Building Capacity for Ebola and Infectious Disease Training in the US: Ebola Biosafety Worker Training Program

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Worker Training Program Overview

Background
- Cooperative agreement grants
  - 18 non-profit consortia representing over 100 training organizations including unions, universities, and community colleges
  - Focus on workers who deal with hazardous materials, including biohazards, and emergency response.

Experience
- Over 25 years of experience providing worker health and safety training related to potential exposures to biological hazards and safety as workers perform their job duties.

WTP Overview

- Training: Many of the training courses provided by NIEHS WTP awardees are based on OSHA’s standards that commonly apply to emergency response and recovery workers.
- Biosafety Training: Involved in providing occupational biological safety training to workers during:
  - H5N1 outbreak
  - Anthrax attacks
  - H1N1 Avian Influenza
  - Mold remediation
  - Ebola preparedness

Timeline of Events

- Summer 2014: Literature review (Ebola Training Courses), gap analysis from stakeholder surveys
- Spr/Sum 2015: Training and performance objectives and Ebola resources
- Aug 2015: Needs assessment released
- Aug 2015: Funding announced
- Aug 2015: 3-day training for Ebola Biosafety Initiative
- Sept 2015: Ebola Biosafety Initiative released
- Early 2016: Lessons learned from stakeholder surveys
- Summer 2016: 3-day training for Ebola Biosafety Initiative
- May 2015: Awareness of Ebola & preparedness workshops
- Summer 2016: 3-day training for Ebola Biosafety Initiative
**WTP Ebola Biosafety & Infectious Disease Response Training**

- Partnership with HHS, CDC, OSHA, NIOSH, ASPR
- Develop evidence-based awareness- and operations-level Ebola biosafety training to protect a number of worker populations
- NIH intends to commit:
  - $3 million per year beginning in FY16
  - Total of $9 million over a period of 3 years
  - Estimated 5-8 awards
- Activities to date:
  - Ebola Training Tools
  - Training Needs Assessment
  - FOA

**Training Program Goals**

- Dissemination of environmental infection control and hazard recognition training
  - Healthcare and non-healthcare job sectors.
  - Focus on pathogens that can be easily transmitted person-to-person
- Improve understanding of disease spread and protection in an occupational environment
- Provide workers with the skills and knowledge to protect themselves and their communities from potential exposure to contaminated material (biological, chemical or radiological) or infected individuals who may be encountered.
- Promote and establish national, regional or multi-state geographical partnerships that can provide training or training support in occupational settings

**Target High Risk Populations**

- Air transport
  - Cabin/airline crew members
  - Border protection/compliance officers
  - Transportation security screeners
  - Other air transport workers
- Medical Treatment
  - Physicians
  - Allied health care professionals
  - Nurses
  - Emergency medical technicians/Paramedics
  - Emergency/first responders
  - Morticians/Coroners/Medical examiners
  - Clinical/research laboratory workers
- Environmental Services
  - Janitors
  - Housekeepers
  - Sanitizing personnel
  - Maintenance workers
  - Dietary aide workers
- Waste Handling
  - Solid and household waste handlers
  - DOT permitted waste disposal/collection
  - Disinfection and decontamination teams

**WTP Training Resources**

- Ebola Awareness Orientation
- Health and Safety Essential for Ebola Operations Level Training
Training Needs Assessment

- Needs assessment and gap analysis of current training for Ebola and other emerging infectious diseases
- Methodology:
  - Literature search
  - Web search for and review of existing Ebola training courses
  - Stakeholder meetings and interviews
  - Online survey of stakeholders assessing their experience with Ebola Training

Web Search & Guidance Review

- Web Search
  - Recent, specific goals, biosafety focus
  - 71 training courses met the inclusion criteria
- Guidance gaps include:
  - Applies mainly to healthcare workers
  - Assumes high level of worker knowledge
  - Labels, chemicals, exposure, transmission routes
  - Assumes that workers have access to equipment/resources
  - Assumes that procedures will be clearly communicated to workers
  - Assumes workers know their rights and responsibilities

Stakeholder Meetings

- Meetings held in:
  - New York City, NC
  - Washington, DC (x2)
  - Oakland, CA
- May 28, 2015 Ebola Biosafety Training Initiative Awardee Meeting in RTP, NC
- Several individuals from various backgrounds were invited
- Participants represented:
  - labor unions, academic centers
  - government
  - private industry
  - professional organizations
  - advocacy groups

Major Findings from the Meetings and Interviews

- Often disease/situation specific without mention of future application
- Guidance was confusing, incomplete, and healthcare specific
- More emphasis needs to be placed on general worksite preparedness.
- Hospitals focus on infection control and not worker safety and health.
- Need for multi-disciplinary teams in training development
  - Programs that had the cooperative input from labor and management were felt to be the most successful.
- Participants agreed that training should be competency-based but could not agree on which competencies to include in training.
- Waste management and training is very important
- Training for laboratory workers is very important and overlooked
Theme 1 of Gap Analysis

- Integration of Efforts
  - No current mechanism to integrate public health, medical, occupational health, and worker safety activities
  - Disconnect between infection control, occupational health, worker safety, and emergency management at health care level
  - No mechanism to provide input into local practice and policy and guidance
  - Federal guidance was inconsistent and left out key items that adversely affect worker safety and health
  - Resources from trusted sources are sometimes conflicting or lack specificity
  - No incentive for labor or management to work collaboratively
  - Resiliency training was rarely offered

Theme 2 of Gap Analysis

- Sustaining a high level of readiness is difficult due to:
  - Complacency
  - Inadequate funding and a loss of interest as outbreak resolves
  - Pathogen-specific training and emphasis on technical aspects of PPE which are not employed in daily use made it difficult for workers to maintain the high level of competency necessary to perform their job duties safely
  - Timely and consistent guidelines based on worker risk are essential for effective programs
  - Lack of basic preparedness training
  - No clearly defined and agreed-upon core competencies
  - Stigma of Ebola

Additional Information on the Project

- You can find more information on the NIEHS WTP Biosafety Initiative at the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training website: