CHHS Hosts Governor O’Malley, First Responders to Remember 9/11

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security (CHHS) hosted a conference for state and local first responders to share best practices in disaster preparedness and response.

Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley was the keynote speaker and he used the opportunity to deliver a major speech on the lessons learned in the post-9/11 world and how Maryland is building a prepared and resilient state. Following the Governor’s speech, two panels discussed “Building Local Resilience” and “Intelligence Sharing and Interoperability,” respectively. The panelists included: Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Marcus Brown, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police; Frederick Bealefeld III, Baltimore City Police Commissioner; Chris Voss, Director of Montgomery County Emergency Management and Homeland Security; Mark Hubbard, Baltimore County Homeland Security Director; Ray Lehr, Maryland Interoperability Director; and Kristina Seidel, Ready Chesapeake and Leadership Anne Arundel.

Prior to the Governor’s speech, U.S. Representative Elijah Cummings and U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin shared remarks about the need for vigilance and preparedness in the face of man-made and natural threats to the state. Senator Cardin noted that Maryland is a national model for security and preparedness, and emphasized that the Center for Health and Homeland Security, as well as its director, Michael Greenberger, are invaluable resources for federal, state and local agencies, as well as private enterprises.
Director’s Message

When our Center opened for business on May 15, 2002, it was thought that its major work would be focused on counterterrorism. At that time, the country was still reeling from the September 11, 2001 attacks, as well as the anthrax attacks in the late fall of 2001. However, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a new concept arose in homeland security circles: governments and private institutions must prepare themselves for “all hazards,” i.e., both man-made (terror attacks) and natural disasters, the latter caused by severe weather conditions or naturally occurring diseases, most particularly influenzas.

The underlying rationale of an “all hazards” approach to disaster planning is that prevention, response and recovery plans should prepare society for both terror attacks and natural disasters. A recent example is the evacuation of large sectors of the East Coast populace in low lying areas to avoid life-threatening flooding in the wake of Hurricane Irene. Were there a threatened terror attack using deadly biopathagens, the same kind of evacuation would be required. Planning for evacuation in hurricanes is like planning for evacuation in the face of a terror attack using weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

While the U.S. has had the good fortune to date of not experiencing WMD attacks, that is not the case with equally devastating natural disasters. Just this past summer, the East Coast was hit within days of each other by a severe earthquake and a massive, crippling hurricane with unusually severe attendant flooding. During that same time frame, Texas was hit by the worst wildfires in that state's history. When you add 2010’s snowstorms and 2009’s H1N1 influenza attacks, it is readily seen that severe natural catastrophes dictate the same kind of ambitious and complicated governmental responses needed to combat the use of a WMD.

CHHS has been actively involved in all of these kinds of responses. During this summer’s earthquake and severe hurricane, our staff was deployed to many governmental emergency operations centers to help organize responses and rescues. After Hurricane Irene, I was called by one of Maryland’s top health officials, who offered thanks for the excellent legal materials we prepared that pertained to organizing emergency response. She told me our work was put to good use in guiding the state in a very tricky evacuation of the Eastern Shore.

Similarly, as you will see in these pages, we have been conducting large-scale field exercises at the local level to ensure that governments and their hospitals can effectively deploy emergency resources. We have also partnered with the U.S. State Department in training foreign delegations, including Jordan, Uganda, Egypt, Colombia, Iraq, Tanzania, Tunisia and Pakistan. These countries not only experience natural and man-made disasters, but as we have seen in recent months, civil unrest in some of these regions presents new challenges in emergency planning.

Given that severe natural disasters are now almost a monthly occurrence worldwide, our Center is kept very busy. We are gratified by the important role we play and by our continued growth that is evidenced in this newsletter.

Michael Greenberger, JD
CHHS Founder & Director

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

First Row (left to right): Czarina Biton MPH, Ulka Ghanta JD, Preeti Emrick JD, Adrian Wilairat JD, Alexandra Podolny JD, Michael Greenberger JD, Heather Shavitz JD, Katherine Shea JD, Nishamariie Sherry JD, Anne Marie Harkins JD, Sheena Tomar, Karla Schaffer JD

Second Row (left to right): R. Sabra Jafarzadeh JD, Trudy Henson JD MA, Laura Hoch MPIA, Oris Zeevi Bell JD, Clara Woody, Jeanne Stringer, Cesar Lopez JD, Peter Suh JD MST, Peter Fox JD, Ravi Kambhampaty JD, Megan Timmins JD, Jessica Hurst JD, Ellen Cornelius JD

