



The University of Maryland  
Center for Health & Homeland Security

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## Director's Message

*By Michael Greenberger, CHHS Founder and Director*



*Founder and Director  
Michael Greenberger, JD*

As we have now entered the third year of the pandemic, our CHHS staff continues working tirelessly to provide guidance, planning, and training for state and local governments, public and private academic institutions, and hospitals on strategies to combat what has become a once in a lifetime, deadly public health crisis.

This newsletter highlights a sampling of our new and significant contributions concerning the pandemic, in addition to our work in cybersecurity and other areas of emergency preparedness.

For example, we report about the way Public Health Director Trudy Henson and Law &

Policy Analyst Hanna Leonard have used a generous grant from the State of Maryland to develop important recommendations and training to improve pandemic care within Long Term Care Facilities, like nursing homes, that have been the epicenters of COVID infections around the country.

Similarly, CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Ellen Cornelius is providing support to one of our area's largest county governments in coordinating economic recovery efforts from the financial devastation wrought by the pandemic.

Elsewhere, we report on the findings and recommendations of CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Christine Gentry and Senior Policy Analyst Shelly Gooding concerning the largely unrecognized serious stress management issues incurred by the Nation's emergency managers who have been at the forefront of responding to the pandemic.

While the pandemic still captures much of our attention, the newsletter also highlights important work we are doing on developing effective emergency responses to more traditional disasters. There is, for example, a report on CHHS Continuity Director Eric Oddo and CHHS Law & Policy Analyst Chang Won Kang's facilitation of a tabletop exercise concerning how to respond effectively to a major rush hour commuter train derailment spreading over federal, public, and private land. The numerous participants included emergency management leadership from military, federal, state and local responders.

*Continued on page 3*



CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Ian Hamilton (pictured in center) participates in a CBRNE functional exercise at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama.



CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analysts Netta Squires and Lisa Mantel distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits at Little Falls Library in Montgomery County. Squires and Mantel are part of a team, including CHHS Senior Policy Analysts Jessica Pryor, Myra Derbyshire and Patrick Fleming, which has been supporting rapid test kit distribution planning and operations in Montgomery County.

## Director's Message (continued)

*Continued from cover*

We also discuss important new developments in our cybersecurity work. For example, Markus Rauschecker, CHHS Cybersecurity Director and professor in three different law school cyber courses, wrote a successful application on behalf of our partner, the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, focusing on the significant cyber academic work CHHS has done at the law school. The application was granted and led to membership on the new and prestigious Academic Engagement Network of U.S. Cyber Command. Carey Law was the only law school named among the 84 prominent academic institutions selected; and the law

school's membership was specifically highlighted by Cyber Command at the organizational meeting of the network as the only institution focusing on the law of cybersecurity.

CHHS Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin, in conjunction with Maryland State Senator Katie Fry Hester, a leader in the Maryland General Assembly's cyber efforts, conducted an all-encompassing statewide cybersecurity study provoked by a series of crippling cyber attacks within the state. The Maryland Cybersecurity Council, under the leadership of Maryland Attorney General, Brian Frosh, provided the organizational

framework for completing the study. Yelin was also assisted by the hard and effective work of CHHS student externs and testified about the final report to a joint General Assembly committee. The final report includes a series of important recommendations for the Maryland General Assembly's consideration in its upcoming legislative session.

In May 2022, CHHS will celebrate its 20th anniversary. We are very proud of our work, reflected in the following pages.

*Michael Buehner*

## US Cyber Command Selects University of Maryland Carey School of Law to be Part of its Academic Engagement Network

### **Maryland Carey Law is the first law school chosen to be part of the Network.**

2022 marks the beginning of the new Academic Engagement Network, launched by US Cyber Command, to engage with the academic community. CHHS is proud to announce that Maryland Carey Law has been selected as a member of this newly created network. Maryland Carey Law was chosen by US Cyber Command due to the Law School's strong cyber law program, developed and lead by CHHS. The academic partnership with US Cyber Command will provide a mutually beneficial relationship between the US Cyber Command, CHHS and Maryland Carey Law.

US Cyber Command launched the Network to support and enhance four primary lines of effort: future workforce development, applied cyber research, applied analytics, and strategic issues. As a law school with specialized programs in cyber law and policy, US Cyber Command will engage with Maryland Carey Law to study legal and policy challenges in cybersecurity. Indeed, US Cyber Command specifically highlighted Maryland Carey Law as being the only law school that within the Network and highlighted the need for more law and policy engagement.

