



DiversityPreparedness.Org E-Newsletter

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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the inaugural E-Newsletter of DiversityPreparedness.org, the nation's first online resource center devoted to advancing the emergency preparedness needs of culturally diverse communities. The aim of the e-newsletter is to provide current information on resources, research, training opportunities, and events which serve to advance the preparedness and build the resilience of diverse communities.

This issue features Hurricane Season as the Topic of the Month and provides the latest information on Hurricanes Gustav and Ike as they relate to diverse communities. This issue also includes excerpts from an interview with Dr. Randy Rowel of the Morgan State University School of Public Health and Policy and features a number of promising new resources and training opportunities in the field.

Director's Desk

Thoughts from Dr. Dennis P. Andrulis, PhD, MPH, Director of the Center for Health Equality and Associate Dean for Research at the Drexel University School of Public Health.



Hurricane season has come again, with hurricanes Ike and Gustav in particular conjuring up memories of Katrina along the southern coast and with agencies and communities vowing, and hoping, not to repeat the tragedies of recent events. The severity of these storms did not equal Katrina's wrath, and the outcomes were not nearly as catastrophic. Still, despite the best intentions and hard work of many, the experiences in poor and diverse communities once again proved there is much that needs to be done. A September 20th New York Times editorial entitled, "[Never Again, Again](#)" stated that the working poor in New Orleans "got a sickening reminder of Katrina", as those without transportation were shuttled off to places with not enough toilets and where the National Guard and police were omnipresent. In New Orleans and elsewhere undocumented immigrants, fearful of being caught on

evacuation routes despite promises by Homeland Security that their status would not be checked, chose to stay behind because word had not filtered through effectively. Others who spoke little or no English struggled to understand where to go and what to do.

These events were reminders of the work of our [National Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness and Cultural Diversity](#) and its emphasis on building and sustaining trust, fully engaging and empowering communities and their representatives to speak knowledgeably when disaster may strike, and assuring understanding among those with limited English proficiency. Clearly, awareness of these and many other cultural and community norms and ways of life are being recognized and valued. Therein we find progress as we work to assure the safety of all residents.

Topic of the Month: Hurricane Season

With the hurricane season upon us, which officially spans from June 1st to November 30th, comes the threat of storms ravaging the Gulf Coast region and Eastern seaboard of the United States. To help mitigate the effects of these storms and learn from their experiences, The National Resource Center is highlighting hurricane season as the Topic of the Month. We are providing current information on preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction efforts specific to individual storms as they affect racially and ethnically diverse populations and featuring relevant resources from our resource library.

[CLICK HERE](#) for a comprehensive list of annotated resources which focus on the needs of culturally diverse populations across the various phases of a hurricane.

Hurricane Ike:

As Hurricane Ike barreled through the Caribbean en route to the Gulf Coast region, residents and emergency management officials prepared for the category 2 storm. President Bush declared a state of emergency for Florida and Texas, while Governor Bobby Jindal declared a state of emergency for Louisiana. In Texas, a stern warning was issued by the National Weather Service calling for residents to evacuate Galveston. Houston residents were also urged to seek shelter inland. The following are articles and resources which mention racial, ethnic and immigrant communities specifically in the context of Hurricane Ike.

- NAACP Teams are on the Ground to Assist in Hurricane Ike Recovery Effort: This press release describes resources which are being provided by the NAACP to Texas residents and efforts to assure that African

American victims receive equal treatment in the aftermath of the storm. To view the full press release [CLICK HERE.](#)

- As Hurricane Ike Looms Closer, Immigrants Refuse to Leave: This article discusses the pervasive fear amongst undocumented immigrants that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol would be checking for immigration status during the evacuation process. This fear caused many undocumented immigrants to disregard evacuation orders and weather out the storm in Texas. To view the full article [CLICK HERE.](#)
- Listo America has created a Spanish language website containing hurricane preparedness resources and links to the most current information on the projected path of Hurricane Ike. To view the website [CLICK HERE.](#)

Hurricane Gustav:

As Hurricane Gustav made its way through the Gulf Coast region various media outlets charted response and recovery efforts targeting culturally diverse populations. Below are links to news articles and initiatives which mention culturally diverse populations and Hurricane Gustav.

- New York Times Editorial- "Never Again, Again": This editorial describes some of the perceived short fallings of recent evacuation efforts in New Orleans and contains a number of quotes from evacuees. To view the full editorial [CLICK HERE.](#)
- FEMA has developed a Hurricane Gustav information hub to provide relevant resources and current information in [English](#) and [Spanish.](#)
- Illegal immigrants opted to stay during hurricane: This article documents the reluctance of undocumented Hispanic/Latino workers to evacuate New Orleans due to fear of deportation. The article also cites the shortcomings of efforts to disseminate evacuation orders in Spanish. To view the full article [CLICK HERE.](#)
- Hurricane Gustav bears down on empty New Orleans: This article cites efforts which were taken in New Orleans to ensure that populations with limited English proficiency were able to understand mandatory evacuation orders. To view the full article [CLICK HERE.](#)
- Spanish speaking volunteers were needed to help interpret for Hispanic/Latino hurricane evacuees staying in the Memphis area. For more information [CLICK](#)

[HERE.](#)

- The organization INCITE has requested support to help low-income African American women and their families evacuate New Orleans and return to safety. For more information [CLICK HERE.](#)

Events & Training

Sixth National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations

September 21-24, 2008

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The National Conference on Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations, which has been held biennially since 1998, is one of the most respected and well-supported conferences on cultural competence and health disparities reduction in the United States. Co-produced by the Drexel University Center for Health Equality, Resources for Cross Cultural Health Care, and the HHS Office of Minority Health, this meeting attracted over 700 attendees from North America and around the world. It featured over 150 presentations during pre-conference intensive training sessions, plenary panels, roundtable sessions, concurrent workshops, a film festival and a resource center with exhibits and poster presentations.

At this year's conference, a Peer-to-Peer Practice Advancement Session was focused explicitly on "Lessons Learned and Practical Strategies for Integrating Diverse Communities into Emergency Preparedness." This session brought together a room full of professionals to share their experiences working with racial, ethnic, immigrant and limited English proficient communities in times of public health emergencies. Common views shared by panelists and attendees included the need for culturally competent translated resources, not just verbatim translations, and the importance of trust in the relationship between service providers and the local community. For more information on the proceedings of the peer-to-peer session [CLICK HERE](#) or visit the [CONFERENCE WEBSITE.](#)

Partnerships in Emergency Preparedness: A Faith-Based Community Initiatives Workshop

July 2008- November 2008

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has organized a number of workshops across the country to engage Homeland Security stakeholders from the private sector, governmental agencies, and non-profit groups, such as community and faith-based groups, in a strategic partnership to develop a national culture of preparedness. The workshops will highlight the role of grassroots faith-based and community-based organizations in emergency management and preparedness.

[LINK TO WORKSHOP DATES AND LOCATIONS](#)

Online Training Module: Case Studies in Culture and Health Literacy

This online training module presented by the University of Minnesota School of Public Health describes three local efforts to close the health literacy gap in Minnesota, including that of ECHO Minnesota which focuses on emergency preparedness in culturally diverse communities. The importance of engaging culturally diverse communities in the planning stage is emphasized as is the need to identify sources of information which are trusted in the local community. The interactive training module can be accessed free of charge but registration is required.

[LINK TO ONLINE TRAINING MODULE](#)

Webcast: Addressing At-Risk Populations in Emergency Preparedness Planning

This webcast, presented by the SUNY Albany Center for Public Health Preparedness, is led by Advanced Practice Center Program Managers from Montgomery County, Maryland and King County, Seattle, along with the Chief Program Officer for Public Health Practice for the Association of State & Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). Lessons learned and best practices for reaching vulnerable populations in a public health emergency are discussed as are key findings from the ASTHO-led At-Risk Population Engagement Meetings. [LINK TO WEBCAST](#)

Emergency Preparedness in the Latino Community: Training Manuals for Promoters

The Montgomery County, Maryland Advanced Practice Center and the Latino Health Initiative used results from their focus groups to develop a training curriculum for the promotores de salud (lay health promoters) to help increase knowledge and change behaviors in the Latino community on emergency preparedness. This serves as a guide for lay health promoters to lead emergency preparedness training sessions in the Latino community.

