

# **PUBLIC HEALTH CHAPTER**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department's (ZMCHD) Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is to provide basic information and resources to staff and public health responders for preparedness readiness before, during and after a natural or man-made disaster. This Chapter addresses ZMCHD's role in preparedness readiness.

## **SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

### **A. Situation**

1. ZMCHD is located at 205 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Zanesville, Ohio and is the lead public health agency serving all communities within Muskingum County.
2. During declared emergencies, the ZMCHD may recruit public health partners within Muskingum County and public health personnel from nearby counties via mutual aid agreements and the Ohio Department of Health.
3. A significant natural disaster or man-made event (flooding, utility outage, tornado, winter storm, hazardous material spill, communicable disease, food-borne illness outbreak or bioterrorism incident) may require a public health response. Therefore, ZMCHD staff may be asked to respond to any disaster requiring public health assistance.
4. Hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory care centers, pharmacies, the Muskingum Valley Health Center and other facilities for medical/health care and special needs populations may be structurally damaged or destroyed. Facilities that survive with little or no structural damage may be rendered unusable or only partially usable because of a lack of utilities or because staff are unable to report for duty as a result of personal injuries and/or damage/disruption of communications and transportation systems. Medical and health care facilities that remain in operation and have the necessary utilities and staff will probably be overwhelmed by the "walking wounded" and seriously injured victims who are transported there in the immediate aftermath of the incident.
5. In the face of massive increases in demand and the damage sustained, medical supplies (including pharmaceuticals) and equipment will probably be in short supply. Disruptions in local communications and transportation systems could also prevent timely re-supply. Uninjured persons who require frequent medication and/or treatments may have difficulty obtaining these medications and treatments because of damage/destruction of normal supply locations and general shortages within the disaster area. ZMCHD may be overrun with walk-ins seeking assistance unavailable at clinics and hospitals.
6. Certain disasters require a need for an agency relocation, public shelters and vector control. Some disasters may require the need of returning potable water, wastewater services, and solid waste facilities back to operation. ZMCHD will ensure that available shelters can handle the public health needs of a large number of people using the facilities. ZMCHD will work with public health partners, local

government and private sector to ensure that water, waste-water treatment and solid waste facilities are maintained or returned to normal function.

**B. Assumptions**

1. The Health Commissioner can seek mobilization of federal resources such as Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and other public health resources when an event overwhelms local capacity to respond.
2. A terrorist release of weapons of mass destruction; damage to chemical and industrial plants, sewer lines, and water distribution systems; and secondary hazards such as fires will result in toxic environmental and public health hazards to the surviving population and response personnel, including exposure to hazardous chemicals, biological, radiological substances, and contaminated water supplies, crops, livestock, and food products.
3. ZMCHD will partner with mental health professionals to address need for crisis intervention for individuals and affected groups.
4. ZMCHD will work with local facilities to assess sanitation services, power issues and shelters to determine the best ways to reduce the potential for further disease or injury.
5. Primary medical treatment facilities may be damaged or inoperable; thus, assessment and emergency restoration to necessary operational levels is a basic requirement to stabilize the medical support system.