As part of the Academic Engagement Network, Maryland Carey Law students and faculty will have access to several valuable opportunities. These include:

**Monthly Tech Talks** – Faculty and students will be able to engage with US Cyber Command officials and experts on a monthly basis where they can discuss some of the latest issues confronting the nation, including such topics as election security and disinformation campaigns.

**Internship and Recent Graduate Opportunities** - Beginning in the summer of 2023, Maryland Carey Law students will be able to take part in internships at US Cyber Command to gain practical experience. There will also be opportunities for recent graduates to work with US Cyber Command.

**Mentorships** - Students will be able to apply for mentorships for capstone projects. US Cyber Command officials will advise students so that they may produce cutting edge work with real impact.

**Research Symposia** – Maryland Carey Law students and faculty will be able to present on law and policy issues at yearly research symposia that will bring together academia and government leaders. These symposia will provide occasions for US Cyber Command and academic institutions to learn from one another.

**Individual Speaker Engagements** – Students will be able to regularly hear from US Cyber Command leaders, including US Cyber Command Commander, General Nakasone, and engage in Q&A. We will also see Command leaders in our classes as guest speakers.

In total, 84 colleges and universities were selected to partner with US Cyber Command. Partners consist of 69 universities, 13 community colleges, nine minority serving institutions, four military service academies, and four military war and staff colleges. As part of the Maryland Carey Law community, CHHS is thrilled to be part of this new academic network and looks forward to engaging with US Cyber Command on critical legal, policy, and strategic challenges.

CHHS, via its partnership with the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, administers and teaches nationally-recognized JD and Masters programs in cyber law and policy. For more information about our academic programs, see our website at: <https://www.mdchhs.com/academic/graduate-programs>.

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## CHHS Plays a Leading Role in Statewide Cybersecurity Study

Over the past several years, cybersecurity incidents have wreaked havoc on public and private institutions in Maryland. In 2019, Baltimore City was the victim of a ransomware attack, which brought down the City's network. Residents were unable to pay water bills and record real estate transactions for over a month, and the cost of restoring the data was estimated to be \$18 million. Even smaller jurisdictions suffered the kinetic effects of cyber attacks. A contractor for the southern Maryland city of Leonardtown suffered a hack, and the City was unable to access its network, and had to use significant staff and financial resources to restore its network. The Baltimore County Public School system also suffered a ransomware attack in early 2021, as they were trying to sustain virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Political leaders in Maryland across the ideological spectrum have sought ways to improve the cybersecurity posture of both state agencies and units of local government. A series of bills were proposed over the past couple of legislative sessions to improve cyber preparedness and coordination, but the bills have fallen short. One of the Maryland



*Maryland Senator Katie Fry Hester, CHHS Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin and Director of Information Services for the City of Salisbury Bill Garrett present on cybersecurity issues at the Maryland Municipal League Conference in October 2021.*

General Assembly's foremost experts in cybersecurity policy, Senator Katie Fry Hester, decided to conduct a formal, statewide cybersecurity study to help bring the State's cybersecurity preparedness and response gaps into greater focus.

With Senator Hester's leadership, the Maryland Cybersecurity Council (MCC) convened a temporary subcommittee to conduct the study. Ben Yelin, CHHS' Director for Public Policy & External Affairs, led the study's research efforts, in collaboration with CHHS legal externs during both the Summer

and Fall terms of 2021. Yelin and the externs conducted a series of surveys to gauge cybersecurity preparedness among units of local government, from public school systems to local emergency management offices. They conducted focus groups with County IT professionals and representatives from the Maryland Municipal League. Armed with feedback from local stakeholders on the biggest cybersecurity challenges facing these jurisdictions, the team drafted a report issuing a series of recommendations. Among the key recommendations is for the State of

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*CHHS Policy Analyst  
Michael Block*

CHHS Policy Analyst Michael Block was appointed to the cybersecurity seat and chair of the cybersecurity subcommittee on the Maryland 9-1-1 Board this legislative session. Formed in 1979, the board consists of 24 members and coordinates the installation and perpetual enhancement of county 9-1-1 emergency telephone number services systems in Maryland.

