

Bioterrorism Guide for Texas Hospitals Released, Training Begins

A bioterrorism guidance manual designed to assist Texas hospitals in preparing for a bioterrorist act, contagious disease outbreak, or other public health threat or emergency has been released.

Disaster Preparedness and Response in Texas Hospitals: Part I, Bioterrorism was developed by more than 100 experts in emergency response and hospital planning. The manual is the first comprehensive guidance publication developed for regional and community bioterrorism planning. The Texas Institute for Health Policy Research was contracted to develop the manual and conduct orientation by the Texas Department of Health, with funding provided by the Health Resource and Services Administration, or HRSA, a component of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Future editions of the manual will address other types of terrorist attacks and disasters.

The urgency to develop regional disaster planning initiatives was recently underscored by a March 12 report from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations that described a "brewing cataclysm" of underfunding, inexperience and unpreparedness of emergency response capabilities across America's communities.

At a ceremony April 10, Texas Commissioner of Health Eduardo Sánchez, M.D., and Alexander E. Kosyk of the federal HRSA Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program commended the more than 100 emergency response and hospital planning experts who contributed to *Disaster Preparedness and Response in Texas Hospitals: Part I, Bioterrorism*.

Texas Medical Center experts honored at the ceremony included Stephen Adams, pharmacy manager, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital; Kevin Kite-Powell, also a St. Luke's pharmacy manager; Scott Lillibridge, M.D., professor and director of the Center for Biosecurity at The University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston; Sharon Marsh, administrative manager, Houston Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Strategic Development; and Parsa Miraji, M.D., director of information technology, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston's Office of Biotechnology.

Copies of *Disaster Preparedness and Response in Texas Hospitals: Part I, Bioterrorism* are available from the Office of the State Epidemiologist, Texas Department of Health, (512) 458-7219. ■

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