

# Preparing Mass Fatality Plans for Pandemic Influenza and including MRC Volunteers Assistance

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# Introductions

- Name, Title
- Health Department, City/State
- Rural/ Metro?
- Do you have an active MRC?
- What is the “type” of MRC volunteers that you have?

# Introduction

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Traditional mass fatality plans

vs.

Mass fatality plans for pandemic flu  
or natural death surge plans

# Perspective from Rural KY

- Situation in Green River District, KY
- Situation in Lawrence County, KY
- Coroner/legal issues
- Input from professional associations
  - National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO)
  - International Association of Private Funeral Home Directors
  - CDC/ASPR

# National Review of Mass Fatality Plans

Different types of state and local plans:

- Mass fatality plan not specific to pandemic flu
- Short appendix with pandemic flu implications
- Mortuary surge plans
- Central Collection Points vs. County specifics

# Concepts for a new Natural Death Surge Plan in Kentucky

- Reasons
- Goals
- Requirements: NIMS-compliance
- State buy-in

# Historical Perspective

- Practical
- Historical events
- Precedents set
- Public Perspective
- Public Education

# MRC Challenge

- Educate
- Educate
- Educate
- Be realistic on the capabilities and capacities of your MRC.
- Identification
- confidentiality



# Step 1: Review your jurisdiction's Legal Authority

- Coroner's role and authority in mass fatality events
- Difference between accidents/homicides/terrorism vs. mass influenza deaths
- Declaration of death and issuance of death certificates

## Step 2: Engage Traditional and Non-Traditional Partners

- Types of partners needed
- Engagement strategies
- Barriers to working with specific partners

## Step 3: Conduct Background Research

- Identify funeral homes, cemeteries and crematoriums
- Assess mortuary capacities
- Build relationships with influential leaders
- Research mortuary products
- Identify facilities
- Understand NIMS

# Identify funeral homes, cemeteries and crematoriums

- Identify all facilities and plot on a map
- Understand 'market share' of each funeral home and identify the largest
- Be cognizant of building positive relationships and mutual understanding
- Understand politics

# Assess mortuary capacities

- Cold body storage
- Body bags
- Embalming supplies
- Staff
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Vehicles
- Facility space

# Build relationships with influential leaders

- Who are key stakeholders?
- Who is necessary to carry out plan?
- Who enacts the legal authority to activate the plan?
- Who will communicate with the public?

# Research mortuary products

- Cold storage: trucks, ice rinks, Polar King™, private sector resources
- Body containment: body bags, BioSeal™, vaults, zigler cases, biodegradable caskets
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)

# Identify Potential CCP facilities

Requirements for a Central Collection Point (CCP):

- Mutual aid agreement with funeral home
- Large enough space for human remains processing
- Away from public view, if possible
- Facilities for staff: bathrooms, kitchen
- Office space for administrative work



# Identify Potential FAC facilities

Requirements for a Family Assistance Center (FAC):

- Parking
- Capacity for privacy/social distancing: small rooms or partitioning
- Admin space, bathrooms and break rooms
- Capacity for a phone bank
- Website
- Normal function will be closed during pandemic: workforce available

# Understand NIMS

- Stakeholders may need training in NIMS
- More information: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

## Step 4: Planning Operations

- Transport of human remains from homes and facilities
- Identification of remains
- Declaration of death and death certificates
- Securing valuables
- Security needs
- Body storage
- Temporary interment/burial and tracking
- Family Assistance Centers

# Transport of human remains from homes and facilities

- Closed funeral homes: use their vehicles and staff
- Home deaths: use of volunteers, family members and hospice
- Call EOC for additional assistance
- Special concerns: obese decedents, homeless and live-alone populations, others?
- Training volunteers on body handling
- Conflicting info on disease spread from decedents
- Risk communication is key!

> Not an EMS function!

# Identification of remains

- DNA sampling
- Positive ID from family or physician
- Special concerns: homeless and live-alone populations

# Declaration of death and death certificates

- Understand legal authorities
- Explore ideas to expand numbers of those able to do these functions
- Special concerns: tourists, foreigners, homeless populations
- Suspicious deaths

# Securing valuables

- Plan to store and track valuables removed from bodies
- Mutual aid agreements for storage
- Recommend that valuables not be stored at CCP
- Staff issues: is this a role MRC could assist with?

# Security needs at CCP

- Managed by CCP Coordinator
- Police vs. unarmed security
- 911 if necessary
- Credentialing of all staff and volunteers
- Keep out media!



# Body storage

- Identify cold storage resources
- Make plans for additional storage beyond current cold storage capabilities
- Expedite interment
- Staff/volunteer training
- Risk communication

# Temporary burial and body tracking

- Containers for burial
- GPS markers and tracking
- Private cemeteries vs. public land
- Grave spacing: ~1 acre/1,000 bodies
- Costs to family and government

# Family Assistance Centers

- Volunteers needed
- Numerous tasks that MRC can handle
- Insurance and estate issues
- Grief counseling/mental health
- May manage home death calls, decedent pick-up requests
- Must have walk-in service and website
- No media!

## Step 5: Plan Execution Phases

- Awareness
- Alert
- Activation

Communication is always a problem,  
MRC may be able to help spread the  
word to community areas.

# Overview of Region 3 Natural Death Surge Plan

- NIMS-compliant plan
- 2 Central Collection Points
- Family Assistance Centers at local colleges
- Use of home hospice for provisional death certificate issuance and possibly transport
- Use of public land for temporary and permanent burials; will later become a memorial site
- Public engagement meetings and exercises

# Resources

## NACCHO's Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Template

- Conduct your background research
- Use tool to prepare a tabletop exercise
- Download tool at

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/pandemictabletop.cfm>

# Resources

- Resource and additional information provided in the folder.

# Thank you!

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