

---

# PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (PHEPR) ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY25

---

**PHEPR Mission:** Through citywide partnerships, PHEPR will coordinate evidence-based disaster mitigation processes to protect health and cultivate resiliency with an equity and community-based approach.

As a part of our strategic planning process, PHEPR has established our internal goals that align with our branch mission that then tie into the DPH overall mission. We have organized our highlights based on these internal goals. These goals comprise the sections below:

1. **Data-Driven Planning and Response:** All PHEPR partners are equipped with timely, actionable and equity-informed data to plan, respond, and continuously improve outcomes, particularly for populations at greatest risk
2. **Robust Disaster Preparedness:** PHEPR and stakeholders have the capacity and resilience to effectively manage every phase of the disaster life-cycle for the whole community, while prioritizing the risks, needs, and barriers faced by populations disproportionately impacted by disasters
3. **Outreach and Advocacy:** PHEPR maintains trusted and collaborative relationships with DPH and healthcare partners, CCSF collaborators, local communities and all levels of government through structured, consistent, and proactive communication that prioritizes the needs, perspectives, and inclusion of disproportionately impacted communities
4. **Nimble Incident Support System:** A structured, responsive, and rapidly scalable incident support system is in place to provide technical assistance and graded operational support to internal and external partners, ensuring coordinated emergency response that prioritizes the needs of disproportionately impacted communities
5. **Build an Environment for Staff to Thrive (BEST):** PHEPR maintains a healthy, safe, equitable and supportive work environment where staff feel valued, have access to development opportunities, are well-prepared to meet the demands of emergency response and can balance workload and well-being.

# Highlights

## - **Data-Driven Planning and Response**

- Community section created Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping for key population settings: Residential Care Facilities, Senior & Adult day programs, Senior Housing, and CBOs. It will be used to map hazard information with different partners, identify priority areas during activations or for information sharing.
- PHEPR Leadership developed a new strategic plan:
  - Identified 100 objectives and their corresponding tactics and strategies, for each PHEPR section in preparation for the development of branch metrics.
  - Re-evaluated and revised the PHEPR Branch Goals to include 5 refined goals focused on data-driven decision making, outreach & advocacy, ensuring preparedness in all phases of a disaster, providing a scalable incident support system for DPH, ensuring staff are provided with the necessary tools to build workplace resilience and ensuring that all goals consider equity at their core.
  - Developed over 100 draft branch metrics that are aligned with identified objectives & tactics.
- PHEPR disaster epidemiologists:
  - Hired our final PHEPR disaster epidemiologist position—we are now fully staffed with 1.5 FTE of disaster preparedness-focused epidemiology staff (2 staff, one is shared 50% time with the SF EMS Agency)
    - This is the first time that PHEPR has had dedicated epidemiologists for preparedness and response.
  - Supported H5N1 preparedness planning by modeling the population reach of potential vaccination strategies for pandemic influenza scenarios.
  - Developed a report on the October 2024 Extreme Heat Event, analyzing the heat event's impacts on EMS call volume, emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and deaths.
  - Coordinated across hospital IT, CDPH, and CDC to support the onboarding Zuckerberg San Francisco General hospital to the National Syndromic Surveillance System which will enable real-time monitoring of patient chief complaint data in emergency departments.

## - **Robust Disaster Preparedness**

- Exercises
  - Conducted or supported over 15 exercises in FY24-25 including the first ever Department-wide emergency notification drill.
  - Participated in city & regional exercises: BioWatch Full-scale exercise, Family Assistance Center City-Wide Tabletop exercise.
  - Heat & Air Quality Tabletop
  - Conducted the “Seismic Surge” Functional Exercise:

- This is an annual Medical Response & Surge Exercise (MRSE) required by the federal Agency for Strategic Preparedness and Response.
- The Healthcare Preparedness Section & Training & Exercise team collaborated to plan for and test the Hospital's readiness for a large earthquake which allowed for PHEPR to identify critical gaps and strengths in the healthcare systems communications, info sharing protocols, needs assessment processes & hospital patient care capacity.
- All PHEPR staff participated as either as hospital controllers or Departmental Operations Center (DOC) players, and included the SF EMS Agency and 9 acute care hospitals.

