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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE DC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Welcome to the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH), Health and Medical Coalition (HMC)! I am eager to share with you this year’s HMC Annual Report which highlights HMC activities from March 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. The HMC was developed and launched in March 2015 to strengthen emergency preparedness and response efforts among healthcare organizations and public and private sector partners, working in concert for threats or incidents plaguing the District of Columbia and the National Capital Region (NCR).

The coalition’s membership is composed of the DOH’s 6 administrations to maximize the Department’s resources and to strategically plan. Through the memberships’ footprint within the public health and healthcare system, DOH is able to solicit participation and gain partnerships from various multi-disciplinary and multi-specialty groups.

Over the past year, the HMC has accomplished many goals including implementing the following 6 strategies:

1. Establish HMC Governance
2. Engage and align DOH administrations to HMC objectives and mission
3. Developed workgroups comprised of government and community stakeholders
4. Integrate information sharing and ensure common operating platforms
5. Incorporate the HMC into the Medical Branch within the Incident Command Structure
6. Identify, evaluate, and address Hospital Preparedness Program Capability gaps

This is an exciting time for the HMC and we look forward to reaching more milestones in our efforts to build a resilient health and medical community in the District of Columbia.
MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ADMINISTRATION SENIOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND HMC CHAIR

This year has been filled with exciting exercises, trainings, drills, emergency plan development, special events, and so much more. But most importantly, the collaboration between public health and medical partners, first responders, and emergency preparedness officials, has been most impressive.

All of our partners worked together to reassure that the health and well-being of the residents, visitors, and those doing business in the District was a top priority. The HMC has provided a forum for partners to engage in the conversation to better inform preparedness efforts, not only in the District, but also throughout the region. I have been proud to serve as the Senior Deputy Director of the DOH Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration (HEPRA) and the HMC Chair because it truly shows the work and commitment of our stakeholders to support our family, friends and neighbors.

This is only the beginning of the Coalition, and I am eager to see what lies ahead.

WELCOME FROM THE HMC PROGRAM MANAGER

The HMC has been instrumental in serving as the representative of DOH’s Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 lead for the District to coordinate public health and healthcare resources during emergencies.

From coordinating Ebola planning and response through regional planning, conducting an Ebola table top and full scale exercise, and developing an Ebola Concept of Operations (CONOPS) plan to developing 3 workgroups- Fatality Management, Healthcare Associated Infections, Public Information Officer- and sub-workgroups such as the Trauma Plan Workgroup, the HMC has done very well in its first year.

I thank all of our partners for helping to make the work of the HMC a huge success. If you’re not yet a partner of the HMC, we welcome you to read through this annual report and identify how you can join us in ensuring a safe District of Columbia. We look forward to another successful year!
OVERVIEW

Department of Health Mission
The mission of the Department of Health (DOH) is to promote and protect the health, safety and quality of life of residents, visitors and those doing business in the District of Columbia. DOH responsibilities include identifying health risks; educating the public; preventing and controlling diseases, injuries and exposure to environmental hazards; promoting effective community collaborations; and optimizing equitable access to community resources.

Health and Medical Coalition

Mission
The mission of the Health and Medical Coalition (HMC) is to strengthen the resilience of the healthcare system to disasters through strategic planning, stakeholder engagement and training and exercises.

Purpose
The HMC is a multi-agency coordination entity with associated staffing that supports Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 - Public Health and Medical Services, at the State level. The purpose of the HMC is to support the DOH mission through collaboration with the six DOH administrations, combining strengths and expertise in order to create a cohesive and efficient partnership.

This coalition strengthens the healthcare system’s resiliency, by focusing on its core disciplines:

✓ Strategic planning
✓ Building sound partnerships
✓ Exercising and training
✓ Employing the four phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery)

The HMC keeps the District SAFE by:

- Serving as the representation of the DOH Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 lead for the District to coordinate public health and healthcare resources during emergencies
- Advising the DOH Director to enhance the emergency preparedness and response capabilities of District health and medical organizations
- Facilitating collaboration and coordination between the DOH and critical public health and health care partners
- Empowering District stakeholders to effectively support the ESF#8 mission by providing expertise and technical assistance through licensing and regulation, strategic planning and operations support

Goals
The HMC has four main goals:
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH/HEALTHCARE ALIGNMENT

The National Response Framework is part of the national strategy for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It provides guiding principles for domestic response partners at all levels to prepare for and provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies.

The activities and capabilities needed to successfully respond to incidents are organized into 15 groupings called Emergency Support Functions. At the federal level, the DHS Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leads ESF #5 – Emergency Management. The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leads ESF-8 – Public Health and Medical Services. ESFs provide an organizational structure that facilitates program implementation, resource coordination, information sharing and service delivery in response to incidents.

