

NJDOH REGIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY PLANNING



Background

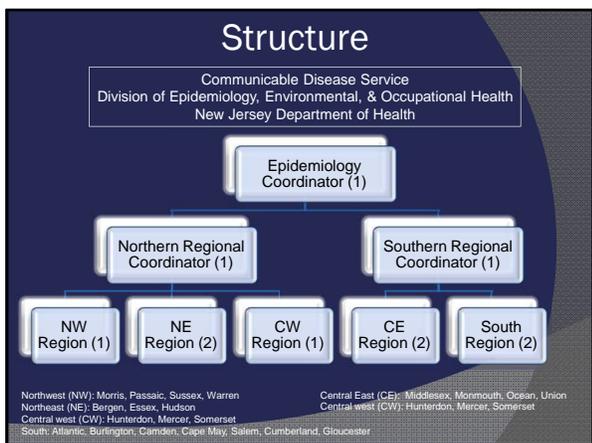
- ⦿ Reductions in PHEP grant funding
- ⦿ Current system unsustainable
- ⦿ Value Epidemiology/Surveillance capacity
- ⦿ Regionalization of services was best option to sustain this capacity and ensure consistency

Background

- ⦿ Reduce LINCS epidemiologists from 21 to 11
- ⦿ Move positions from LINCS agency to NJDOH
- ⦿ Establish MOA with Rutgers to hire new staff

Timeline

- ⦿ June 2013 - CDS planning team assembled
- ⦿ August 2013 - MOA executed/Positions posted
- ⦿ September/October 2013 - Interviews conducted
- ⦿ October/November 2013 - Positions offered
- ⦿ Supervisors (3) report December 2, 2013
- ⦿ Regional staff (8) report January 6, 2014



Operations

- ⦿ Monitor communicable diseases and consult with LHD's on disease investigations
 - Field routine calls from LHDs in assigned region
 - Monitor CDRSS to identify potential clusters of disease
 - Monitor CDRSS for completeness, quality, and timeliness
 - Provide consultation (during day and after hours) to LHDs in region on investigative process and reporting
 - Provide regional/jurisdictional reports on communicable diseases as requested by HOs

Operations

- ◉ Offer/provide epidemiologic assistance and consultation to LHDs in events of public health significance
 - Field calls from LHDs in assigned region
 - Work with NJDOH staff in the coordination of epidemiologic response and public health recommendations
 - Coordinate, assist and/or support LHD's with epidemiologic investigation activities
 - Provide direct follow-up when necessary (contacting cases, analytical studies, multistate cluster/outbreak)
 - Assist in completion of outbreak summary report with LHDs

Operations

- ◉ Perform or participate in routine, syndromic and enhanced surveillance for region as prescribed by SMEs
 - Serve as the liaison to stakeholders
 - Report anomalies to LHDs for follow-up and provide assistance with such investigations if requested
 - Coordinate follow-up investigations involving multiple jurisdictions
 - Participate and engage stakeholders in surveillance set up for non-routine events (e.g., SB-48, RNC etc..)

Operations

- ◉ Liaison with public health stakeholders in region
 - Coordinate regularly scheduled regional meetings with SME's, LHD communicable disease staff and members of local healthcare community (e.g. IPs)
- ◉ Participate in exercises involving communicable disease response
- ◉ Communicable Disease Training/Education/Resource Development
 - Identify training needs
 - Prepare or participate in the preparation of written or oral reports related to communicable disease
 - Assist in development of resources to be used by public health stakeholders

Feedback

- ◉ Need your help
 - Feedback - questions and concerns
 - Address during planning process

Contact Information

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How do you plan maintaining current networking performed locally by the regional epidemiologist?

- ◉ NJDOH recognizes the role played by the regional epidemiologist
- ◉ NJDOH also realizes that the local health departments will continue to build and foster these relationships as they are critical to all aspects of public health
- ◉ NJDOH hopes to implement a more regional approach to networking
 - Regular (e.g., quarterly) communicable disease focused meetings in each established public health region
 - Establishes more regular communication with all local health jurisdictions as well as other critical stakeholders

How will local health officers request epidemiology service for their jurisdiction?

- For assistance with routine communicable disease investigations or with outbreaks, LHDs can reach CDS via current mechanisms
 - Regional epidemiologist will assist LHDs with epidemiologic aspects of communicable disease investigations
 - Should the scope of the work become overwhelming for the single epidemiologist assigned (i.e., large outbreak) additional epidemiologist from the group will be assigned to assist.
- For assistance with other projects (e.g., press releases/media inquiries, special surveillance, preparedness planning), a formal request process will be put into place

If a jurisdiction decides to maintain an epidemiologist, what will the relationship be like with these individuals?

- Local health officer remains the responsible party to ensure communicable diseases and outbreaks listed in NJAC 8:57 are reported to the state health department and appropriately investigated
- If the local health officer develops a mechanism by which this information is reported to their local epidemiologist prior to being reported to the NJDOH, this mechanism should be communicated to NJDOH and reporting partners involved
- NJDOH will work with epidemiologist in local health departments in a similar manner to the way we interact with current LINCIS epidemiology staff