LINK TO TRAINING MANUAL: [English](#), [Spanish](#)

New Resources

Integrating Immigrant Families in Emergency Response, Relief, and Rebuilding Efforts

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, in collaboration with Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, recently developed a framework for how local governments can incorporate limited English proficient (LEP) residents and immigrants into the emergency planning process, increase their preparedness, and develop capacity in key public agencies to communicate with and

serve these residents. The framework draws on findings from a series of recent reports which examined barriers to successfully integrating LEP immigrant communities into emergency preparedness and response strategies. These barriers include geographic and cultural isolation, limited English proficiency, and lack of trust in government officials. To View the report in its entirety [CLICK HERE](#).



Yale Center for Public Health Preparedness Newsletter: Engaging Immigrant Communities in Emergency Preparedness

The September installment of the Yale Center for Public Health Preparedness newsletter focuses on potential barriers to engaging immigrant communities in public health preparedness and proposes various strategies to promote preparedness in these communities. Barriers include limited English proficiency (LEP), cultural differences, and lack of trust in government officials and service providers. Promoting preparedness through trusted sources, such as ethnic media outlets and community organizations, is a key strategy for fostering a culture of emergency preparedness in immigrant communities. To view the newsletter in its entirety and learn how to subscribe [CLICK HERE](#).

Fire 20/20: Multicultural Health Research Project

This report presents the findings of three case studies which were conducted across sixteen Metro Fire departments in: Seattle, Washington; Austin, Texas; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The project set out to test the hypothesis that the "hero" culture of the fire service increases the risk of injury and loss of life of both firefighters and community members when working with multicultural communities. The report also examines the perceptions of firefighters in their ability to meet the needs of multicultural communities and what specific safety risks could be reduced to firefighters and community members if firefighters had greater multicultural awareness and were better reflected in the community. A series of interviews and testimonials accompany the

report and are available to view in streaming format as are findings from a survey which examines the racial composition of 108 metro fire departments.

[LINK TO FULL REPORT](#)

Emergency Preparedness Education for the Latino Community Conducted by Health Promoters: A Mini Pilot Study

This report presents the findings of a program initiated by the Montgomery County, Maryland Advanced Practice Center for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and the Latino Health Initiative to increase emergency preparedness in low-income Latino communities through health promoters from the local community. Following a literature review and eight focus group discussions, experienced Vías health promoters were trained, using a curriculum based on the findings of the formative research and highlighting the key messages and materials of the Advanced Practice Center. Results suggest that the promoter-led community education sessions on emergency preparedness were remarkably effective in increasing the Latino community's readiness for emergencies. [LINK TO FULL REPORT](#)

At-Risk Populations Project Engagement Meetings: Final Report

This report serves as a comprehensive summary of three engagement meetings among federal, state, local, and territorial health agencies, as well as other key stakeholders to develop model guidance on at-risk populations during an influenza pandemic. The report provides an executive summary of the meetings as well as quantitative results of participants' agreement with various statements regarding vulnerable populations. The resource serves as a compliment to ASTHO's report "At-risk Populations and Pandemic Influenza: Planning Guidance for State, Territorial, Tribal and Local Health Departments." [LINK TO FULL REPORT](#)

Disaster Preparedness in Urban Immigrant Communities: Lessons Learned from Recent Catastrophic Events and Their Relevance to Latino and Asian Communities in Southern California

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) recently released a joint study which finds that immigrant and limited English proficient populations are not fully incorporated in disaster preparedness educational efforts and emergency response plans. The study examines selected Latino and Asian immigrant communities in Southern California for disaster education and response preparations in order to improve disaster awareness among immigrant community members and to help emergency response personnel better serve limited English speaking populations. [LINK TO FULL REPORT](#)

Voices From the Field:

Dr. Randy Rowel, Morgan State University



Integration of the principles of cultural competence to public health frameworks is core to eliminating racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care. Yet few have investigated the role of cultural competence in the field of public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) as thoroughly as Dr. Randy Rowel.