Additionally, the 9-1-1 Board creates, issues, and determines the guidelines and review procedures necessary to approve or disapprove of county plans for these systems. Block will focus on the cybersecurity systems in the State, particularly in the

field of emergency communication networks. Additionally, it will be his responsibility to ensure that county Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are secured with, and adhere to, the most up-to-date and comprehensive cybersecurity protocols and standards required by law, a timely issue as Maryland completes its transition to the NextGen911 answering system.

Protecting Maryland’s infrastructure is of the utmost importance, and practicing good cyber hygiene is a necessity like never before. “Helping guide Maryland through the cyber transition and providing subject matter expertise are tasks I take extremely seriously. I am both very appreciative and humbled to have this opportunity.”

– Michael Block, M.S.L.

Maryland to maintain a Local Cybersecurity Support Fund, available to units of local government to upgrade and harden devices, hire cybersecurity staff, and pay outside vendors for cybersecurity trainings. The team also recommended that the State fully fund and resource the newly created Cybersecurity Preparedness Unit at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

Yelin and his team presented their findings at a November meeting of the Joint Committee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Biotechnology. The final draft of the report was released in late-December 2021.

When the Maryland General Assembly reconvenes in January 2022, legislators will be armed with concrete proposals on how Maryland institutions can prepare for, and

respond to, cyber incidents. Legislators will have access to survey data, and input from the very individuals at the forefront of the effort to fend off cyber-attacks. CHHS is proud to have been a part of this statewide study and looks forward to continuing its role in informing policymakers as they seek to improve readiness for cyber incidents, and all other types of natural and man-made disasters.



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## Twenty Years after 9/11: CHHS Examines U.S. Response to Terrorism, Public Health Emergencies, and Cyber Attacks



*CHHS Founder & Director Michael Greenberger, Academic Director Michael Vesely and Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin address the Maryland Carey Law community on the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.*



*CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger discusses the evolving U.S. response to terrorism in the 20 years since 9/11.*

2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The somber date was remembered as people around the world took time to reflect on the tragedy of that day and the 20 years that have since passed. So much of the work CHHS does today, as well as the founding of the Center in May 2002, can be traced back to 9/11. In reflecting on the last 20 years it seemed important to consider the U.S. response to the attacks and how that has shaped the way we respond to changing threats, including domestic terrorism, public health emergencies, and cyber attacks.

On August 30, 2021 CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger, CHHS Academic Director Michael Vesely, and CHHS Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin joined Maryland Carey Law Associate Dean and Professor Peter Danchin for an in-person Anchor Event at the Law School entitled “20 Years Later: Reckoning with 9/11.” Greenberger, Vesely, and Yelin examined the laws and policies adopted in response to 9/11 and discussed how effective they have been in addressing threats faced by the U.S. over the last twenty years. Vesely highlighted the evolving threat landscape, including the shift from large international organizations to increasingly decentralized,

domestic actors. Yelin addressed the expansion of the “surveillance state” and ensuing public backlash. One lingering question posed by the panel is whether new federal legislation is needed to more effectively prepare for and respond to terrorism, as well as other types of emergencies like climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event was well-attended by law faculty, staff, and students who had just marked the return to campus for in-person learning this Fall. The discussion was the first in the Anchor Event series hosted at the Law School, but was also livestreamed for a broader audience. The recording of the livestream can still be viewed. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZtF1QSJHYI>

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Maryland Carey Law faculty, staff and students gather during the Law School Anchor Event entitled "20 Years Later: Reckoning with 9/11." The panel was hosted and moderated by Carey Law Associate Dean and Professor of Law, Peter Danchin (seated, left).

On September 10, 2021 CHHS held two other 9/11 anniversary events focused more specifically on public health and cybersecurity. The events were held as virtual panel discussions moderated by CHHS Public Health Director Trudy Henson and Cybersecurity Director Markus Rauschecker.

The public health panel featured CHHS Senior Law and Policy Analyst Christine Gentry, Law and Policy Analyst Jessica Pryor, and Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster. The panelists explored how the U.S.' perception and response to public health emergencies have evolved over the last 20 years, from terrorist-based threats, like Anthrax, to natural disasters, and pandemics.

The cyber panel included CHHS Public Policy and External Affairs Director Ben Yelin, Senior Law

and Policy Analyst Netta Squires, and McKesson Cyber Security Counsel (and Maryland Carey Law graduate and Cybersecurity & Crisis Management Law Certificate recipient) Rachel Cooper. The panel discussed the evolving nature of cyber threats since 9/11 and what the public and private sector are doing to address it. Squires and Yelin spoke about state and local initiatives to better prepare for cyber incidents, while Cooper offered a perspective on how businesses are navigating the complex landscape of data privacy law.