Third Row (left to right): Mario Bravo, Anthony Villa JD, Robin Clark JD, Angelique So JD, Earl Stoddard III PhD, Patrick Rose PhD, Chris Webster JD, Matilda Channel-Ward MBA

Fourth Row (left to right): David Mandell JD, Amy Major JD, Cal Bowman, George Weddington PhD JD, Markus Rauschecker JD, Michael Stallings JD, Kelley Coyner JD, Christina Crue MS MEP CEM

Fifth Row (left to right): Vernon Herron MS, Raymond Shin JD Med MPP, Matthew Swinburne JD, Daniel Goodman JD, Blake Carroll, George Lettis, David Brummett JD, David Bohannon JD

Not pictured: Lisa Connor MIHSM, JoAnne Knapp MA, Clark Lee JD, Mary Lesser, Eric Oddo MPA, Jennifer Shahabuddin JD, Lori Stone JD, Shevez Streat, Elizabeth Webster JD, Mike Ulrich JD, Mike Vesely JD
CHHS Conducts, Evaluates Major Terror Attack Drill for Maryland Hospitals, First Responders

On October 19, CHHS and the Department of Defense conducted Capital Shield 2012, a full-scale exercise to test the D.C. region’s ability to respond to a mass casualty terrorist attack. Thirteen Maryland hospitals across Montgomery, Prince George’s, Calvert, St. Mary’s, and Charles County joined dozens of emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and rescue personnel in exercising the triage, treatment and transport of mock victims by ambulance bus or helicopter. CHHS analysts positioned at many of the locations where volunteer victims would be triaged or transported, evaluated the process to ensure proper response techniques were executed.

The exercise emphasized the testing of cutting edge technology that promises to improve patient medical care and transport communication between EMTs and hospitals. For instance, EMTs who participated in the exercise used hand-held devices that allowed them to collect and store vital patient information electronically and exchange that information seamlessly with medical staff at the hospital. This new technology is designed to prevent the loss and damage of data during an incident.

Volunteer mock victims were made-up to look like they had just been in an explosion.

Educational and Career Opportunities in Homeland Security and Emergency Management Growing

“We didn’t find emergency management. Emergency management found us.” A panel came to this consensus at a September 2011 event hosted by CHHS, the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) and the University of Maryland University College (UMUC). Aimed primarily at students and young professionals, the panel discussion moderated by CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger and entitled, “Beyond 9/11: The Evolving Landscape and New Career Paths” featured speakers with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences who are making careers in homeland security and emergency management. The speakers agreed the attacks of 9/11 highlighted the dire need for the public and private sectors to become more focused on security, emergency preparedness and interoperability. CHHS Exercise and Training Program Director Christina Crue said she was able to use her teaching degree and skills in her emergency management career. Another panelist, Jim Stoddard, Director of Safety and Emergency Preparedness at Washington Adventist Hospital, described how his experience as a firefighter convinced his future employers of the importance of having someone in the organization dedicated to safety and security planning. CHHS Senior Policy Analyst Vernon Herron, Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Director Chris Voss and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Policy Analyst and CHHS alumnus Matt Fuchs told the audience to take advantage of the growing list of institutions of higher learning that now offer specialized degree programs in emergency management.

Employment opportunities in homeland security was also a topic of discussion during the 2011 Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference at the Washington Convention Center in September. Greenberger participated in a panel entitled, “Getting Down to Business: Exploring Job and Contracting Opportunities with the Department of Homeland Security.”
University of Maryland Plans to Establish Master’s Degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management

CHHS and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law plan to establish a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The program will launch in the 2012-2013 academic year.

This two-semester program will provide students with a rigorous academic and experiential foundation to prepare them for entry in the rapidly expanding field of homeland security and emergency management.

This LL.M. curriculum will require students to take the following CHHS-taught courses: Homeland Security and Law of Counterterrorism; Law and Policy of Emergency Public Health Response; Law and Policy of Cybersecurity; and Law and Policy of Crisis Management.

In addition to these core courses, master’s students will be required to complete a one-semester externship at CHHS. The CHHS-taught core courses and CHHS externship will be supplemented with courses in a variety of other areas of law offered at the law school.