○ Responses

- October Heat Response –our DPH DOC was activated to respond to excessive temperatures at the beginning of October 2024. PHEPR staff led the efforts to prevent and minimize adverse impacts to at-risk communities, public health services and the city's medical systems.
- First Amendment Activities Response: PHEPR activated staff throughout the week to the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to represent Public Health and Medical Operations. PHEPR led DPH internally by maintaining situational awareness on evolving activities through daily briefings with the department. In collaboration with DPH communications, PHEPR distributed messaging to community partners, DPH staff, healthcare facilities and hospitals about potential disruptions and their effects on healthcare access and provided guidance on how to mitigate them. Utilized GIS mapping to monitor and identify healthcare facilities within affected areas and connected with each one to provide guidance & updates.
- PHEPR activated staff to assist in the City's EOC for the following responses:
  - 2024 Elections in November
  - NBA All Stars in March 2025
  - First Amendment Activities in June 2025
  - Bay to Breakers in May 2025
  - Pride Parade in June 2025
- Other responses:
  - Scarce Resource Coordination: Intravenous Fluids, Bicillin (only treatment able to prevent syphilis in newborns), and Blood Culture Bottles (needed to detect blood infections)
  - Tsunami Warnings (12/2024 and 7/2025)
  - 4 UCSF Labor Action Events
  - Leading PHD coordination in response to Federal Funding Risks

○ Plans, SOPs, Guides & Assessments

- Led DPH-wide development of supplemental response plans for Pandemic Flu and preparedness for a possible H5N1 Bird Flu outbreak.
    - This also served to help us update our general pandemic plans using lessons learned from COVID.
    - At the same time, led DPH-wide updates of our Continuity Of Operations Plans (COOPs).
      - 29 branch/section COOPs were updated, in addition to the Department-wide COOP.
  - Finalized SFDPH's Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (Ebola) Response Plan.
  - Updated seasonal climate hazard plans (heat, flood), crisis emergency response communications (CERC) plan and protocols, biological attack protocols, and the chemical attack response concept of operations plan.
  - Worked with DPH Public Affairs to draft templated messaging, talking points and social media assets to allow for rapid communication during low frequency/high consequence hazards.
  - Drafted and finalized the PHEPR Duty Officer Program Guide.
  - Developed DPH DSW protocols and readiness for future DOC activations.
  - Created an Emergency Plans Catalogue that lists all necessary Response Plans, SOPs, templates, and resources that DPH may need to rapidly reference in an emergency.
  - Supported ZSFG to complete their HVA for 2024 and conduct an in-depth analysis of their Emergency Management Program.
  - Finalized the SFDPH Clinical Volunteer Response plan and provided an orientation to 30+ healthcare volunteers.
  - Completed content review and update of the City-level Health and Medical Coordination Plan for emergencies (known as the Emergency Support Function or ESF-8 plan) for the Department of Emergency Management (DEM).
  - Healthcare Preparedness completed the Healthcare Information Sharing Plan, Healthcare Resource Management Plan, Healthcare Surge Strategies & Tactics, Healthcare Information Sharing Protocol & Healthcare Resource Needs Support Protocol.
- Training & Seminars
  - Training & Exercise Team conducted the Training & Exercise Needs Assessment (TENA)
  - Agency Preparedness Section held a Heat Risk Seminar for Health Officers with Dr. Susan Phillip.
  - Agency Preparedness Section annual winter weather seminar focusing on cold & flooding to help prepare DPH leadership, program managers, facilities, and partners.