All three panels proved to be useful opportunities for practitioners, academics, and students to share their perspectives on several of the most pressing issues in homeland security today.

## CHHS in Social Media



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## CHHS Goes to Vegas for the National Homeland Security Conference



*CHHS staff gather with emergency management colleagues at the National Homeland Security Conference in Las Vegas this Fall. (left to right) CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Christine Gentry, Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Planning Chief Tina Laboy, CHHS Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin, Anne Arundel County Deputy Director of Emergency Management Joe Corona, CHHS Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster, Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Emergency Management Specialist Mitch Dinowitz, CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Netta Squires, CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Myra Derbyshire.*



*CHHS Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster, Senior Policy Analyst Myra Derbyshire and Senior Law & Policy Analyst Netta Squires present on their work with Montgomery County to address food insecurity at the National Homeland Security Conference in Las Vegas.*

CHHS was lucky enough to send a delegation to the National Homeland Security Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada this summer. The delegation included CHHS Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster, Senior Law & Policy Analyst Netta Squires, Senior Policy Analyst Myra Derbyshire, Public Policy & External Affairs Director Ben Yelin, Senior Law & Policy Analyst Christine Gentry, Law & Policy Analyst Michael Block and Senior Policy Analyst Shelly Gooding.

Squires, Derbyshire, and Webster presented on the background, best practices, and lessons learned from their work responding to the food insecurity crisis brought about by

COVID-19. Their presentation discussed the application of The Incident Command System (ICS) in a novel context to coordinate the response of government agencies, businesses, philanthropists, and over 100 local food access providers (FAPs). They presented lessons learned and practical guidance for incorporating food system resilience into local planning, response, and recovery efforts.

This presentation explored how growing lines for food support, emptying food pantry shelves, and disruptions in the “just in time” food supply chain, presented unique challenges to emergency managers. Moreover, the food-security crisis

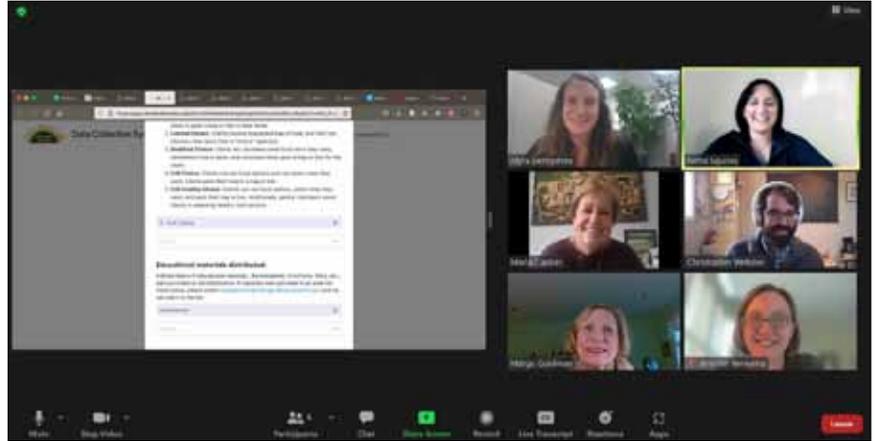
disproportionately impacted minority and immigrant communities, raising important issues of equity and social justice in preparedness, response, and recovery. While the Food and Agriculture Sector is commonly recognized as critical infrastructure, local FAPs, who have a critical response role during any food crisis, often lack the same formalized emergency management role as other critical infrastructure providers (like public utilities). The presentation showed how engagement and partnerships are critical to effective response, but can be hard to build with local FAP systems made of large, diverse, distributed networks of nonprofits.

## Economic Recovery through Community Engagement



*CHHS Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster takes some time off in Las Vegas.*

Yelin and Squires gave a presentation advocating for the integration of emergency management principles into cybersecurity policy, and highlighting the importance of emergency managers becoming fluent in cybersecurity preparedness and response. In the wake of an unprecedented series of cyber incidents affecting both private and public sector entities, the principles of emergency management (all-hazards planning, the incident response framework etc.) must be applied to cyber incidents, and emergency managers can and must play a role in preparedness, recovery and response from cyber incidents.