Graduates of the LL.M. program will have a unique ability to meet the growing demand for highly qualified and effective practitioners in the field of homeland security and emergency management.

The LL.M. in Homeland Security and Emergency Management will complement the existing Maryland LL.M. programs in other areas of specialization, which include business law, constitutional law and international & comparative law.

Interested applicants should contact the School of Law’s Office of Admissions at (410) 706-3492 or llm@law.umaryland.edu.

Gov. O’Malley Appoints Greenberger to Cybersecurity Post

In October 2011, CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger was appointed to the Commission on Maryland Cybersecurity Innovation and Excellence. The Commission’s goal is to set policies, standards and best practices for ensuring the security of computer systems used by educational institutions and state government. Greenberger is one of four representatives on the Commission from institutions of higher education in the state.
CHHS In The News

CHHS staff regularly appears in the media to offer expertise on a wide range of events and issues. The following excerpts highlight CHHS media appearances to date in 2011.

The Death of Osama Bin Laden

CHHS Founder and Director Michael Greenberger and Associate Director Adrian Wilairat spoke to several Washington, D.C. and Baltimore media outlets (WBFF-TV, WYPR-FM, WUSA-TV, WBAL-TV) about the possibility of Al-Qaeda retaliation following the death of Osama Bin Laden at the hands of U.S. Special Forces. Greenberger also noted that security at airports and federal institutions would be tighter than usual in the days following the Al-Qaeda leader’s death.

Later, Wilairat told D.C.’s WUSA-TV (CBS) and WTTG-TV (FOX) that the quake is a wake-up call. “It’s a great opportunity for [D.C.] agencies to conduct self-assessments, meet with their partner agencies and with their partners in the private sector and take stock.” CHHS Exercise and Training Program Manager Christina Crue told The Washington Post, “This event is an opportunity not only for public officials to educate the community, but for individuals to take a proactive stance for earthquakes and all hazards.”

The East Coast ‘Quake

Moments after the earthquake hit on August 24th, Greenberger told D.C.’s WTOP all-news radio that the effects of the 5.8 magnitude earthquake could last for days because of the unknown aftermath with regard to utility line damage and repair and the necessity of inspections of multiple bridges and buildings for cracks or fallen debris.

Keeping an ‘Eye’ On Irene

Hurricane Irene’s devastating aftermath in August 2011 led to many questions from the public about emergency preparedness, response and recovery—how it works, who is involved and the challenges ahead. Greenberger was asked to explore these issues on C-SPAN’s live call-in show “Washington Journal.” Greenberger explained how local, state and federal emergency managers and first responders coordinate plans to evacuate and ultimately to shelter people endangered by a hurricane. Greenberger also explained how CHHS staff analysts served as consultants to emergency management offices during the hurricane to offer advice on preparation, response and recovery.

9/11 Ten Years Later: Are We Safer?

On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Greenberger appeared on television, radio stations and online media outlets to discuss the impact 9/11 has had on emergency management.

In interviews with WBFF-TV, WJZ-TV and WBAL-TV in Baltimore, Greenberger said the country has improved its intelligence gathering, but that governmental budget difficulties are the biggest challenge to effective emergency response. Despite such challenges, Greenberger explained in U.S. News & World Report emergency management has become a growth area for the legal profession. “Lawyers are trained in how to get things done, how to organize not only issues but people, and we’re finding the legal experience to be very helpful in the emergency management function,” Greenberger said.
CHHS’ Global Reach

CHHS has extended its reach beyond U.S. borders. In December 2010, CHHS entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) to conduct a series of Senior Crisis Management (SCM) seminars to train foreign governments in mitigation, planning, response and recovery efforts.

Through this new partnership, CHHS combines its expertise in crisis management with that of the ATA. For decades, the ATA has provided key nations abroad with guidance on how to better combat terrorism and strengthen national security through programs that engage foreign leaders in the public safety, law enforcement, governance and civilian security fields. “This opportunity will allow us to provide best practices in crisis management to countries from all over the world,” said CHHS Exercise Program Manager Christina Crue, who is leading the CHHS team working on this project.

In March 2011, a contingent of CHHS experts traveled to Jordan to conduct a five-day seminar and exercise to test Jordan’s National 9-1-1 Center and its National Center for Security and Crisis Management. The seminars focused on critical aspects of emergency management, highlighting key components like mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery for senior Jordanian officials.

