

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RURAL HEALTH

Nate Weed

Director, Community Health Systems
Washington State DOH

Heidi Hedberg

Director of Public Health
Alaska DHHS



Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the relationship between the work we all do in rural health and the work that must be done through public health and healthcare preparedness structures to protect the health of our communities during emergencies.

Objectives

- Provide some background on public health and healthcare emergency preparedness and response.
- Explore the linkages between the work we do in rural health and the work of emergency management during disasters.
- Identify ways to leverage the organizations that support rural health work for better outcomes during disasters.

Funding and Support

- US HHS - Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
 - *Authorities*
 - *Responsibilities*
 - *Focus*
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response
 - *Authorities*
 - *Responsibilities*
 - *Focus*
- Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - *Authorities*
 - *Responsibilities*
 - *Focus*

Direction

- State- level public health and healthcare emergency preparedness and response.
 - *Typically in state department of health*
 - *Often (but not always) includes state Emergency Medical Services*
 - *Often funding local and regional efforts*
 - *May direct operations of health and medical response*
- State and local Emergency Management agencies
 - *All states have a state emergency management agency and many have local authorities*
 - *Emergency Operations Centers*
 - *Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans*
 - *Technical expertise*

Healthcare Emergency Response

- Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response funded Healthcare Coalitions
 - *collaborate with hospitals, clinics, long-term care providers, dialysis centers, blood centers, emergency management, public health, tribal health and others to increase regional healthcare system preparedness and response.*
- Other healthcare response coalitions
 - *Many communities have groups of healthcare organizations that plan for, train for, and exercise local emergency response efforts.*
 - *These can be led by many different organizations – hospitals, local emergency management, public health agencies, etc.*

Core Rural Health Work

- Providing access to care
- Improving health equity
- Supporting the healthcare workforce in underserved communities
- Convening organizations around health issues and healthcare resource issues

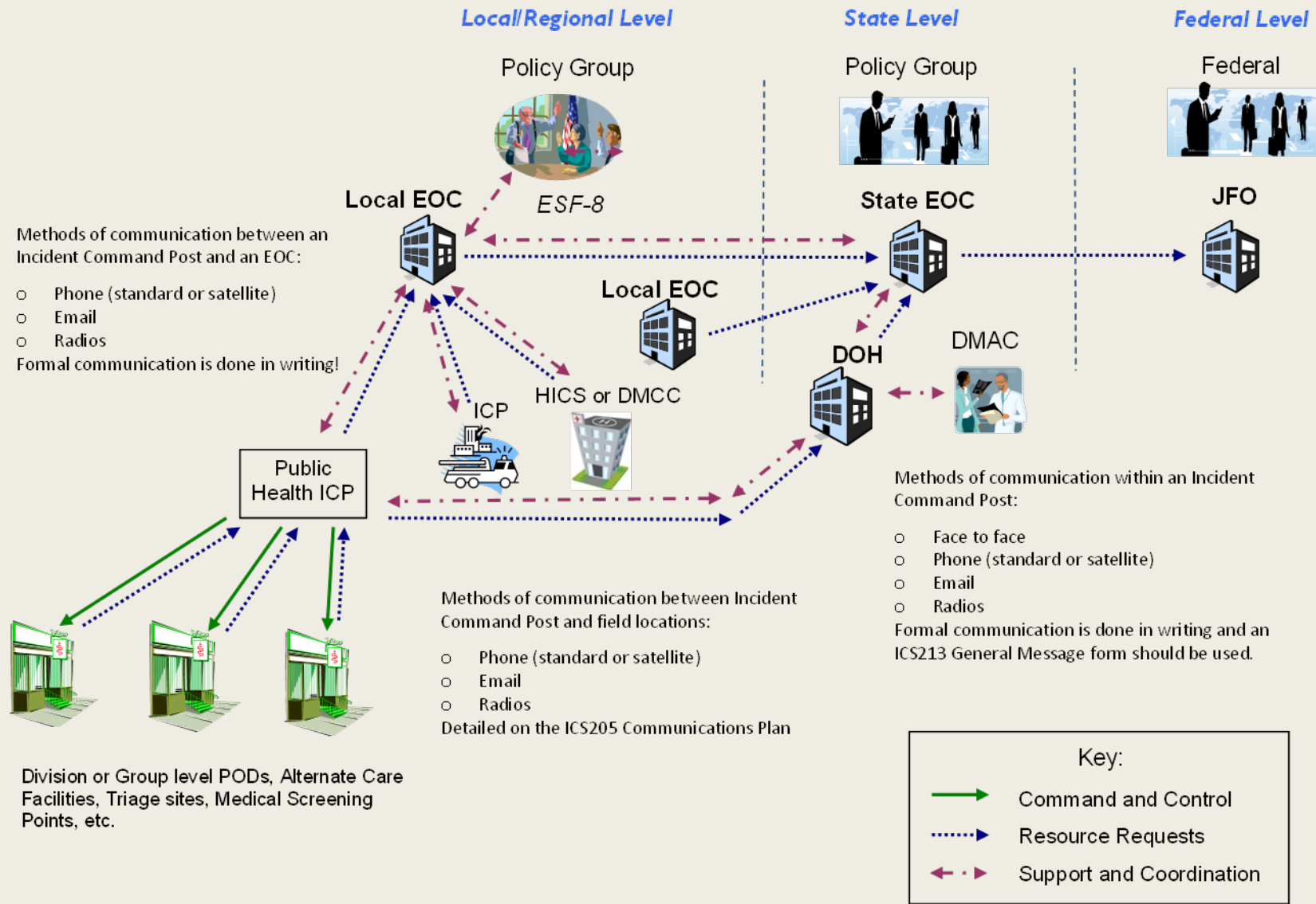
Healthcare Impacts of Disasters

- Sudden and immediate reduction in access to care
- Disruptions to communications
- Supply chain disruption
- Workforce shortages

Key Intersections

Consider this... In major disasters, even many urban cores quickly begin to assume the same characteristics of frontier communities. The strategies and expertise applied in rural health is necessary for health and medical response.

- Rural health organizations have strategies and approaches for establishing, improving, or reconstituting access to care in communities
- Rural health organizations have expertise in health equity that can inform how a healthcare response is carried out
- Rural health organizations often have expert awareness of existing healthcare capacity, supply availability, and workforce availability that can be leveraged during an emergency.



Healthcare Coalitions

- Coalition member organizations share expertise and receive the benefit of other's experience to build response capabilities together, in order to make their communities more successful during an emergency.
- Healthcare coalitions can take on different forms, from one state to another but they all share a similar mission.
- Although these organizations tend to have a more urban focus (focus on areas with higher population density) most states in Region E have coalitions with a strong rural focus.

Leveraging Rural Health Organizations

- In a crisis, help from out of the area is often valuable. In rural health, there are organizations that support us and where we might be able to find that help.
 1. *NOSORH*
 2. *HRSA*
 3. *CDC*
 4. *US HHS Regional Offices*