At the local level, DC DOH serves as the ESF-8 lead. The HMC coordinates ESF-8 activities, ensuring that both public health and medical needs are addressed. ESF-8 activities include public health surveillance, medical care personnel and veterinary services. The HMC leads planning and coordination according to the 8 Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP) capabilities established by the HHS Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Although the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration (HEPRA) chairs the HMC, each administration contributes its expertise and resources to fulfill the ESF-8 mission before, during, and after emergencies.
HMC MEMBERSHIP

Executive Steering Committee

The HMC Executive Steering Committee (ESC) consists of the Department of Health’s six Senior Deputy Directors, or their designees, and the Senior Leadership from the Office of the Director. The Senior Deputy Director of HEPRA serves as the HMC Coalition Chair; however all administrations work together on strategic planning, promoting emergency preparedness and supporting response capabilities. The ESC met monthly to identify gaps and develop strategic goals and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jacqueline Watson</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Office of the Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Fletcher</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td>Office of the Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Annetta Arno</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Office of Health Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrance Hubbard</td>
<td>HMC Chair, Senior Deputy Director</td>
<td>Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Anjali Talwalker</td>
<td>Senior Deputy Director</td>
<td>Community Health Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Fern Johnson-Clarke</td>
<td>Senior Deputy Director</td>
<td>Center for Policy Planning and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kharfen</td>
<td>Senior Deputy Director</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD &amp; Hepatitis Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sharon Lewis</td>
<td>Senior Deputy Director</td>
<td>Health Regulation and Licensing Administration</td>
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Staff

HEPRA developed a strong team with diverse skills to support the management, organization and implementation of HMC activities. The HMC support staff consists of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aisha Williams</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>Oversight &amp; Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Gouldbourne</td>
<td>Program Specialist</td>
<td>Communications &amp; Information Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielah Tucker</td>
<td>Program Specialist</td>
<td>Stakeholder &amp; Workgroup Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Alabi</td>
<td>Public Health Advisor</td>
<td>Stakeholder &amp; Workgroup Engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HMC PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The HMC engages over **200** individual partners from a variety of disciplines. These include:
HMC WORKGROUPS

The HMC developed three workgroups to engage government, private sector and community stakeholders in healthcare preparedness planning and response. From hospitals and nursing homes to media outlets and public relations stakeholders, the HMC is involving the whole of community in preparedness planning, operations and recovery.

**Chair:** The DOH Public Information Officer (PIO), Office of Communications & Community Relations

**Mission:** The PIO Workgroup gathers, verifies, coordinates, and disseminates accurate, accessible, and timely information on the incident’s cause, size, and current situation; resources committed; and the others matters of general interest for both internal and external use.

**Chairs:** The District Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

**Mission:** To strengthen coordination among public health and healthcare facilities with regards to fatality management operations through stakeholder engagement, plan development, training and exercises and technical assistance.

**Chairs:** DC DOH Center for Policy Planning and Evaluation & DC DOH Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration

**Mission:** To identify healthcare associated infections prevention activities, recommend evidence based practices and sustainable interventions, establish targets, and monitor and communicate progress to stakeholders and the
HMC COMMUNICATIONS

Radio Communications
The HMC oversees radio communications with various District partners (e.g. District Office of Unified Communications, hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, ambulatory care centers). Each stakeholder/facility is assigned a radio as part of the DOH emergency radio network. The HMC conducts weekly radio tests and provides technical assistance as needed to ensure that radios are fully functionally and staff are properly trained in radio operations. This network allows the HMC to maintain open lines of communication with its partners during day-to-day operations as well as during emergencies.

![HMC Radio Test Results](image)

* Radio communications were down due to technical difficulties for a significant period of time during Quarter 4

Health Alert Network
The District of Columbia Health Alert Network (HAN) is a unique communication system that uses various communication outlets (e.g. phone, email, pager, text messages, and fax) to deliver alerts/messages and exchange information to internal and external stakeholders in the District of Columbia.

![Health Alert Network Response Rate](image)
Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt established the Emergency Support Function #8 Health and Medical Coalition (HMC) with an Executive Order.

Drafted a Project Charter outlining the administrative structure and function of the HMC.

Appointed 5 DOH Senior Deputy Directors, the Director of Health Equity and 3 Office of the Director Officials to serve as the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to integrate emergency preparedness across the DOH.

Organized 4 ESC meetings to discuss HMC strategic priorities across the 5 DOH administrations.

Developed Roles and Responsibilities for each administration within the HMC and increased awareness of how each administration will support healthcare preparedness and response.

Conducted gap analysis and developed work plan for the next budget period according to the Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP) capabilities.
Activated the HMC Branch for 8 National Special Security Events (NSSEs) including the 2015 Papal Visit, 2016 Nuclear Summit, State of the Union. The HMC gathered hospital bed tracking data and developed/distributed situational reports to HMC stakeholders.