In April 2011, CHHS provided a SCM seminar for a delegation of senior government officials from Uganda. CHHS trained the delegation in concepts such as mitigation, adversarial targeting and planning, preparedness, response and recovery. The five-day course held in Maryland was highlighted by a Capstone Exercise that included two scenarios unique to Uganda: a landslide in a rural area and a targeted terrorist attack in the capital of Kampala.

In September, CHHS conducted a SCM seminar at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) for a delegation of senior government officials from Egypt. CHHS guest speaker Anit Mukherjee, an international relations scholar and former major in the Indian Army, provided an insightful analysis of the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, describing the strategies behind the terrorists’ use of several small teams of gunmen. Mr. Mukherjee also emphasized the importance of preparing for similar attacks in the future.

In October CHHS conducted SCM seminars in Maryland for senior government delegations from Colombia and Iraq, and plans to do the same for delegations from Pakistan and Tunisia. Additionally, CHHS traveled to Dar es Salaam to conduct a SCM seminar for government officials in Tanzania.
CHHS staff members played an integral role in emergency operations centers responding to Hurricane Irene in August 2011. They worked around the clock for days helping mitigate the harm to people and property. Among the most difficult tasks for emergency and state officials during this hurricane was the complete evacuation of Ocean City, MD. Hurricane Irene was the first time Maryland conducted an evacuation of this magnitude and CHHS’ David Bohannon, pictured above, worked with the Maryland Department of Human Resources to overcome this logistical challenge. Bohannon’s main goal was evacuating roughly 4,000 seasonal workers from the beach town a few days before Irene’s expected arrival. He helped coordinate the deployment of buses from Baltimore to Ocean City to pick up the workers and bring them back to the Baltimore area for shelter.

CHHS Exercise and Training Program Director Christina Crue, pictured to the right, worked closely with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) before, during and after Hurricane Irene. She said the smooth evacuation of Ocean City was a foremost example of the coordination between state and local officials. Both the state and local officials ensured that communications were made about the need for voluntary and then mandatory evacuation. She noted that citizens statewide made the difference in minimizing their own risk because they heeded state and local advisories to buy appropriate amounts of food and water and sandbags where necessary.

CHHS Public Health Program Manager Earl Stoddard III, pictured to the left, is stationed at the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. During Hurricane Irene, he worked inside the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The following is an excerpt from a blog he wrote about that experience. You can find the entire blog at mdchhs.com/blog.

**Hurricane Irene’s powerful winds resulted in enormous, beach-pounding waves. Wooden piers like this one in Ocean City, MD were no match for the hurricane’s wrath.**

*David Bohannon*

*Christina Crue*

*Earl Stoddard III*
Me, EOC and Irene

After several days of regular planning conference calls among members of its Emergency Management Group (EMG), the Montgomery County EOC was officially activated at 12:00pm on Saturday, August 27. Representatives from county agencies, including police, fire, transportation, public health, corrections, environmental protection and others were joined by municipal representatives and critical infrastructure providers, such as the primary electrical provider, Pepco. In advance of the storm’s arrival in Maryland, extraordinary efforts were made to coordinate communication and resource deployment to prepare for any number of outcomes.

As the storm arrived in the late hours of August 27, sustained winds of more than 40mph combined with gusts as high as 72mph and periods of heavy rainfall combined to make much of Montgomery County, particularly in the southeastern segment of the County, dangerous for residents. As of 11:00pm on Saturday evening, Pepco was reporting a mere 700 outages. By 1:30am on Sunday morning, this number grew to 17,000 and by 5:00am, had reached more than 75,000. Those totals speak to the extraordinary forces that the winds exerted on the utility infrastructure and surrounding trees.

WebEOC, the online emergency management tool utilized by Montgomery County, served to improve situational awareness, process task requests between agencies, produce reports in advance of routinely scheduled conference calls and generally improve communications in a calm, constructive manner. The fire department was coordinating with the county’s permitting services department to arrange inspections of homes impacted by falling trees and the transportation department was coordinating messaging with the County’s 311 information line regarding Ride On bus schedules and detours. Finally, the health department worked with Pepco to ascertain when shelter occupants could reasonably expect their power to return. These efforts represent the tip of the iceberg with regards to the communication and coordination that occurs within the EOC during an activation.
“Contagion” Needs a Dose of Reality

With the recent release of the movie “Contagion,” there has been some debate over whether its premise -- an infectious disease spreads uncontrollably worldwide and kills millions of people rapidly -- could really happen. Regardless of how well-versed you are in infectious diseases, reading different mainstream press articles leaves an uneasy feeling. What are the chances we will be faced with a doomsday scenario such as the one described in the movie “Contagion”? Before answering that, let’s get something straight: “Contagion” is just a movie and understanding the complexity of disease outbreaks cannot be summarized in a couple of hours.