*CHHS Public Safety Technology Director Chris Webster and Senior Policy Analyst Myra Derbyshire present a new data reporting tool they created that captures vital information from emergency food assistance providers, integral to making funding and policy decisions for programs that provide food to over 70,000 community members in Montgomery County.*

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Montgomery County, Maryland launched a multi-agency effort among the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Office of the County Executive, and the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate economic recovery. Since the beginning of the pandemic CHHS has been supporting this coordination effort.

Businesses were hit hard by the mandatory closures at the beginning of, and throughout, the pandemic. In order to provide information, answer questions, and respond to the needs of the business community, Montgomery County government began weekly workgroups based on economic sectors. Last fall, Montgomery County began

Economic Revitalization and Recovery Town Halls where County businesses and the public joined to hear updates on grants, public health initiatives, and topical conversations such as ventilation, inspections, permitting, and workforce solutions.

Most recently, CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Ellen Cornelius convened two multiagency workgroups to synchronize data scientists in Montgomery County government. By using data, efforts in economic recovery can be directed towards tangible impacts and informed policy decisions. As the pandemic continues, albeit in a different form than three, six, or nine months ago, economic recovery continues, and community engagement is front and center.

## Seeing the Forest *and* the Trees: Long Term Care Facilities and Emergency Preparedness Post Covid-19 Pandemic

As the pandemic has unfolded, we have seen many systems and emergency plans, procedures, and networks tested from individual businesses to agencies at the state and federal level. Not all have worked according to plan—almost none, in fact—but as the pandemic unfolded, public health organizations worked hard and found novel ways to address the numerous and evolving challenges—shortages of PPE, critical equipment, personnel, food access, vaccine distribution and access.

There are volumes' worth of lessons learned from this ongoing event, and as we enter the second calendar year of the pandemic, we continue to incorporate the hard-earned knowledge as we look to future challenges. One of the recurring themes of the Covid-19 pandemic is that disasters magnify disparities, whether those are economic, health, or otherwise. And this lesson, while very tangible, is one of the most difficult to address moving forward, as it encompasses virtually every facet of life, and a comprehensive response requires the work of departments and agencies that typically fall outside the realm of "public health" or "emergency management."

Though we now know the SARS CoV-2 virus was circulating weeks before originally suspected, the U.S. Covid crisis unfolded in a familiar location: a long term care facility (LTCF). Located in Kirkland, Washington, the outbreak drew national coverage, and before the outbreak had passed, two-thirds of the



*CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Christine Gentry and Senior Policy Analyst Ian Hamilton evaluate an active assailant tabletop exercise in support of Frederick County Division of Emergency Management in December 2021.*

facility's residents and 47 of its staff fell ill; 35 people died. The same scenario unfolded across the country in the early months of the pandemic, as the country and the world scrambled to understand how the virus spread, how to best contain it, and how to keep those most vulnerable safe.

CHHS has continued to assist in the comprehensive response Covid-19 has required. Our work continues to focus on those most impacted by disasters, including those who are in long term care facilities and assisted living homes. Prior to Covid-19, CHHS worked to help address disparities in emergency planning in these facilities, helping facilities to meaningfully implement the 2017 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Emergency Preparedness Rule by providing a free, half day training and tabletop workshop to area facilities. The second of these was planned for March 2020, and had to be

cancelled, as the United States faced an unprecedented scenario unfolding.

Our work in this area was far from finished, however, and in 2021, CHHS was awarded a generous grant from the State of Maryland that allowed us to continue our work. This grant allows CHHS to:

- Research the best practices and lessons learned that are arising as LTCFs respond to Covid-19, from infection control, to staffing challenges, to working with state health departments during critical supply shortages. These findings will be compiled into a comprehensive legal white paper that will provide practical and policy recommendations for LTCFs. The paper will also focus on how these recommendations translate into future emergencies, be it pandemics, extreme weather events, or something else.

- Research, update, and track the legal and policy changes that have arisen at the state and federal level for public health emergencies—whether Covid-related or not—as they apply to LTCFs, as well as updates to court cases and the potential impact of those legal changes on LTCFs. Using our expertise, we will analyze this information and write a second legal white paper that summarizes these legal and policy changes, and looks at future legal trends.
- Create updated, tailored half-day trainings for LTCFs, to not only help those facilities meet federal training mandates, but to improve their individual Emergency Operations Plans with practical and policy information that can save lives.