Selected 5 HMC staff to attend the FEMA Healthcare Leadership Training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL. Staff participated in a week long exercise.

Facilitated an Ebola Table Top Exercise on May 4th, 2016 with 50 District multidisciplinary stakeholders to fully develop the District’s Ebola Conops.

Facilitated an Ebola Full Scale Exercise on June 15th, 2016 with DC Fire, EMS and hospitals to test, evaluate and finalize the District’s Ebola Conops plan.

Participated in the Region 3 Ebola Table Top Exercise in Maryland at Johns Hopkins University to discuss the regional response to an Ebola patient.
Launched the HMC weekly situation reports to keep stakeholders informed on District events and activities. The HMC has distributed 52 reports to over 200 public health, healthcare and emergency management stakeholders.

Conducted approximately 43 radio checks with 46 healthcare facilities and increased overall response rate by 35%.

Led a poster presentation on the HMC entitled, “Leveraging Policy and Partnerships to Strengthen Preparedness and Response in the District” for over 200 attendees at the National Healthcare Coalition Conference.

Initiated 3 workgroups – Fatality Management, Healthcare Associated Infections, and Public Information Officer – that engage government and private public health and healthcare partners.

Launched the Fatality Management workgroup kickoff meeting with over 40 stakeholders working together to plan strengthen coordination among public health and healthcare facilities.

Created an inventory of HMC stakeholders to ensure immediate availability of current and accurate contact information during emergencies.
Activated the HMC Branch in response to Hurricane Joaquin. The HMC gathered hospital bed tracking data and developed/distributed situational reports to HMC stakeholders.

Participated in Ebola Readiness Assessment visits for the District’s 8 acute care hospitals to assess facility plans and operational capability to handle a potential Ebola patient.

Administered survey to 5 acute care hospitals, PH lab, DC FEMS and OCME to assess PPE inventory needs and capacity for Ebola.

Partnered with region 3 states (MD, VA, PA, DE, and WV) local and federal partners to develop a regional CONOPS plan.
RESOURCE SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

November 2015

Provided support and resources to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to procure PPE. PPE will improve responder safety for staff handling of decedents that expire due to infectious disease and prevent further contamination.

April 2015

Supplied the Tier 1 Ebola Treatment Centers (George Washington University Hospital, Children’s National Health System and MedStar Washington Hospital Center) with resources to improve infrastructure in 4 areas: PPE, laboratory, facility retrofitting, and waste management.

May 2015

Issued sub-grants to the applicants of 5 Ebola Treatment and Assessment hospitals to include George Washington University Hospital, Children’s National Health System and MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Providence, and Howard University Hospital.
HMC IN ACTION

From October 2015 through March 2016, DOH conducted on-site Ebola Readiness Assessments of all 8 acute care hospitals in DC. These assessments were led by the DOH Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation’s (CPPE) Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program and conducted in conjunction with the Health and Medical Coalition (HMC) and the Health Regulation and Licensing Administration (HRLA). The purpose of these visits was to assess each individual hospital’s capacity to properly handle a person under investigation (PUI) for Ebola virus disease (EVD) and ultimately keep DOH informed about the EVD preparedness healthcare landscape. These assessments were important for 1) documenting each facility’s current ability to triage or treat a PUI or confirmed EVD patient, 2) identifying Ebola-related infection control gaps, 3) determining the appropriateness of each hospital’s EVD preparedness categorization level and 4) providing facilities with opportunities to receive collaborative assistance from DOH in mitigating identified gaps. Finalized assessment reports were released to the hospitals during the summer of 2016 and mitigation discussions are currently underway.

- Emily Blake, MPH, Epidemiologist

The picture on the right is from the Ebola Full Scale Exercise that was facilitated by the HMC with help from the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services and District hospitals. The Full Scale Exercise simulated a patient with Ebola being admitted to a hospital for care.

VISION FOR 2016 - 2017

During the 2016-2017 year, the Executive Steering Committee will focus on strengthening its infrastructure and partnerships by focusing on four main priorities:

- Enhanced Planning - identifying operational goals and specific deliverables to address gaps. Update all existing coalition plans as necessary.
- Increased Integration - soliciting partnerships from each of the DOH administrations and incorporating them into the HMC framework
- Improved Infrastructure - Aligning IT systems to improve communication and information sharing and coordinating training and drills/exercises for members and partners
- Efficient Equipment & Property Management - identifying resources and assets housed within the coalition and across the DOH administrations

The HMC looks forward to another successful year!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The HMC would like to recognize the following people and groups for their support of the HMC and this annual report.

**District of Columbia Department of Health**
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