In more recent times, there has been the emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the recent 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic, which have threatened to become serious global epidemics. In both instances, these viruses appeared to be very lethal, highly infectious and spread quickly. That was exacerbated by global travel. Rightly so, officials worldwide were concerned that the spread of these highly contagious viruses could infect millions of people and lead to large numbers of casualties. While there were many deaths associated with both of these diseases, the expected mass casualties did not materialize.

Another example is the present day spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which leads to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS. AIDS is only second to road traffic accidents as the leading cause of death among people 20-24 years of age worldwide. We currently have no vaccines available and the costly, and many times ineffective, antiviral therapeutics for AIDS patients have had limited success. Furthermore, HIV infections are on the rise because the virus is developing resistance to antiviral therapies, most likely leading to a resurgence of AIDS cases in industrial nations.

When HIV first appeared, there was so much concern President Ronald Reagan convened his staff in 1981 to determine whether HIV/AIDS was a bioterrorism weapon because many men began to die rapidly. However, the likelihood of a situation like “Contagion” is low. One reason, in part, can be explained by the biology of viruses. Very simply put, viruses are organisms that require a host to reproduce and spread. If the virus destroys the host then the virus dies, too.

Viruses that are the most successful in nature are able to infect a host, reproduce and spread, without killing the host (i.e., cold sores in your mouth can be caused by the virus Herpes simplex, which is a life-long, non-lethal infection). Granted, if an emerging infectious disease has a first contact with people, chances are very high that those people initially infected will die. As the epidemic progresses, conditions will change and fewer people will die. Some infected persons will survive and develop immunity, while others will have an inherent immunity against the infectious agent. This prevents the epidemic from uncontrollably spreading, thereby giving us a chance to contain and stop the virus spread in its tracks. Many other factors also affect the outcome of an emerging epidemic (its discussion is beyond the
The most significant reason we are not experiencing deadly epidemics is a direct result of federally-funded basic science research and public health awareness programs. Basic research has made important strides to improve our understanding of the biology of viruses. We continue to generate novel antiviral therapies and are increasing our arsenal of vaccines against infectious diseases. Augmenting scientific discoveries are public outreach programs and a rapid response towards containment or mitigation. As with any natural or man-made disaster, preparedness is the key to preventing the worst.

The spread of SARS was expected to lead to a devastating death toll, as rapidly and as lethal as it was spreading. Yet the death toll was limited to less than a thousand. Despite a more inter-connected world and no vaccine against SARS, this highly infectious disease was stopped in its tracks. The reason for this was a rapid global health response and effective containment strategies to prevent further spread. Of course it helped that scientists were able to quickly develop a first vaccine for SARS within one year of its initial contact with humans. Similarly, public health awareness campaigns in the ’90s helped temporarily mitigate the extent of HIV/AIDS-related mortality rates and helped control the spread of HIV. Basic research was able to supplement the prevention of HIV from spreading by generating available antiviral therapies.

Many institutions tasked with disease surveillance (i.e., the Centers for Disease Control) are excited to have Hollywood highlight the hard work by public health officials, mainly because their work is often taken for granted. Others see this as an opportunity to direct the public’s attention towards the fact that basic research is underfunded. For many diseases we are still lacking the necessary tools to be well-equipped. Some even suggest this should be the CDC’s version of “Top Gun” to attract more people into public health service.
Maryland Chooses CHHS to Help Develop Energy Assurance Plan

In February 2011, CHHS entered into a partnership with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to develop an Energy Assurance Plan (EAP), support a Department of Energy regional exercise and MEMA exercise, and make revisions to Maryland Emergency Support Functions (ESF) #12-Utilities and Energy. Designed to help ensure that the state’s energy infrastructure is robust, secure, reliable and resilient, the Maryland EAP should allow the state and its stakeholders to respond to an energy crisis and provide for a rapid restoration of services in all types of disasters.

