

Public Health Response to 2012 Flooding in Washington County/Johnson City

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Emergency Response Coordinator







Public Health's Role

- Tennessee Department of Health is Emergency Support Function 8 under the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan (TEMP)
- Tennessee Emergency Management Agency is the lead agency for emergencies in Tennessee
- Locally, the Emergency Management Office (EMA) is responsible for disasters.

Public Health's Role

- Washington County/Johnson City EMA Office made a formal request to the State Emergency Operations Center asking for ESF 8 to support the mission.
- Under the TEMP, TDH is responsible for the medical needs of the citizens
- The TDH agencies that responded:
 - Johnson City/Washington County Health Dept.
 - Northeast Tennessee Regional Health Office

Washington County Health Dept.

- Requests through the Mayor's Office to provide Tetanus immunizations as indicated
- Provide any information to the public regarding mold and other contaminants when returning to homes
- Information on Preparing for Cleanup
 - FEMA website www.fema.gov/hazards/floods/
 - www.Redcross.org/service/disaster/
 - www.lungusa.org/air/flood_factsheet99.html

Northeast TN Regional Health Office- **Surveillance**

- Provide surveillance after the flood for potential outbreaks-these are unusual
- Rates of diseases that were present before a flood may increase because of decreased sanitation or overcrowding among displaced persons.



Northeast TN Regional Health Office- **Assessment**

- Medical assessments- worked closely with the EMA Office, Red Cross and others to determine any medical needs of the community
- Teams were organized to go to homes or areas that reported elderly or persons with fragile health conditions
 - Electrical hazards to those with wet surfaces
 - Wounds, injuries, trouble with blood pressure, breathing etc.

Public Health during the **Recovery**

- Daily check in with the Command Post
 - Assignment with teams and list of areas that need to be visited for assessment
 - Areas included Dry Creek, Johnson City-Austin Springs, University area and others
 - Citizens were asked to call the County Mayor's office if they had potential problems with flooding that needed building assessment

Public Health during the Recovery

- Various agencies were contacted to assist with needs as building and medical assessments were conducted
 - Baptist Ministries provide many services such as gravel to areas where roads were washed out
 - Baptist Ministries provided laundry services
 - Area Agency on Aging were able to provide meals to homebound
 - Red Cross provide meals throughout the community and assessed for mental health issues

Public Health during the Recovery

- Provide instructions re: drinking water and hygiene
- Several questions re: gardens and what produce was adequate for consumption
- Animal and insect bites
- Usually assist with sheltering if requested by the local EMA office in support to the Red Cross

Hospital Coordination

- Each region has a Regional Hospital Coordinator (RHC)
- The RHC tracks movement in the hospitals and through Regional Medical Communication Center (RMCC)

Questions????

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NORTHEAST TENNESSEE
REGION