



Ledge Light Health District Region 37 Public Health Emergency Preparedness

MAY 17, 2007

"Volunteers are an essential requirement to a large scale Public Health Emergency."

Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Citizens Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

Ledge Light Health District is the lead planning agency for public health emergencies in Region 37, which serves the communities of East Lyme, Lyme, Old Lyme, New London, Waterford, Groton, Stonington, North Stonington, and Ledyard. Representatives from local government, emergency services, hospitals, businesses, clinicians and schools meet to coordinate a response to a public health emergency. As in any emergency, volunteers are a critical and necessary requirement. CERT teams have provided support to the Region in providing key assistance through education, exercising and drilling.

What is a Public Health Emergency?

A Public Health Emergency is defined as an occurrence or imminent threat of a:

- Communicable disease, except sexually transmitted
- Contamination (bioterrorism, epidemic or pandemic)
- Natural disaster
- Chemical attack (or accidental release)
- Nuclear attack
- Accident posing a substantial risk of a human fatalities or incidents of a permanent/long-term disability

What is the responsibility of a local health department in Public Health Emergency?

Local health departments have responsibility, during declared emergency and non-emergency times, to control and prevent disease by providing protection through:

- Dispensing medications
- Vaccination
- Conducting isolation and quarantine
- Educating the public about risks and reducing the risk of disease

What do we plan for?

- Pandemic Flu
- Bioterrorism: Anthrax, Smallpox, others
- Point of Dispensing Clinics
- Infectious Disease Outbreaks: SARS
- Foodborne Disease Outbreaks
- Risk Communication

What does this mean for volunteers?

- General working knowledge of public health emergency types
- Identification of working partners
- Have an updated personal emergency plan
- Understand National Incident Management System and Incident Command
- Participate in exercise and training

Roles for CERT volunteers?

- Point of Dispensing Clinics
- Alternate Care Sites
- Vulnerable populations assistance
- Provide community support for Isolation and Quarantine issue
- Assist in local response as assigned: public information, answer phones, work with partners including Medical Reserve Corp (Public Health response team)
- Public health emergency responses are largely dependent on volunteers

How to prepare:

- Visit us on the web - www.ledgelighthd.org - for posted resources, announcements, public health alerts and advisories
- Stay informed
- Be prepared for Public Health Emergencies
- Have an updated personal emergency plan
- Exercise and train for a public health emergency response