What we have learned from the past two years is that often, our worst case scenario for a tabletop exercise can and may become reality: Public health officials may face a novel disease, a catastrophic weather event, social unrest, and more all at once. Public health emergency response is not just seeing the forest or the trees—it requires both. Keeping individuals safe and prioritizing resources and response levels becomes all the more important—and individuals in LTCFs—some of the most vulnerable—must be prioritized. CHHS is proud and honored to have received this grant that will enable our important work to continue.

**Funds for the Center for Health and Homeland Security are administered by the University of Maryland, Baltimore Foundation, Inc.**



*CHHS Directors meet virtually to discuss ongoing projects and new business.*

## Maryland Carey Law Student Accepted to Legal Honors Program at NSA

Recently, Maryland Carey Law Cybersecurity and Crisis Management certificate-recipient Jordan Kuchta was accepted to the prestigious Legal Honors Program at the National Security Agency (NSA). At NSA, Kuchta will rotate through the Office of General Counsel's legal practice groups analyzing cutting-edge technical and intelligence issues and provide legal advice on high-profile current events affecting our national security.

Kuchta credits his success to Maryland Carey Law's Cybersecurity and Crisis Management program, which is administered and taught by CHHS. In our program, Kuchta was able to take cyber law and policy courses -- such as International Cybersecurity Seminar and National Security, Electronic Surveillance and the 4th Amendment -- that have direct applicability to the work he will be doing at NSA.

Maryland Carey Law's Cybersecurity and Crisis Management Program also offered Kuchta opportunities to become part of a growing network of program alumni. Our program alumni have come back to visit current students through our Cyber Law and Data Privacy Association to talk about their work and provide career advice. The connections made through these visits have resulted in opportunities like Kuchta's internship with Under Armour's Global Privacy Division.

At CHHS we are very proud of the work we are doing to educate the newest generations of cyber lawyers. Our staff are teaching courses that provide the theoretical and practical backbone necessary for our program graduates to begin successful, rewarding, and impactful careers.

## Critical Incident Stress Management and the Emergency Manager

By CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Shelly Gooding, MA, CEM and CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analyst Christine Gentry, JD, MPH

In the last two years, much has been reported about the impacts of COVID-related chronic stress, grief, and anxiety on our frontline and essential workers. For example, one study shows half of all healthcare workers report symptoms of burnout (Prasad, 2021), while a joint Washington Post – Kaiser Family Foundation survey indicates that three in ten healthcare workers are considering quitting. Similarly, during the 2020-21 school year, half of teachers surveyed considered quitting (Lough, 2021). COVID-19 prompted the traditional discussion about the impact of emergencies on first responders and healthcare workers to expand to include grocery store clerks, teachers, and delivery drivers, who all continue to serve essential roles.

One field and group of essential workers which has remained largely invisible in all this research and discussion are emergency managers. While we recognize that many contribute to emergency management without the title of emergency manager, this article is intended to

include public health emergency preparedness practitioners and similar professionals who work behind the scenes during emergencies. For those who may be unfamiliar, emergency managers develop and coordinate the systems, processes, and resources necessary to efficiently mitigate risk, as well as prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

By form and function, emergency managers work behind the scenes under stressful conditions. We get that three am wake-up call when the unthinkable happens in our communities. We shift from a regular nine-to-five work schedule to intense twelve-hour shifts at a moment's notice. We talk our neighbors through applying for family assistance or property damage assessments, and we pick up the phone when our first responders need anything to more effectively respond to an emergency.

Emergency managers experience stress much like that of traditional first responders; however, we also operate with different pressures such as working with varying levels and types of professionals, navigating spheres of political influence, and considering possible unintentional negative outcomes of decisions made with little or incomplete information. In our coordination role, we often gather

comprehensive data on just how bad the situation is and hear stories of grief and loss from first responders and community members.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing response, the limited research available showed that emergency managers and staff may experience a host of mental and physical health issues which include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, heart disease, stroke, and hypertension to name a few. (Knox, 2017)

Environmental (time pressure), organizational (bureaucracy), and operational (decision making) demands directly impact the degree of stress on emergency managers. Research “suggests that emergency managers can suffer from mental fatigue and burnout if they do not receive emotional support to address their underlying issues” (Phillips, 2018). Generally, most people will not suffer severe effects of stress and will only experience minimal psychological disturbances. However, for some, stress can become problematic, particularly when the stress response is experienced for an extended period and remain unaddressed (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005).

