



## From the Director

This beautiful season is a reminder that change is a normal and expected part of life. This certainly holds true for, for us, in Emergency Preparedness and Response at MDH. On Friday, October 21, 2016, the Commissioner of Health announced an organizational structure change at MDH. He has created a group of centers, to be led by Deb Burns and LuAnne McNichols, which will report directly to him. The Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response will be a part of this structure, along with the Center for Public Health Practice, the Center for Health Equity and the Center for Health Statistics. We do not anticipate that this organizational change will impact the day to day operations of EPR, but we wanted to make sure you were among the first to hear of it.

Thank you to the Medical Reserve Corp Behavior Health strike teams that were deployed in response to flooding incidents this past month. Traveling with the damage assessments teams as they moved throughout the state, the teams provided support to impacted communities by sharing printed materials with information about coping with stressful situations, and providing a listening ear to those who were impacted by flooding.

I would also like to thank everyone who participated in the Northern Lights 2016 Exercise. Held at Camp Ripley, this federal level exercise examined a nuclear power plant response three weeks after a release. This first of its kind exercise was a great opportunity to work with both state and federal partners.

Happy Fall!

*Cheryl*

## CDC's New Operational Readiness Review

Minnesota has completed its first series of operational readiness reviews (ORRs). The ORR is a new biennial Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requirement aimed at evaluating state and local Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) jurisdictions' planning for and exercising of mass dispensing related Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) capabilities ([see http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/capabilities/DSLRCapabilitiesJuly.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/capabilities/DSLRCapabilitiesJuly.pdf), capabilities 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15). The four ORR rating categories are early, intermediate, established, and advanced. CDC's goal is for all CRI jurisdictions to reach the *established* rating level in all ORR capabilities by the year 2022.

Earlier this year MDH and Minnesota's 17 CRI jurisdictions, in coordination with the CDC, participated in extensive documentation reviews. Analysis of our results have helped to identify areas for future development and target technical assistance resources. Early glimpses of statewide ORR data indicate our largest overall gaps exist in capabilities 9 and 14, and greatest progress has been made in capabilities 3 and 6. The data also indicate that all jurisdictions, including at the state and at the national level, have room to grow in planning for and exercising demobilization of resources. Across the nation, staffing and security have been identified as the areas where the biggest gaps exist when it comes to operational readiness.

As a "rising tide lifts all boats," jurisdictions demonstrating best practices or creative approaches have the opportunity to provide leadership to fledgling CRI jurisdictions. Similarly, technical assistance provided to MDH by CDC can be shared with LPH as a resource. The next series of ORR documentation reviews and site visits will be completed during 2018 and will include process improvements identified during this past spring.

### Inside this Edition

From the Director, CDC's New Operational Readiness Review, Partner Messaging Using Email, Help MDH "Zap Zika" Using Social Media, Preparedness Apps for Mobile Devices, Meet the Staff, Important Dates

## Partner Messaging Using Email

Local and tribal health departments (LHDs/THDs) receive a variety of email messages from MDH staff. Many of those communications are “general messages” that provide LHDs/THDs with program and administrative information. However, in situations when time-sensitive important information about health threats needs to be shared with LHDs/THDs, MDH will send out messages via the Health Alert Network (HAN).

A message sent out via the HAN will include the following characteristics:

- Message subject starts with *Health Alert* or *Health Advisory*
- Acknowledgement link is included for local and tribal health departments, as well as hospitals and clinics
- Message may include action steps for immediate action by health care providers

Only the most urgent messages originating from MDH or the CDC are sent out using the HAN. Such messages are sent first to local and tribal health departments, who then forward the information on to contacts at hospitals, clinics, urgent care centers, or convenience clinics. Finally, the message is targeted to the doctors, nurses and other partners who need it most.

To learn more and see examples of recent Health Alerts, visit the MDH Health Alert Network website (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/han/>)

## Help MDH “Zap Zika” Using Social Media



MDH has been awarded three CDC grants to work on Zika. To coordinate efforts, MDH has formed a cross-departmental Zika communications team. The team includes staff from Emergency Preparedness and Response, the Vectorborne Diseases Unit, and the Birth Defects Monitoring & Analysis Unit, as well as the department’s Communications Office.

Because Minnesota is considered a “phase one” state – *meaning there’s currently no local transmission of Zika* – MDH’s Zika communications activities are focused on preventing travel-associated infections and educating pregnant (or soon-to-be pregnant) couples on how to protect themselves to prevent birth defects. Social media will be used as an outreach strategy, especially during the upcoming “warm-weather getaway” travel season.

You can help us get the messages out in your communities by liking the [MDH Facebook page \(@mnhealth\)](#) and following [MDH on Twitter \(@mnhealth\)](#) and sharing these posts from your personal and organizational accounts



### Preparedness Apps for Mobile Devices

#### American Red Cross First Aid App

First Aid by American Red Cross provides free lifesaving first aid instruction and disaster preparedness information, including videos and simple step-by-step advice. Preloaded content provides instant access to safety information, even without internet access.

<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps>

### Meet the Staff



#### Amy Smith—Public Health Preparedness Consultant—South Central

Amy Smith is the new PHPC for the South Central Region. She comes to MDH with 25 years of county related experience. She began her career at Blue Earth County and served in a variety of roles in both Human Services and Public Health as a planner, case manager, and Seniors Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL) specialist. Most recently, Amy worked for South Country Health Alliance (county-based managed care), developing care management and in Operations, managing enrollment and relationships with business partners.

### Important Dates

**November 16-17, 2016** ---- 2016 M-STEP Conference-----Brooklyn Park-----<https://hennepintech.edu/cts/pages/1243>

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