Through May, CHHS researched the energy sector in Maryland and interviewed key stakeholders within state agencies and private companies. In June, the draft EAP was used successfully during the Department of Energy’s Northeast Regional Assurance Exercise and Workshop in Boston. CHHS continues to finalize the EAP through evaluating vulnerability and risk factors and reviewing the impact of future energy alternatives.

CHHS Facilitates MEMA Partnership with Target

As part of the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP), CHHS has conducted outreach to the private and non-profit sectors to provide their assistance with state and local government response to emergencies. Through this outreach, CHHS identified the national retail chain Target as one of the largest and most successful companies willing to provide support to Maryland’s disaster response efforts.

In April 2011, Target signed a disaster response agreement with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), in which it agreed to assist Maryland, if needed, during a catastrophic event. Target has agreed to provide the state with a variety of its stores’ available supplies, like food and water.

Shady Grove Welcomes CHHS

On Thursday, April 14, 2011, CHHS hosted a reception in conjunction with the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), where CHHS was welcomed to its new satellite office on the USG campus in Rockville. The move puts CHHS closer to its Washington, D.C., federal government and Montgomery County, Maryland clients. CHHS has access to USG’s state-of-the-art conference facilities and other resources that are valuable to the Center and its clients.
Ride On Review: CHHS Examines Montgomery County Bus System Locations

Montgomery County, Maryland’s Ride On bus system provides a variety of transportation needs to approximately 28 million people a year and employs thousands of citizens. With this responsibility, the county’s Division of Transit Services (DTS) emphasizes the security of its many locations. During the winter of 2010-2011, CHHS examined Ride On’s locations, policies, procedures and protocols as part of DTS’ risk assessment and System Security Program Plan.

To support these preparedness and security efforts, CHHS Senior Law & Policy Analysts Anthony Villa, Trudy Henson and Michael Vesely visited 22 Ride On transit locations, including bus depots and Park & Rides, to conduct risk assessments. Through these assessments, the team made recommendations to reduce risk (i.e., from terrorist attacks, criminal activity and natural disasters), measure progress and update security policies, procedures and protocols. Based on site visits and information gained from Ride On’s staff, which provided invaluable access and cooperation, the CHHS team tailored these risk factors to Ride On’s unique concerns and mission.

Cracking the Codes of Emergency Communication

In January 2011, CHHS began working with the Maryland State Police to integrate the use of plain language communication into the agency’s day-to-day operations. Plain language, as its name suggests, is the use of everyday English over the radio as opposed to ten-codes, which have traditionally been used by law enforcement to communicate over the radio (i.e., 10-4). The use of differing ten-codes stymies communication among police agencies throughout the nation. Police departments, even those in neighboring districts, often use different numerical codes over the radio to communicate about the scenarios that they encounter. As interoperability between departments and jurisdictions becomes more of a focus in emergency management and disaster response, these differences can cause costly miscommunication among responding police departments.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had originally directed all public safety-related agencies to switch to plain language communication for all responses in order to receive emergency preparedness funding. However, this directive resulted in a significant backlash from law enforcement agencies around the country for two reasons: officer safety and force of habit. Many police departments are wary of switching to plain language because it could give suspected criminals an advantage if they can understand officer communications. Additionally, habits ingrained through the long-time practice of using ten-codes to train police have resulted in some officials’ resistance to change.

Currently, DHS requires the use of plain language only during multi-jurisdictional events in order for local jurisdictions to receive federal emergency preparedness funding. CHHS is working with the Maryland State Police and the Maryland Transportation Authority Police as they draft a new uniform plain language system that will allow different agencies to communicate with each other seamlessly at all times. CHHS is providing guidance to help with the transition from ten-code use and align the agencies’ plain language communications with other emergency responders in Maryland.
Addressing the needs of people with functional needs in emergency preparedness is a nationwide concern. People with functional needs include those who may require additional assistance during a disaster in order to maintain their independence, and may include people with disabilities, the elderly, children, people from diverse cultures, those who have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, people who are homeless or people who lack access to transportation.

The Baltimore Urban Area Work Group (UAWG) Functional Needs and Citizen Involvement Subcommittee has shown its commitment to dealing with this concern by contracting with CHHS to assess what functional needs support services exist, before, during and after a disaster, and to identify what gaps remain to be addressed in each of the seven jurisdictions of the Baltimore Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), which includes the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties.

