

CDC Support to Senior Health Officials: How CDC Can Help Respond to Emerging Local Health Concerns

During an emerging local public health issue or incident, there are several forms of assistance you can request as a senior health official from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—outside of a larger-scale emergency or CDC Emergency Operations Center activation, and under conditions in which your jurisdiction maintains autonomy and control.¹ You do not have to be funded directly by CDC to receive technical assistance and other support. Some types of support require a formal invitation from your jurisdiction (e.g., for CDC to assist you on the ground in an epidemiologic investigation), whereas others are only a conversation away.

The following information can help you communicate, consult, and partner with CDC leaders and staff. Working together, we can identify and respond effectively to emerging public health issues and learn from one another's experiences and expertise.

Important Contact Information

- In the event of an emergency, contact the CDC Emergency Operations Center at **770.488.7100**.
- For general CDC information during and after business hours, call CDC-INFO at **800.232.4636** and follow the prompts for “health professionals.” You will be able to speak directly with someone who can triage your call for response.
- For cross-cutting issues or requests, or if you need assistance in reaching a specific program, contact CDC's Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support (OSTLTS) at OSTLTSfeedback@cdc.gov or **866.835.1861**.

Resources for Newly Appointed Health Officials

- Visit CDC's page for new health officials (www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/hop).
- If you are eligible, attend a CDC orientation for new health officials (www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/hop/nhorientation.html).
- Learn about and sign up for CDC health alerts and other information channels (www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/healthalerts).
- Find other CDC resources available to health officials (www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/aboutcdc/pdf/stlt-agency-resources.pdf).

¹ Pursuant to the 10th Amendment of the US Constitution, states have “police powers”; any powers not specifically delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states or the people. Police powers are defined as powers exercised by the states to enact legislation and promulgate regulations to protect the public health, welfare, and morals, and to promote the common good; many state public health actions fall under police powers. Some federal public health-related activities are carried out under power to regulate interstate commerce and tax and spend. *Source:* CDC Public Health Law Program.



When There Are Emerging Issues of Concern

During emerging developments, CDC can provide the following assistance:

- An informal sounding board and consultation; contact the relevant CDC program or OSTLTS to inform them about and discuss the issue
- Information and data to help you develop plans, justifications, recommendations, and policy options for decision-making
- Toolkits and other resources for conducting local investigations
- Technical assistance and materials for communicating with the public and others
- Help convening informal and formal discussions with stakeholders to raise awareness and discuss problems and solutions
- Help identifying and connecting you with other jurisdictions that have had similar issues

Senior health officials can also request short-term technical assistance from CDC, such as the following:

- **Epi-Aid:** Epi-Aid is a mechanism for public health authorities to request the short-term epidemiologic assistance of CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service officers to respond to urgent public health problems, such as unexplained illnesses, infectious disease outbreaks, and post-hurricane effects. To request an Epi-Aid, email EpiAid@cdc.gov or call the EIS main line at **404.498.6110** (during business hours) or the CDC Emergency Operations Center at **770.488.7100** (after business hours). Additional information about Epi-Aids is available at www.cdc.gov/eis/downloads/epi-aid-fact-sheet.pdf.
- **Lab-Aid:** A Lab-Aid is a mechanism for public health authorities (mostly state or local laboratory directors) to request the short-term public health laboratory assistance of CDC's Laboratory Leadership Service (LLS) fellows. A Lab-Aid allows for rapid response by the LLS fellows, who assist in providing laboratory services during an outbreak or offer technical assistance related to quality management systems or laboratory safety. Note: The Lab-Aid is in addition to any laboratory technical assistance that might be provided during an Epi-Aid in which an LLS fellow participates. To request a Lab-Aid, email EpiAid@cdc.gov or call the Epidemiology Workforce Branch main line at **404.498.6110** (during business hours) or the CDC Emergency Operations Center at **770.488.7100** (after business hours).
- **Info-Aid:** Health officials can request assistance related to information systems, meaningful use requirements, electronic health records, and other health information technology activities. Public health informatics fellows collaborate with requestors and their partners to define the problem and work extensively with CDC informatics staff to provide solutions or recommendations. Public health entities that request Info-Aids must pay for travel and per diem of responding fellows. To request an Info-Aid, contact Dr. Sridhar Papagari Sangareddy at spapagarisangareddy@cdc.gov or **404.498.6586**.
- **Econ-Aid:** Health officials can request assistance related to quantitative policy analysis, health economics-based inquiries, and integrative health services research. Steven M. Teutsch Prevention Effectiveness fellows participate in the response as a part of their experiential training. Public health entities that request Econ-Aids must pay for travel and per diem of responding fellows. To request an Econ-Aid, contact Dr. Adam Skelton at askelton@cdc.gov or **404.498.6786**.
- **Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE):** The HHE Program provides services to assess potential health hazards in workplaces. The HHE Program can 1) provide consultation for local health departments doing their own evaluations, 2) do its own investigation and report the findings to you, or 3) collaborate with you on an investigation. Learn more at www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2014-113/pdfs/2014-113.pdf. To discuss a particular situation, contact Allison Tepper at atepper@cdc.gov or **513.841.4382**.

- **Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER):** Health officials can request assistance from CDC's Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects, Health Studies Branch (HSB) in conducting a rapid needs assessment to determine the health status, basic needs, or knowledge, attitudes, and practices of a community in a quick and low-cost manner. CASPER can be used in both a disaster and non-disaster setting. A CASPER toolkit is available at www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/disaster/casper. To request assistance from HSB, contact Amy Wolkin at awolkin@cdc.gov or **770.488.3402**.
- **Assessment of Chemical Exposures (ACE):** Health officials can use ACE tools or request assistance from the ACE program to conduct an epidemiologic assessment after a chemical incident. The ACE Toolkit contains materials that can quickly be modified to meet the needs of a local team performing an epidemiologic assessment, including surveys, consent forms, a medical chart abstraction form, an interviewer training manual, and Epi Info™7 databases to enter and analyze the data. When an incident occurs, the ACE program (located within the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) can provide technical assistance by forming a multidisciplinary, often multiagency, team to assist the state or local health department. Visit www.atsdr.cdc.gov/ntsip/ace.html for more information and to request ACE assistance.
- **Public Health Law Support:** CDC's Public Health Law Program (PHLP) performs research and creates tools for understanding law and making law and policy decisions. PHLP also hosts state and local public health counsel listservs and quarterly conference calls so that state and local public health attorneys can discuss and collaborate on public health law issues. PHLP can provide you with guidance or information on legal matters pertaining to certain aspects of public health. Technical assistance may include services such as consulting, editing, and planning, but it does not involve an attorney-client relationship. To request technical assistance, visit www.cdc.gov/phlp/technicalassistance.
- **Customized Support for Health Officials (CSHO):** CSHO provides customized support for health officials, collaborating to identify CDC and partner resources, help address public health issues in their agencies and jurisdictions, and improve population health in their communities. CSHO helps health officials address key public health challenges by connecting them with world-class subject matter experts, developing customized data and resource packages, and coordinating peer-to-peer networking opportunities. To request assistance from CSHO, contact Kimberly Cantrell at kcantrell@cdc.gov or **404.498.0411**.

If CDC identifies a possible issue through one of its surveillance systems (e.g., an outbreak or disease cluster), CDC will contact you to discuss it.

For more information, contact the Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support at **866.835.1861** or OSTLTSfeedback@cdc.gov.