- PHEPR's Training Lead became an official California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) Outreach Instructor after completing required documentation and pre-requisites and offered their first FEMA training course, ICS-700: Intro to National Incident Management System on June 25.
- Conducted second annual extreme heat seminar for DPH.
- In collaboration with SF Fire Department, conducted the first Disaster Health Volunteer/Medical Reserve Corps (DHV/MRC) Orientation to interested participants.
- Conducted quarterly HealthCare Coalition conferences: In June the conference focused on cyber security preparedness. Coordinated for a speaker from the Federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to present on cybersecurity standards, tools used to assess cyber risks and a review of common and new techniques that cyber attackers used to compromise healthcare systems.
- Communications
  - Community Section disseminated more than 20 messages to over 800 community partners in response to extreme heat, cold & wet weather, and November Election and successfully shifted the format from emails to a more engaging "Emma" format.
    - Messages were translated and distributed in the 5 threshold languages (Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Russian, Vietnamese).
    - This represented a 60% increase in messaging over 2023.
  - Disseminated 55 situational awareness messages to make healthcare partners aware of emergent situations and guidance that may affect their organizations.
  - Operations & Logistics section updated and exchanged 250 emergency 800 mHz radios at 50 healthcare facilities.
  - Operations & Logistics purchased satellite phones for DPH leadership and managed communication platforms department-wide.
- Successfully donated 7 unused DPH trailers in storage at San Bruno County Jail to SFO, SFPD, and SFPUC.

- **Outreach & Advocacy**

- Visitacion Valley & Sunnydale Pilot Project
  - This project has three main goals:
    - Understand how communities in Visitacion Valley and Sunnydale prefer to be communicated with and who their trusted communications messengers are
    - Support community-based organizations to develop community-centered emergency preparedness and response plans

- Develop a process and best practices for assessing communications needs, emergency preparedness priorities, and mitigation strategies in communities to facilitate replicating this process in other neighborhoods
- To accomplish these goals, we partnered with other City organizations that work with communities on emergency preparedness to ensure we were aligning and not duplicating efforts. These groups included the Department of Emergency Management, the San Francisco Fire Department Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams, DPH Climate Health, and other DPH Branches that interface with community. We also gathered (and are still gathering) information on best practices from other successful community groups and held seven community listening sessions
- Finalized Project Framing document which describes the project scope to both internal & external partners.
- Drafted, finalized, & posted the RFP to find CBOs/FBO partners for the project; received 8 applications (each of the 8 successful organizations received \$10,000 to facilitate the development of organizational disaster strategic plans and the formation of an emergency planning network in the neighborhood).
- Collaborated with our partner Civic Edge Consulting for work on the communications for the project which included audience mapping, developing interview questions, facilitation strategies and coordinating focus groups:
  - Received 346 survey responses
  - Conducted 13 community leader interviews
  - Held 5 focus groups
  - Results will be presented to communities and stakeholders this fall.
  - These results will help inform DPH and CBO message dissemination strategies and bi-directional communication practices.
- Organized several briefings with CBOs to provide information and updates on the project.
- Led interactive activities, distributed disaster preparedness information and provided presentations, gathered >250 participant surveys about general emergency preparedness, gave out almost 500 first aid kits and portable flashlights and flyers with guidance on preparing for heat, power, outage, flooding and food storage at the following community events:
  - Sunnydale Community Health Fair
  - Black & Beautiful Event
  - In collaboration with DEM, tabled at the Bayview Hunter's Point Sunday Streets Fair
  - District 10 Health Fest
  - Sunnydale Breast Cancer Awareness Day

