



# Ready to Respond

Health Security, Preparedness and Response

Spring 2015

## Special points of interest:

- HSPR Director looks back at 2014 and forward to 2015
- HSPR staff and partners mourn Allan Visnick
- Public Health Division exercises Business Continuity Plan

## Inside this issue:

Justin Schumacher Leaves HSPR 2

Cascadia Rising 2016 4

Allan Visnick: A Deeply Felt Loss 5

Welcoming our Spring VISTAs 5

Oregon ESSENSE 6

New Office for two HSPR Liaisons 6

Oregon HOSCAP 7

ECHO 2015 7

PHD Business Continuity TTX 8

## Director's message

Looking back at 2014 requires a giant step backward to appreciate the massive and complex image it forms. Last year was a challenging time as our Federal Funds were cut almost in half. We had to decrease funds to our local public health and hospital/health system partners and layoff 20 percent of our staff. We felt the pain as we managed and helped staff two incident management teams.

The first division-wide team was for the Douglas County Relinquishment event. We currently have one staff person managing the Douglas County project. The second was the Ebola response. We maintained a virtual incident management team creating weekly Ebola situational awareness reports for our local, statewide and federal partners until March 5, 2015.

The past few months have brought unique challenges and opportunities. Oregon has encountered and responded to Ebola, measles, chicken pox, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), seasonal and other strains of influenza and, most recently, the University of Oregon meningococcal outbreak. I had the honor of being a panelist for a recent Rail Oil Tabletop exercise hosted by Oregon's Office of Emergency Management. Others on panels included representatives from Union Pacific and Portland & Western Railroads, State Hazmat Teams 4 and 7, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Transportation/Rail, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshall, the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Department of Environmental Quality. These events let us test and practice our plans, allow for process improvement and encourage communication internally and externally with all levels of partners.

So now we look forward and welcome 2015! We are in the process of receiving federal Ebola supplemental funds that will be rolled out to our local public health, Tribes and hospital/health system partners. We also are preparing for the summer of 2016 Cascadia Rising exercise, the August 2015 Pathfinder Minutemen exercise with our military partners



Mike Harryman, Director

Spring 2015

---

## Director's Message (continued)

and our annual [ECHO Preparedness Summit](#) in Bend, Oregon.

Our team is focusing on Cascadia planning to prepare the state's public health and health care system for a 9.0 earthquake. Much of our staff went to Camp Withycombe at the end of January for a briefing on the large scale regional Cascadia Rising exercise to be held in 2016. All seven coalitions actively engage in Cascadia Earthquake Planning, Cascadia East Group (R9) especially.

The Health Security, Preparedness and Response program is a better and stronger team because of the challenges we have encountered and worked through. Oregon is also a better-prepared state because of our continued commitment to the preparedness and resilience of all Oregonians.

Stay safe, stay focused,  
Mike Harryman



Camp Withycombe

---

## Justin M. Schumacher and the Legacy he Leaves

By Dean Marcum and Kristi Wheeler Johnson

Justin Schumacher is leaving the Oregon Health Authority for a unique and well-deserved security job with the U.S. Department of State. We will have already said our heartfelt goodbyes by the time this newsletter is published.

Justin served as public health preparedness liaison to eastern Oregon since early 2009, joining the Public Health Division just in time for the H1N1 pandemic. Justin has filled numerous roles for exercises and incidents in the state agency operations center. He has worked with and helped train dozens of preparedness coordinators and assisted counties develop countless plans and exercises. He was very instrumental in acquiring funds during a water contamination outbreak in Baker City, which helped back fill staffing during a time of need for the Baker County Health Department.

In concert with his county coordinators, Justin organized an eastern Oregon planning conference for Cascadia planning and, in recent years, annual regional exercises. He and HPP Coordinator, Dean Marcum, worked to combine health care preparedness and public health meetings, planning and exercises to build relationships and get the most benefit possible from these efforts. The knowledge Justin is taking with him is immeasurable and will be missed throughout the state. Who knows — maybe someday he will be back to help better protect and serve the citizens of Oregon.



Justin Schumacher

Spring 2015

## Justin M. Schumacher (continued)

Justin would like to express that it has been a pleasure working with all of you, and he'll miss Oregon. "Although the future is always uncertain in this game, I have confidence that the professionals with whom I've had the pleasure of working will continue to protect the health and safety of Oregonians as well as anyone could. Thank you everyone!"