In order to accomplish these goals, CHHS Functional Needs project members JoAnne Knapp, Elizabeth Webster and Anne Marie Harkins met with representatives of the Baltimore UASI offices of emergency management and jurisdictional planning groups focused on functional needs. The goal was to learn about the support services currently provided in the Baltimore UASI. CHHS then conducted focus groups with people of functional needs and providers of support services to learn about their perspective on the local emergency management services they use, gaps that exist and solutions for filling those gaps. CHHS conducted a final presentation and tabletop exercise with the emergency managers to share the information collected throughout the project, and to help get everyone on the same page about how to achieve inclusive preparedness. In addition to helping bridge the information and communication gaps, CHHS also developed various planning tools to help providers and people be better prepared for emergencies.
As part of the mid-Atlantic’s Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) preparedness efforts, CHHS examined Communities Actively Living Independent and Free (CALIF) v. City of Los Angeles, a groundbreaking California federal court case that could impact how emergency preparedness plans are designed and implemented nationwide.

In 2009, CALIF, a non-profit group that represents people with functional needs across California, sued the city of Los Angeles in federal district court for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). CALIF claimed that the city’s emergency preparedness program did not adequately address the needs of the city’s nearly one million people with disabilities. CALIF argued that its clients felt disproportionately vulnerable in the event of an emergency and that the city’s emergency preparedness program did not include ways to notify people with auditory or cognitive disabilities of an emergency. The plaintiffs also argued there were deficiencies in city plans to evacuate, transport or temporarily house people with functional needs during or immediately following a disaster or emergency.

Although the city argued that its emergency plans did not intentionally discriminate against people with disabilities, the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California ruled that Los Angeles violated a portion of the ADA. The opinion noted that the city did not “have any plans for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in the event of an emergency or disaster.”

After the ruling, CHHS Senior Law and Policy Analysts Megan Timmins, Cezar Lopez and Dave Brummett, pictured above, drafted a policy memorandum to serve as a primer for non-lawyers on the background, procedural history and legal issues arising out of CALIF. Specifically, the CHHS team researched relevant case law, as well as federal and state statutes, to determine the legal landscape facing government emergency planners and managers in addressing sheltering for functional needs populations. Based on this research, the CHHS team outlined possible steps and solutions for emergency managers to meet standards in their jurisdictions to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with functional needs. CHHS focused on balancing emergency management priorities of engaging the whole community and preparing for catastrophes.

LA Lawsuit: Victory for Functional Needs Advocacy
Since 2008, CHHS staff members have been working to implement Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley’s number one homeland security priority: improving interoperability amongst first responders.

During the past year, Maryland state and local public safety agencies have made steady progress toward building a statewide interoperability program to improve emergency communications among police, fire and emergency medical personnel. In November 2010, Motorola began developing a 700 MHz radio system that provides statewide, secure, real-time voice and data communications to Maryland agencies during major events and day-to-day routine operations. The radio system will be delivered in five phases around Maryland, with the project expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

With CHHS help, Maryland is developing and implementing Statewide Communications and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) / Records Management Systems (RMS) to serve state agencies and local partner jurisdictions. This system will allow all state agencies to share data and coordinate dispatch data with law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services. Local jurisdictions view access to these systems as a way to share resources and reduce costs.

CHHS has also been working with the Eastern Shore Communication Alliance (ESCA), whose membership is composed of the directors of emergency services from every county on the Eastern Shore and Ocean City. Through the assistance of CHHS, ESCA, a cooperative alliance dedicated to establishing and maintaining interoperable emergency communications, has been able to accomplish successes that include the development of regional interoperability standards, communications lifecycle plans and a long-term technology investment strategy. By working together, the jurisdictions of the Eastern Shore have helped unify the region’s disaster response efforts.

Additionally, CHHS’ training and exercise division has provided significant interoperability trainings, materials and exercises to the Eastern Shore. CHHS has developed an “InterOp 101” course that teaches first responders the basics of communicating during a region-wide emergency. ESCA also completed radio field guides that will be placed in every emergency services vehicle on the Eastern Shore. Emergency dispatchers are also receiving training on the Maryland Eastern Shore Interoperability Network (MESIN) via an ESCA video training program. Once trainings are complete, CHHS will help ESCA conduct regional exercises to test the region’s ability to communicate during a disaster, and identify areas for improvement.
COOP Updates

Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans are designed to ensure that government agencies can continue their most essential functions during natural or man-made emergencies, and can resume operations as soon as possible after an incident. CHHS is working on the following COOP programs for local, state and federal clients.

