BUILDING BRIDGES: STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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OVERVIEW:

- Challenges to Meeting the Preparedness Needs of Diverse Communities
  - Individual-level Barriers
  - Institutional-level Barriers

- National Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness & Cultural Diversity
  - Background on Panel
  - National Consensus Statement
  - Guiding Principles

- National Resource Center for Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities

- Dr. Shah’s work…. 
INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL BARRIERS*

- Socioeconomic factors
  - Preparedness not a priority
  - Lack of personal transportation
  - Substandard housing
  - Limited financial resources

- Culture and language barriers
  - Unable to understand disaster warnings
  - Misinterpret verbatim translations
  - Geographic/cultural/linguistic isolation

- Distrust of messengers and service providers
  - Fear of deportation among undocumented immigrants
  - Distrust of local law-enforcement officials among refugees

- Reliance on non-mainstream sources of information
  - Family members/social networks primary sources of information
  - Ethnic media outlets
INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL BARRIERS*

- **Knowledge**
  - Limited knowledge about diverse communities, their cultures, circumstances, and distinct needs

- **Community input**
  - Minimal collaboration between local community members and public agencies in planning process

- **Infrastructure**
  - Limited support to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services (e.g., workforce diversity, availability of on-site bilingual interpreters, and cultural competence training for service providers)

Panel’s Mission & Objectives:

- **Mission**: Provide guidance to national, state, and local agencies and organizations on developing public and private sector strategies to advance preparedness and eliminate disparities for racial/ethnic minorities across all stages of an emergency.

- **Main objectives**:
  - Create a National Consensus Statement & Guiding Principles on integrating issues of racial/ethnic diversity into preparedness planning & action;
  - Identify Specific Action Steps to operationalize recommendations highlighted in the consensus statement and guiding principles

- Initiated in 2007 with support from USDHHS/Office of Minority Health
The integration of racially and ethnically diverse communities into public health emergency preparedness is essential to a comprehensive, coordinated federal, state, tribal, territorial and local strategy to protect the health and safety of all persons in the United States. Such a strategy must recognize and emphasize the importance of distinctive individual and community characteristics such as culture, language, literacy and trust, and promote the active involvement and engagement of diverse communities to influence understanding of, participation in and adherence to public health emergency preparedness actions. Additionally, this strategy must acknowledge the critical commitment to developing effective and sustainable services, programs and policies and building mutual accountability. Only through these comprehensive, unified efforts can we work to counter the legacy of racial and ethnic disparities and ensure that quality and equality for all communities form the foundation of the Nation’s planning for any and all public health emergencies.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Identifying, locating and maintaining a profile of diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant, and limited English proficient (LEP) populations within the community.

2. Establishing sustainable partnerships between community representatives and the public health preparedness system to assess, build, and sustain trust with diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant, and LEP populations.

3. Engaging community representatives to design, implement, and evaluate emergency risk communication strategies, ensuring that they are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

4. Developing and testing drills and exercises that reflect the community and incorporate scenarios that explicitly take into account situations involving culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONT.)

5. Building capacity within the public health preparedness system to respond to unique needs of diverse communities.

6. Measuring and evaluating emergency plans and actions from preparedness to recovery, ensuring the active involvement of participants from the public health preparedness system and the community in a continual process of review.

7. Coordinating information, resources, and actions within and across organizations as well as with diverse communities in a concerted effort to maximize compliance and adherence to preparedness practices.

8. Ensuring the availability of funds to develop and sustain services, programs, and policies that strengthen diverse communities’ ability to prepare and respond to as well as recover from emergency events.
Purpose: Offer practical recommendations to assist agencies in engaging and incorporating needs of diverse communities across the continuum of preparedness activities

- Intended to complement existing resources (e.g., ASTHO At-Risk Populations Guide and CDC Public Health Workbook)
- Not intended to be prescriptive; rather guidance will offer recommendations and strategies that can be adopted or adapted across settings

Specific guidance for operationalizing stresses:
- Actively involving and engaging community leaders and representatives
- Integrating/considering broader social and economic needs and circumstances of communities
- Coordination and communication across public and private sectors
Mission & Target Audience:

- **Mission**: Provide a central and comprehensive database of resources and an information exchange portal on advancing preparedness and eliminating disparities.

- **Target Audience**: Communities, government, emergency planners, emergency managers, first responders, health care providers, public health professionals, researchers, businesses and policymakers.

- Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health.
NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER’S ACTIVITIES

- Offers a central database of resources on emergency preparedness for diverse communities
  - Over 500 annotated English-language resources
  - Translated materials in 58 languages
  - Information on promising practices and lessons learned
  - Courses, drills, and training programs
  - Assessment tools
  - Research articles
  - Policy documents

- Provides a forum for the exchange of information
  - Bi-monthly e-newsletter
  - Voices from the field
  - Option to submit new resources
Welcome to the National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities, developed by the Drexel University School of Public Health's Center for Health Equity, with support from the HHS Office of Minority Health.

**Breaking News:** The 7.0 magnitude earthquake which struck just outside Port au Prince, Haiti on January 12, 2010 has caused death and destruction of catastrophic proportions. The humanitarian crisis has set international aid organizations into action and mobilized the first wave of international relief workers. While the critical need for immediate disaster relief is without question, the complex nature of the emergency is likely to raise formidable cross-cultural challenges for international relief workers who are not familiar with the local language, customs, social structures, and communication systems. Below is a list of resources to assist disaster relief workers and international aid organizations in meeting these challenges—such as effectively working with lay translators and providing culturally competent mental health services.