Kristi Wheeler Johnson of the Morrow County Health Department and one of the local preparedness coordinators in Justin's region provided us with an insider's view of what it has been like to work with Justin.

Justin's background in POD planning and exercising helped the public health departments in the two counties complete an Exposure Roster Plan (ERP) to manage a large exposure incident. This planning culminated in Justin's participation in the Oregon Public Health Division's revision and adoption of the ERP as part of Oregon's standardized POD Field Operations Guide (collection POD procedures and dispensing POD procedures).

Funny memory: When Justin first moved into an older apartment in Pendleton, Oregon, he left his windows open, and found an unwelcome bat. I sent him a jargon-filled Bat Emergency Response Plan and recommended he or his landlord put in window screens (nonpharmaceutical intervention), a better option than getting rabies vaccine (pharmaceutical intervention). His email reply told me the new guy had a sense of humor.

Apart from work: We share a love of the unique landscape found in eastern Oregon, defined as the rest of the state east of Bend. I always appreciated seeing any new pictures Justin took while on his travels in the region. We also share a love of old buildings, hotels and houses, and he has seen the progress my husband and I have made on the restoration of our old house (c. 1903) in Baker City, Oregon. Justin has woodworking and landscaping skills and has shared pictures of his own work on the older house he bought.

I congratulate Justin on the completion of his master's degree and wish him all the best in the next chapter of his career.

### Highlights of Justin's tenure:

- 2015: Regional exercise (April 2015)
- 2015: Regional Cascadia meeting with OEM and OPHD in La Grande, Oregon (January 2015)
- 2014–2015: Ebola response planning
- 2014: Regional measles exercise (state grant funded)
- 2014: Cascadia East Training in Baker City, Oregon (state grant funded)
- 2013: Cryptosporidium outbreak in Baker City, Oregon
- 2013: Capability assessment completion (first time)
- 2012: Exposure roster plan adoption by OPHD
- 2011 and 2012: PHP and HPP conference planner (two years)
- 2011: CDC Preparedness Capabilities 1-15 (preparedness standards reviewed by the state)
- 2011: Exposure roster plan presentations (OR-Epi, CSEPP Annual Conference, PHP Conference)
- 2009–2010: H1N1 flu pandemic



Justin Schumacher

## Cascadia Rising 2016

By Julie Black and Sara Rubrecht

Cascadia Rising is a four-day exercise based on a 9.0 magnitude catastrophic earthquake and resulting tsunami scenario. The multi-jurisdictional functional exercise will take place the week of June 6, 2016. The exercise will test disaster operational systems and practices and improve response collaborations. Private sector and government partners at all levels are participating including federal, state and local stakeholders. This is a valuable opportunity to discuss assumptions and priorities and to collectively process the incredible response this event will warrant.

The Cascadia fault line is located just off the coasts of Oregon and Washington. It is a 600 mile long fault at the intersection of the Juan de Fuca and North American Plates. Previous massive earthquakes resulting from rupture of the fault have occurred consistently about every 400–600 years. Experts have identified 40 such quakes ranging from 8.0 to over 9.0 over the last 10,000 years.

Sara Rubrecht, interim emergency manager for Jackson County, shared their projected Cascadia Rising exercise participation and some of the groundwork they are doing in the meantime.

Jackson County will have a variety of functional and full-scale play occurring over the four days of the exercise.

Jackson County EOC will operate for three days. During those three days, 10 of 11 incorporated cities and all area hospitals will open their EOCs. Numerous DOCs will be opened as well. The incorporated cities will notify County Emergency Management that they have opened their EOC, make a city-level disaster declaration and make at least one resource request to the county EOC.

Several venues will be operating at full-scale capacity as follows:

- An emergency shelter for humans and pets will open and operate in collaboration with the Red Cross and will use the regional Disaster Animal Response Trailer located in the county. The Red Cross will use the Pillowcase Project to educate children in grades 3–5 about preparedness between now and June 2016.
- The airport will be conducting a full-scale exercise to test emergency plans.
- All local CERT groups will be actively engaged in many of the activities and will likely conduct field exercises.

Jackson County will be holding training and tabletop exercises in preparation for Cascadia Rising. There will be courses hosted this spring on volunteer and donations management, incident leadership and decision making, advanced planning concepts (covers making incident action plans) and an ICS/EOC interface course (all paid for with a grant from HPP). The county also hopes to offer ICS 300, ICS 400 and ICS for public officials.