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Unlike the impactful, but comparatively short-term response to emergencies such as severe weather, our ongoing COVID-19 response has revealed vulnerabilities to emergency managers that have for the most part been ignored. Emergency managers live through the incident in much the same way as any first responder. We suffer burnout and fatigue that can lead to poor decision-making. We relive, and in some reported incidents, have been re-traumatized during the after-action process. There is little to no respite from the ongoing battle against COVID-19 for emergency managers. We work it, see it on the news, on social media, hear about it from friends and family, and even the simple act of going to dinner can result in conversations and debates about all things COVID-19. We are caught up in political influence at a level not previously experienced by even the most seasoned emergency manager. Simply put, COVID-19 has been a “24/7 365” activation with only a dim light at the end of a very long tunnel.

Despite the slow and steady progress in getting back to a new normal, the increased pressure and stress on emergency management will not end with COVID-19. As a country,

we are witnessing disasters that are happening more frequently and impacting larger areas and more people, which will inevitably impact some of us directly. The emergency management cycle will continue - prepare, respond, recover, mitigate, and repeat with little relief for those in the field many to turn to for answers.

All this leads to the question: what should we be doing to protect the mental health of emergency managers? There are at least two steps that we should be taking to provide the same mental and physical health protections to our emergency managers that are already extended to other first responders. First, emergency management could immediately implement Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), a “psychological first aid” tool. (CISM International, 2021) For decades, CISM has been in place to provide first, military combat veterans, and ultimately civilian first responders (police, fire, ambulance, emergency workers, and disaster rescuers) with a crisis intervention protocol for those who have experienced trauma. CISM utilizes techniques by trained professionals (usually in the same field as those needing assistance)

which include inner dialogue, coping, debriefing, defusing, and pre-crisis education. Emergency management in Maryland, perhaps led by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, should create a volunteer CISM team. Like incident management teams, the Maryland Volunteer CISM team could consist of CISM-trained emergency managers from all jurisdictions for deployment throughout the state.

Second, emergency management should work with legislators and the Maryland Emergency Management Association to write, champion, and pass legislation that classifies emergency managers (defined broadly in this context to include 911 call takers and other frontline workers) as a “high-risk” occupation population. If the field of emergency management is going to continue to grow and flourish as a professional and credentialed field, then it is necessary to protect those who are in it now. Failure to do so will ultimately result in the decline of existing emergency managers through career change and early retirement, leaving our communities and incoming emergency managers without the benefit of their experience and institutional knowledge.

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## CHHS Facilitates Train Derailment Exercise at Fort Detrick



*CHHS Continuity Director Eric Oddo and Law & Policy Analyst Chang Won Kang facilitate a train derailment tabletop exercise at Fort Detrick.*

On August 23, 2021 CHHS Continuity Director Eric Oddo and Law & Policy Analyst Chang Won Kang facilitated a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) at Fort Detrick's Forest Glen Annex. A TTX is a simulated, discussion-based, interactive exercise that tests an organization's emergency response procedures.

The Forest Glen Annex is a 136-acre U.S. Army installation in the Forest Glen Park neighborhood of Silver Spring, MD. Since 1999, the Annex has been the site of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and the Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC), along with smaller units. The Forest Glen property was acquired by the Army during the World War II era. Formerly known as the "Walter Reed Forest Glen Annex", authority over the

facility was transferred in 2008 to Fort Detrick in Frederick, MD.

The scenario of this TTX featured a hypothetical MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter) train derailment during a morning weekday commute. Exercise participants were told that a train traveling between the Kensington and Silver Spring stations struck a downed maple tree covering both tracks that caused it to derail and crash through the Forest Glen Annex's perimeter fence and onto federal property.

The TTX was well-attended, with both in-person and virtual representation from the United States Army Garrison (USAG), WRAIR, NMRC, Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS),

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), Montgomery County Police Department, and the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS).

The exercise allowed participants to test interoperable communications among responding agencies; evaluate the effectiveness of on-site mass alert and notification systems; test the capability of triaging a mass casualty incident; establish a security physical perimeter and; evaluate command and control protocols.

While the specific observations, strengths, planning gaps and recommendations are classified, there is no question that this was a highly-engaged and well-received exercise for all involved – entirely a result of the participating organizations' enthusiasm and subject matter expertise.

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