- Chinese Community Health Fair
- Generations Event for Black History Month
- Child Care Health Program
- Sunday Street Fair at Tenderloin
- Hosted first community listening session in June
- Presented at the DEM Community Preparedness Collaborative about Extreme Heat Preparation
- Community Section conducted 18 meetings with community and CCSF partners.
- Facilitated monthly Climate Resilience & Environmental Justice (CREJ) Coordination Group with PHEPR sections, DPH and City partners.
- Climate Health is representing DPH on the circular economy work group and the AB617 Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) process.
- Connected Climate Equity Hub with patients enrolled in the ZSFG pediatric asthma clinic for home weatherization upgrades.
- Collaborated with CCSF departments to create a Resilience Hubs strategy.
- Climate Health represented DPH in ClimateSF, a coalition of City agencies focused on building a San Francisco resilient to climate hazards. DPH participation supports the development of programs and policies are human-centered and address climate health impacts.
- Climate Health provided data, mapping, and community engagement support to DPW for project to reduce urban heat islands in Bayview Hunter Point through tree planting.
- MHOAC presented to the SFFD Community Paramedicine Program about the role of PHEPR, DPH & MHOAC during an emergency.
- Agency Preparedness Section staff were assigned to lead PHAB Re-Accreditation Domain 2 “Investigate, Diagnose, and Address Health Problems and Hazards Affecting the Population,” providing many hours of time, documentation and expertise to support re-accreditation.

- **Nimble Incident Support System**

- PHEPR established an IMT to increase DPH’s level of pandemic flu preparedness in response to an increased risk of the H5N1 Avian Flu virus becoming a threat to humans that last 33 weeks and involved over 50 DPH staff:
  - Produced approximately 30 new H5N1 pandemic operational response plans and protocols.
  - PHEPR established the overall planning strategy and wrote the strategic plan.
  - Conducted 2 “mystery patient” drills at ZSFG to test H5N1 protocols. In the second drill, mystery patient was successfully isolated.
  - MHOAC program secured PPE for protection against H5N1 for SF animal organizations and Oseltamivir suspension for pediatric H5N1 patients as part of the SFDPH Emergency Cache.

- Facilitated the DPH Clinical Coordination Workgroup for H5N1 Planning, that developed multiple standardized clinical tools to be used in a response.
  - Drafted the H5N1 IMT Community Outreach Plan.
  - Drafted and disseminated weekly situation status reports and facilitated weekly IMT briefings to the department.
  - Designed & facilitated a Table-Top exercise to test draft response plans and finalized the after-action report which helped guide operational plans to completion.
- Streamlined PHEPR Procurement Process to support both preparedness and response activities in a more timely manner.
- **Build an Environment for Staff to Thrive (BEST)**
  - Upgraded offices spaces by adding additional spaces to provide flexibility for staff workspaces, added bookshelves in the conference room, additional storage in the copy room, a lockable filing cabinet for each staff member and a second monitor for each assigned workspace.
  - Two staff participated in and completed their National Preparedness Leadership Initiative training at Harvard University Executive Leadership Program.
  - One staff epidemiologist participated in and completed Leading Epidemiologists, Advancing Data – a leadership program run by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.
  - PHEPR created, planned, and executed the first PHEPR Appreciation Awards that recognized the preparedness and response contributions of our peers in the Population Health Division (PHD).
  - Several staff attend the state’s annual Emergency Preparedness Training Workshop (EPTW).
  - PHEPR Leadership attended DHR’s workshop on “The 5 Choices to Extraordinary Productivity”.
  - PHEPR held their annual workplace retreat in June.
  - Hired and onboarded 3 new staff and promoted 3 internal staff.
  - Coordinated New Intern Program with 8 interns this year.

## Awards and Recognition

- Amy Ovadia, Healthcare Preparedness Program’s Lead, completed the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense & Security Emergency Program (CDHS). Amy was one of the few public health staff chosen to participate in a highly competitive program comprised of rising stars across the Homeland Security Enterprise.
- Alice Wong from the Community Section won the PHEPR Appreciation Award for Equity.
- Kristin Campo from the Operations Section won the PHEPR Appreciation Award for Logistics.



- DeJanelle Bovell was awarded the California Department of Public Health's Emergency Preparedness Rookie of the Year for 2025. This is a state-wide honor, and this is the second year in a row that a member of SFDPH PHEPR staff was the recipient.