

Seasonal & Pandemic Influenza 2007

Poster Section: Surveillance and Diagnostics, with an Update on Rapid Diagnostics

Section Chair: David Hillyard, MD

Poster Title: The Unfortunates Series—H5N1-Based Functional Field Exercises for the Public Health, Hospital, and Emergency Response Workforces in Alabama

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The Alabama Department of Public Health Center for Emergency Preparedness teamed with the South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness (SCCPHP) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) to design, develop, and deliver an H5N1 human-to-human transmission infectious disease scenario functional field exercise in each of the state's 6 hospital planning regions. The field exercises stressed the abilities of local and regional health departments, the state health department, law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire and rescue services, and hospital emergency departments to coordinate a response to a mass-casualty, large-cluster infectious disease outbreak. The field exercise involved symptom-displaying actors, simulated broadcast and print media, first responder, first receiver, incident command, public health, public information, and evaluators at all venues.

The poster will reveal the strategic-level and incident-level lessons learned in each of the following elements of the exercises: 9-1-1 call for assistance, first response, field triage, hospital emergency department, public health, and public information. The emphasis of the lessons learned primarily focuses on incident command leadership, communication, and management.