Cascadia Rising

The Red Cross will use the Pillowcase Project to educate children in grades 3–5 about preparedness between now and June 2016.

Spring 2015

## Allan Visnick: A Deeply Felt Loss

The HSPR program along with members of the preparedness and public health communities are mourning the loss of our dear friend and irreplaceable colleague, Allan Visnick. Allan passed away on March 10, 2015. "He was a great man, a decorated Colonel, HSPR planner, committed friend, loved father, son, brother and grandfather and one incredible photographer!" Akiko Saito wrote, "He will be greatly missed." So dear friend, for one final time and from our hearts, we proudly salute you.



Allan Visnick

## Welcoming the Spring 2015 VISTA Team

By Lindsay Deal, fall 2014 VISTA team leader

The Oregon Health Authority will be welcoming 17 passionate volunteers to our AmeriCorps VISTA team in April. The seventh year of this partnership project will focus on poverty alleviation and capacity building for underserved communities dealing with poverty. They will join the 13-member August 2014 team.

The incoming team members will be working on oral health, perinatal health, obesity prevention, health education, tobacco cessation, accreditation and community health improvement. They will be hosted by various local and state government offices, nonprofit organizations and public health coalitions across the state of Oregon.

Currently we have members working toward other unique objectives at their project sites. These members have made great strides in the accreditation process of local health departments, created new resources to use now and in the future, and managed community meetings and focus groups to discover new avenues for individual projects.

Are you interested in becoming a VISTA or know someone who might?

- <https://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/SERV-OR/Pages/vistabeavista.aspx>

Would your agency benefit from hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA?

- <https://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/SERV-OR/Pages/Vistahostavista.aspx>



Current AmeriCorps VISTA team sporting their new sweatshirts

One member had to say, "The work is meaningful to me because of the possibilities I can help create as a VISTA. A VISTA's work ultimately effects change, not only at the worksite, but in the community where she/he serves. I view a lot of the projects I work on as catalysts for future opportunities for the organization and community."

The 2014 April team will be missed, but the capacity they have built for their host sites will continue to improve. With every new team, we build the capacity for new projects and success for the future of the Oregon Health Authority AmeriCorps VISTA Project and public health in the state. We look forward to exploring new horizons with our new members.

For more information, please contact Lindsay Deal, VISTA leader for the August 2014 team at 971-673-1713 or at [Lindsay.r.deal@state.or.us](mailto:Lindsay.r.deal@state.or.us).

Spring 2015

## Statewide Syndromic Surveillance goes Live in Oregon – March 2015

By Laurel Boyd

The official go-live for the statewide syndromic surveillance system is in March. All eligible facilities in Oregon will be sending emergency department data to the Public Health Division, which began onboarding facilities in 2012. We want to take a moment to congratulate all of our hospital partners for the job well done. Enabling a new data feed typically takes about three months per project and many hours of technical work. The Preparedness, Surveillance and Epidemiology Team (PSET) is excited to begin switching our gears from technical work to epidemiology.



You may be asking, what is syndromic surveillance? How do you plan to use it? It sounds cool – who has access to this tool?

Syndromic surveillance is the real-time monitoring of key health indicators in emergency department (ED) visits. Oregon's syndromic surveillance project (Oregon ESSENCE) tracks the numbers of visits for specific patient symptoms based on what the patient says when they register in the ED. The symptoms are associated with known health effects for the season, such as flu in winter or asthma during summer wildfires. Similar symptoms are grouped into "syndrome" categories. For example, wheezing and sore throat are grouped into the respiratory syndrome. Any increased trends in ED visits are identified by comparing the syndrome counts against those expected to be seen this time of year.

*Syndromic surveillance is the real-time monitoring of key health indicators in emergency department (ED) visits.*

We plan on using these data to assess the public health effects of wildfires, monitor illnesses during planned events (parades, rodeos, etc.) and for situational awareness during outbreaks. Access to the ESSENCE system is available for public health and hospital employees. Contact your HSPR liaison or [Oregon.ESSENCE@state.or.us](mailto:Oregon.ESSENCE@state.or.us) to learn how you can get access.

---

## Central Oregon HSPR Liaisons Move to New Office

By Kattaryna Stiles

The Bend-based HSPR liaisons have moved into their new office, which they share with Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Agriculture staff. The new location at 475 NE Bellevue is a great fit as it provides daily opportunities to enhance relationships with these great state partners and offers a professionally supportive environment for the team. The office is near the regional hospital and shares a parking lot with a favorite east side restaurant. Stop on by and say hello to the team the next time you are in the neighborhood.