Howard County Public Schools

CHHS is developing COOP plans for Howard County Public Schools to enable the county to continue administering schools and offering classes following an emergency event. Draft plans are complete for all of the central offices for the school system as well as three pilot schools: an elementary school, a middle school and a high school. All of the representatives from central departments and the pilot schools participated in a tabletop exercise in November 2011. This tabletop was designed to uncover any gaps in the current plan and determine areas in need of further planning.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) COOP

CHHS continues to provide comprehensive COOP training to state, local, tribal and territorial government participants from across the country via its DHS COOP program. Through November, over a dozen training sessions of “Preparing the States – Implementing Continuity of Operations Training” have been conducted in 2011 nationwide in such locations as: Orange County, CA; New York, NY; San Antonio, TX; Sacramento, CA; Atlanta, GA; San Juan, PR; and Providence, RI.

During the spring of 2011, DHS conducted a review and recertification of the course curriculum to ensure compliance with recent FEMA guidance such as Continuity Guidance Circular (CGC) 1 & 2. CHHS’ course now features new strategies, terminology and methodologies for approaching COOP’s critical elements, such as essential functions, vital records, alternate facilities and planning for personnel with functional needs.

District of Columbia COOP

CHHS continues to assist the District of Columbia in developing, implementing and testing COOP plans for its various agencies. Working with the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA), CHHS has formed robust working relationships with leadership from a wide spectrum of D.C. agencies, including: Office of Unified Communications, Public Schools, Human Resources, Water and Sewer Authority and Transportation.

In August 2011, CHHS facilitated a tabletop exercise for the executive leadership of the D.C. Department of Mental Health (DMH). The scenario featured a water main break in a portion of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital that necessitated an evacuation. The exercise gave participants the opportunity to assess DMH’s ability to implement its emergency operating procedures and continue essential functions in the event that a primary facility is rendered inaccessible.

University of Maryland Baltimore COOP

CHHS continues to work with the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) on COOP planning. The University of Maryland School of Nursing, School of Medicine, the Francis King Carey School of Law, School of Social Work, School of Pharmacy, Dental School, as well as the campus’ administrative offices have recently participated in tabletop exercises to test the newly updated COOP plans. Tabletop exercises were completed on December 14, 2010, March 15, 2011 and September 28, 2011, with a focus on critical decision making, the coordination between the UMB administration and offices and the ability of the University to protect students, staff and faculty members all while maintaining UMB operations during an emergency.
CHHS Staff Additions

CHHS continues to grow. For biographies of the following new members of our staff, please visit the “Who We Are” section of the CHHS website, www.mdhhs.com.

Czarina Biton, MPH
Senior Policy Analyst

Blake Carroll
Policy Analyst

Lisa Connor, MIHSM
Policy Analyst

Peter Fox, JD
Law & Policy Analyst

Daniel Goodman, JD
Law & Policy Analyst

Anne Marie Harkins, JD
Law and Policy Analyst

Vernon Herron, MS
Senior Policy Analyst

George Lettis
Media Relations Manager

Patrick Rose, PhD
Policy Analyst

Katherine Shea, JD
Law and Policy Analyst

Nishamarie Sherry, JD
Law and Policy Analyst

Michael Ulrich, JD
Law and Policy Analyst

George Waddington, PhD JD
Law and Policy Analyst
Give to CHHS

You can support our ongoing work by contributing to the Center for Health and Homeland Security. Our staff has grown to more than 60 experts and professionals, many of whom present at conferences, speak at symposiums and offer commentary in the media – all outside the scope of their normal duties. Your contribution mirrors our dedication, and your generosity will open doors to exciting new projects and provide the essential resources we need to effectively work side-by-side with emergency officials to ensure the safety of every citizen.

There are three ways to make a gift to CHHS:

1. Online, at mdchhs.com/give
2. Phone, by calling Jeanne Stringer at (410) 706-0585
3. Mail, by filling out the information on the envelope and card attached to this page and enclosing a check made payable to UMBF, Inc./CHHS

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The CHHS newsletter is published on a semi-annual basis. For more information about CHHS or to join our mailing list, visit us online at www.mdchhs.com.

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If you would like to subscribe to the CHHS newsletter and occasionally receive other information about our work, visit mdchhs.com/newsletter to sign up.

All correspondence including inquiries, cases, events and letters should be directed to:

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