Resources for Individuals:

- **Fact Sheet- Immigrant Eligibility for Disaster Assistance:** This fact sheet provides a concise overview of the services immigrants, with and without documentation, are eligible for in the wake of a disaster.
- **Immigrants and Disaster Assistance:** This webpage provides links to a variety of resources on issues surrounding immigration, current legislation, and disasters.

Key Organizations:

- **National Council of La Raza:** NCLR is the largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. They have been vocal in providing policy recommendations to reduce the disproportionately adverse disaster outcomes experienced by Latino communities.
- **National Immigration Law Center:** Primarily focused on immigration related legislation, this center works to protect and promote the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their family members.

- **San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium:**
This advocacy group is concerned with immigrant rights, distinguishing myth from fact, and providing relevant information to advocates, policy makers, and the general public.

Below are links to recent and upcoming events and initiatives as well as recently published reports and articles.

Events & Training:

Webinar: Emergency Communication and Response with Racial, Ethnic & Minority Communities

Thursday, July 9th, 2009

2:00 PM- 3:30 PM EST

This webinar will discuss the challenges of communicating with racially and ethnically diverse communities in emergencies. Specific topics include the role of community health centers, the recent H1N1 outbreak, and strategies for utilizing social media. For registration information [CLICK HERE](#).

Cultural Competency Curriculum for Disaster Response

The Office of Minority Health (OMH) has recently released a set of online courses to provide guidance for emergency personal responding to the needs of diverse communities following a disaster.

The curriculum is grounded in OMH's CLAS Standards which spans the topics of culturally competent care, language access services, and organizational supports. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

Illinois Public Health Emergency Preparedness Summit: Strengthening Illinois Through Community Engagement

July 14-16, 2009

Oak Brook, Illinois

This multi-disciplinary program is designed to benefit a broad range of public health professionals involved in emergency preparedness, planning and response, including state and local health professionals in public health administration, environmental health, nursing, communicable disease, laboratory services, food protection, immunization, hospital emergency services, allied health and other emergency response areas. For additional information [CLICK HERE](#).

The National Conference on Community Preparedness

August 9-12, 2009

Arlington, Virginia

The 2009 National Conference on Community Preparedness: The Power of Citizen Corps is being hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Preparedness Division and the International Association of Emergency Managers. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

Initiatives & Publications:

California's Emergency Preparedness Efforts for Culturally Diverse Communities:

This report presents the findings from a statewide assessment of emergency preparedness programs and initiatives for racially and ethnically diverse communities in California. By using a multi-faceted research methodology, the report charts the current status of programs; persisting individual and organizational barriers and challenges to meeting the needs of diverse populations; promising practices particularly for engaging communities, building trust, fostering collaboration, and informing the development of culturally competent services; and program, policy and funding recommendations for future work. To view the full report [CLICK HERE](#).

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Among Immigrants and Refugees

This article, appearing in *AJPH*, summarizes the advice from an expert panel of public health scientists and service program managers on strategies to meet the needs immigrants and refugees in an influenza pandemic. For information on how to access the full article [CLICK HERE](#).

Developing a Disaster Preparedness Campaign Targeting Low-Income Latino Immigrants: Focus Group Results for Project PREP

This article, recently appearing in *JHCPU*, describes the process and findings of a study to develop a disaster preparedness program for low-income Latino immigrants in Los Angeles, California. The view the full article [CLICK HERE](#).

Translating Disaster

An article recently released online by the American Prospect describes the partnerships that have emerged between the Hispanic/Latino community and a variety of organizations following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To view the full article [CLICK HERE](#).

ECHO Participates in Emergency Response Exercise to Strengthen Emergency Preparedness Services for LEP Communities

Emergency, Community and Health Outreach (ECHO) Minnesota recently took part in a large-scale emergency response exercise with 17 local public health agencies. ECHO used their expertise on populations with limited-English proficiency (LEP) to help ensure that emergency information is made available to diverse communities in Minnesota. For more information [CLICK HERE](#) or visit the [ECHO website](#).

Recent Events and Updates:

Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu)

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization upgraded the pandemic alert level from 5 to 6, officially classifying the novel H1N1 outbreak as a pandemic. Below are links to selected resources of H1N1 and the culturally/linguistically diverse communities. For a comprehensive list of resources and translated materials on H1N1 and pan flu [CLICK HERE](#).



- Arab Community Center for Economic Social Services (ACCESS) issues swine flu advisory ([English](#) and [Arabic](#))
- ECHO Minnesota has produced translated information on H1N1 in printed, audio, and video formats ([English](#), [Hmong](#), [Spanish](#), and [Somali](#))
- [Social Stigma Attached to "Swine Flu"](#)-A FAQ for U.S. Elected Leaders and Health Officials
- Key Facts about Swine Influenza ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))

Start of Hurricane Season

With the start of Atlantic hurricane season, which officially spans from June 1st to November 30th, comes the threat of storms ravaging the Gulf Coast region and Eastern seaboard of the United States. For a comprehensive list of resources and translated materials on hurricanes [CLICK HERE](#).

Voices from the Field: Lorena Audra Rutens*, Heartland Human Care Services, Inc.

An increasingly recognized concern in emergency preparedness is the inadequate engagement and education of low income and ethnically diverse communities. Despite new efforts to increase public awareness, some populations are still not receiving vital messages clearly and in a timely fashion when a disaster occurs. The recent swine flu pandemic illustrated this continued breach in public messaging systems.

"Despite the media blasts and new social marketing and media tools—such as blogs and Twitter—some minority and immigrant populations are still not receiving the message," said Lorena Rutens, Heartland Human Care Services in Chicago. "We heard from our nonprofit partners that clients were filing through the door misinformed and confused as to how to respond to all of the pandemic warnings. Some of these clients did not have access to television or Internet. Some lacked adequate English skills and reading abilities. What these clients needed was for a trusted authority to give them the facts and tell them how to prepare and respond."

Heartland Human Care Services has served displaced persons since 1888 and began a formal disaster recovery department in 2005, following the Gulf Coast storms. Heartland coordinated citywide disaster recovery work for 10,000 Katrina and Rita evacuees. It was during that disaster recovery work that Heartland became acutely aware of the large gaps in disaster recovery service provision for diverse and low income populations. Based on these past experiences, Rutens observed a potential solution to increase emergency preparedness in minority, refugee, and immigrant populations.

"Many outlying populations are disenfranchised, confused or even fearful of traditional government agencies and media," Rutens said. "To improve upon these mainstream information sources, we need to educate self-identified local community leaders—church pastors, teachers and nonprofits service providers—on disaster preparedness and enhanced emergency communication strategies. Many clients are already engaging with these institutions on a daily basis, so it is only natural that they turn to them as a source of information in times of need or fear."

Rutens suggested that funders should be seeking programs and initiatives that target, educate, and empower local urban underserved communities to become more resilient to disasters and emergencies. Using nontraditional communication channels, agencies and educational institutions can implement “train the trainer” series that promote the unique ability of community leaders to reach multiple diverse audiences. Research based materials should be created, gathered, and culturally formatted to educate underserved and diverse citizens on how to create family preparedness plans. These materials need to be tailored to the appropriate audience and translated if necessary.

Rutens concluded that, “unbeknownst to many, the American Red Cross is often unable to provide services after 72 hours post disaster. Unprepared low income and minority families can face homelessness due to the many emergency needs after a fire, flooding, and extreme weather events.” By teaching community leaders, they can in turn teach and personally disseminate critical information to their various channels and networks. Diverse, refugee, and minority communities will then be properly informed and ultimately human suffering and tragedy will be reduced.

* This piece was written by **Lorena Audra Rutens**, M.S.W. , Program & Policy Liaison, Crisis Prevention & Disaster Recovery at **Heartland Human Care Services** in Chicago, Illinois.

We encourage you to share the National Resource Center with your peers and colleagues and welcome you to link to the website. Please also feel free to e-mail your comments and any feedback to our team. We look forward to working with you to making this site a resourceful and useful tool in advancing the preparedness of our nation's diverse communities.

Sincerely,

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