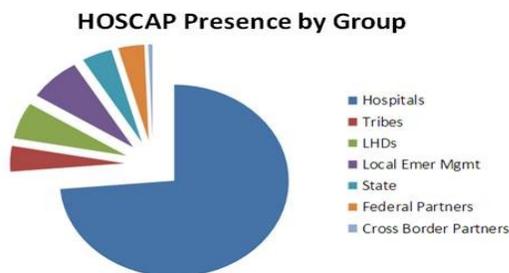
**Kattaryna Stiles, PHEP Liaison, and Carey Palm, Tribal Liaison**

Spring 2015

## Oregon HOSCAP

By Nick May

The Oregon Hospital Capacity (HOSCAP) system connects every hospital and health care organization to each other in a real time environment. First responders, 911 centers and local and state health jurisdictions maintain situational awareness by monitoring HOSCAP. State and federal health and medical resources are coordinated in disasters using data entered in HOSCAP. The common operating picture the system provides allows response efforts to occur intelligently, based on capacity status, triage capabilities and other resources.



Graphic showing the groups using the information provided by the HOSCAP system.

If you feel you should be part of the HOSCAP community, email: [HAN.Oregon@state.or.us](mailto:HAN.Oregon@state.or.us)

## ECHO 2015 Preparedness Summit

By Kattaryna Stiles

The ECHO 2015 Preparedness Summit, hosted by the Oregon Health Security, Preparedness and Response Program (HSPR), will be held October 8–9, 2015 at the Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center in Bend. The free conference is open to all health and medical preparedness staff and partners but registration is required.

We are accepting presentation submissions until April 3. If you are interested in speaking, visit the conference website for more information and to find the Call for Presentations form.

Pre-conference sessions, including training for new Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) coordinators, will be held the afternoon of Oct. 7.

The 2015 planning team, led by HSPR liaisons Dean Marcum and Kattaryna Stiles, is building upon last year's successes and plans to bring in even more local and national experts to help build community resiliency through public health and health care preparedness.

For additional information on the conference or if you would like to deliver a presentation, please contact the ECHO Summit planning team at [HSPR.EchoConference@gmail.com](mailto:HSPR.EchoConference@gmail.com).

*Are you interested in presenting at this year's ECHO Summit? Visit the conference website for more information and to find the Call for Presentations form.*



**ECHO Preparedness Summit 2015**

Stay safe, stay focused

---



Health Security,  
Preparedness and Response

800 NE Oregon Street  
Suite 456b  
Portland, OR 97232

Phone: 971-673-1315

Fax: 971-673-1307

E-mail: [health.security@state.or.us](mailto:health.security@state.or.us)

## About Health Security, Preparedness and Response

Our efforts are an emergency response collaboration with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) and our local, regional and national Emergency Management partners.

The Health Security, Preparedness and Response program is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Cooperative Agreement and the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP).

HSPR ensures that Oregon's communities and hospitals have an improving level of preparedness for health and medical emergencies by supporting the development and testing of plans, providing training, managing volunteers and encouraging collaboration.

**Spring 2015**

## Public Health Division Exercises Business Continuity Plan

By: Candy Cates

Oregon's Public Health Division's (PHD) Winter Storm tabletop exercise in Portland, December 10, 2014, tested the division's draft business continuity plan to maintain critical essential services in austere conditions.



Tabletop exercise participants  
Priscilla Lewis, Jayne Bailey and  
Johannah Swenson

More than forty-five staff from the Director's office, Center for Public Health Practice, Center for Health Protection and the Center for Prevention and Health Promotion simulated response activities to an escalating winter storm event that resulted in evacuation of the Portland State Office Building. The exercise required the participants to assess the situation and identify how to continue operations while maintaining critical functions. These functions include providing public health and state-level medical response; conducting disease outbreak investigation and control measures; conducting laboratory testing and reporting results; distributing vaccine to public/private providers, issuing infant formula and nutrition vouchers; and registering Oregon vital events. The intent was to determine the effectiveness and identify gaps of the draft plan and current procedure for staff before, during and after a severe winter storm.

The after action review is currently in the final stages and will report major strengths, areas for improvement, identified gaps and plans for improvement. The report will be incorporated into a final business continuity plan for the division ready for distribution by May 2015.