

Northwest Preparedness & Emergency Response

Research Center

Public Health Systems Research

The Northwest Preparedness & Emergency Response Research Center (NWPERRC) is a collaboration between University of Washington School of Public Health researchers and practitioners at Public Health - Seattle and King County. Three projects and several pilots are developing evidence-based strategies for improving public health communications during emergencies with populations that are critical to reach. Part of Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, this five-year CDC funded grant is led by Mark Oberle, MD, MPH and Susan Allan, MD, JD, MPH.

Project One:

Effective Emergency Communications with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Populations

When it comes to emergency preparedness, LEP communities create a unique set of challenges and vulnerabilities:



- Culture
- Language
- Literacy
- Access

Aims:

1. **Assess** individual characteristics, cultural beliefs, and communication channels of LEP communities
 - Four focus groups of Mandarin and Cantonese-speakers
 - Community-wide telephone survey of Chinese LEP individuals
2. **Analyze** dispatcher and LEP caller behaviors to assess impact on communication and care delivery
 - Analyze 911 dispatch reports to determine time intervals for dispatching care
 - Abstract 911 LEP recordings to assess communication processes
 - Conduct caller call back survey for sample of Chinese LEP callers to assess their experience
3. **Participate** in a functional exercise with public information call centers to evaluate communication with LEP callers
 - Simulated pandemic flu exercise in King County, Washington, November 2008.
4. **Develop** phone-based emergency communication guidelines to communicate effectively with LEP callers

Project Two:

REACH:

A Randomized Trial of Communication Methods Between Public Health & Health Care Providers

An effective response to a public health emergency requires public health to communicate with health care providers before, during & after the emergency.

Aims:

1. Establish which communication method is most effective between public health agencies & health care providers
2. Determining what effect, if any, public health alerts have on provider-initiated disease reporting.

Traditional and non-traditional health care providers in urban and rural Montana and Washington are included in the study. Provider groups are:

- Doctors
- Nurse Practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Physician's Assistants
- Veterinarians



Alerts are randomized by communication method:

- Fax
- Email
- SMS texting
- No alerts (control group)

Project Three:

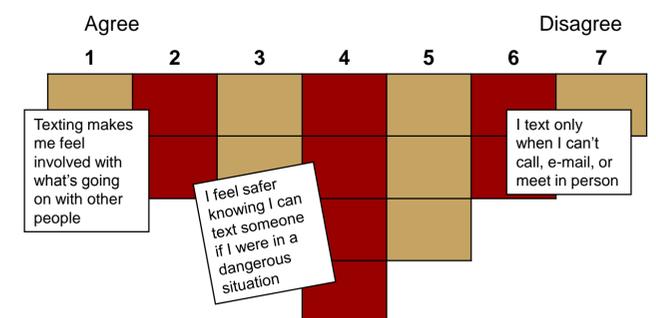
SMS Text Messaging for Public Health Emergencies

This investigation explores texting as a public health strategy for reaching difficult-to-reach populations.

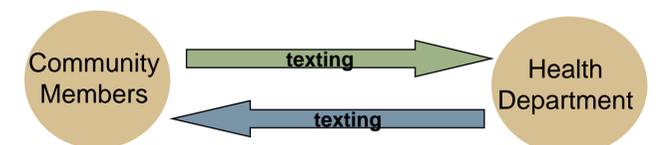
Aims:

1. Describe how and why target audiences use texting and what texting they would want from public health departments.

We will use Q-Method & a random digit phone survey.



2. Identify the fiscal, legal, logistical, and technological capabilities needed by health departments to implement texting programs.
3. Evaluating the use of texting for gathering and disseminating information.



NWPERRC is housed within the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice at the University of Washington.

For more information, please email nwcphp@u.washington.edu