The research agenda of Dr. Rowel and his colleagues is driven by a desire to strengthen the disaster resilience of vulnerable communities by applying the core principles of cultural competence. We spoke with Dr. Rowel to learn more about his team's research and his perspectives on implementing culturally competent strategies to engage racially and ethnically diverse populations in PHEP and strengthen community resilience to a disaster.

In collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health Preparedness, Dr. Rowel, faculty and students from Morgan State, co-sponsored the "Public Health Preparedness: Why Culture Matters Symposium." The symposium proceedings consisted of a series of expert presentations and round table discussions. The aim of these sessions was to better understand the role of the individual and the community in PHEP and examine how principles of cultural competence can be implemented to better address the needs of vulnerable populations across all phases of an emergency. Dr. Rowel and his colleagues are in the process of synthesizing symposium findings to construct a framework of the role of cultural competence in disaster health services. In addition to informing the development of culturally competent disaster health services, this framework will help local public health departments and other organizations better express how they are integrating principles of cultural competence into disaster plans.

According to Dr. Rowel, "A lot of emergency management professionals employ principles of cultural competency and don't realize it, if you asked them what they were doing to increase cultural competence many would find it difficult to articulate it, yet many of them spend a lot of time in the field attempting to understand the communities they serve. This is an important requirement for becoming culturally competent." Dr. Rowel believes the purpose of the research his team is conducting is to help emergency management professionals to better articulate what they are doing or not doing to provide culturally competent disaster related services to the communities they serve, especially vulnerable populations.

Dr. Rowel feels emphatically that it is this engagement with the local community that is absolutely vital to fully meeting their public health preparedness needs. Becoming culturally competent will help service providers to understand even the diversity that exists within vulnerable populations. As Dr. Rowel explains, "Not all minorities are vulnerable. Some minorities have the resources to get in a helicopter and fly away if something happens! It is the service providers' lack of knowledge about who they are and the similarities and differences in how minority populations deal with disaster preparedness, response, or recovery that makes them vulnerable."

By highlighting the benefits of community engagement and cultural competence in building disaster resilient communities, Dr. Rowel and his colleagues hope their research will encourage local emergency management or public health agencies to partner and/or fund community and faith-based organizations who best understand the specific needs of culturally diverse communities. "These organizations already have relationships with many of the vulnerable populations. We need to give these organizations the resources they need to help create a culture of preparedness," says Dr. Rowel.

To learn more about Dr. Rowel and his team's efforts, you can view the following resources currently on Diversitypreparednes.org

- [The Impact of Culture on Preparedness](#)
- ["An Assessment of the Cultural Appropriateness of Emergency Preparedness Communication for Low Income Minorities"](#)
- [Proceedings on the Symposium on Public Health Preparedness: Why Culture Matters](#)

*Dr. Rowel is an Assistant Professor at Morgan State University's School of Community Health and Policy and Director of the Why Culture Matters Disaster Studies Project. His research is partly funded by the DHS National Center for the Study of Preparedness and Catastrophic Event Response (PACER) where he is one of their Principal Investigators. The mission of PACER is to improve the nation's preparedness and the ability to respond. Dr. Rowel also serves on the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Preparedness and Response Advisory Committee.

The National Resource Center is continually growing and updating its collection of resources and information. We welcome individuals and organizations to submit stories from the field and resources including publications, information on current initiatives, training curriculum and educational exercises, measurement and evaluation tools, research activities, policies and services focusing on preparedness for culturally diverse communities. To submit a resource click on the submission links in the Quick Links box at the top of the e-newsletter's left navigation column.

We encourage you to share the National Resource Center with your peers and colleagues and welcome you to link to the website. Please also feel free to e-mail your comments and any feedback to our team. We look forward to working with you to making this site a resourceful and useful tool in advancing the preparedness of our nation's diverse communities.

Sincerely,

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