

# Public Health Preparedness at AppHealthCare

AppHealthCare is the local health department for Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties. Local Health Departments are charged with public health emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

## Public Health Services Include:

- ✓ Preparedness Activities
- ✓ Mitigation Planning
- ✓ Response to Communicable Disease Events
- ✓ Information Dissemination
- ✓ Immunization Activities
- ✓ Public Health Alerts



- ✓ Recovery from Natural and Man-made Disasters
- ✓ Resiliency Building
- ✓ Epidemiologic Surveillance
- ✓ Data Collection and Analysis
- ✓ Food Borne Illness Investigation
- ✓ Communicable Disease Investigation
- ✓ Crisis Communication

## Main Goals

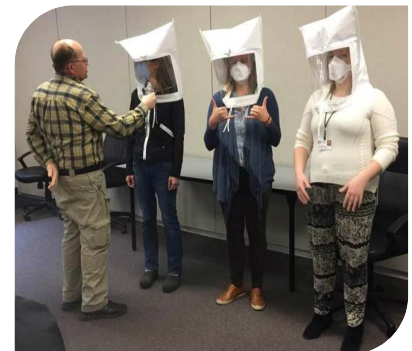
- Communicate and collaborate with stakeholders in the community on all elements of public health preparedness.
- Using relevant and current data to create the most effective plans for all hazards.
- Practicing routine and non-routine epidemiological surveillance.
- Distributing pertinent information to the public in a timely and effective fashion.

## Background Information

Incidents can range from a man-made incident such as a chemical spill or explosion to natural disaster events such as severe winter storms and hurricanes. A recent example is the Ebola Virus Disease, which created concern across the United States and globally. AppHealthCare released information pertaining to high risk populations, developed and provided training, disseminated crisis and risk communication, community stakeholder engagement around the events, as well as providing culturally appropriate information to the virus's implications. For more information, check out [this](#).

## Another Example: Medical Countermeasures Readiness


- ✓ At a local level, AppHealthCare has points of distribution kits, epidemiology kits, respirator masks, and many other clinical and environmental supplies for public health responders.
- ✓ At the State and National level, medical countermeasures such as vaccines, antibodies, antiviral or antibacterial drugs, and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as gloves or respirator masks are stored. The CDC has a National Stockpile of all the above equipment, and can be sent wherever in the Nation they can save the most lives if local supplies run out. AppHealthCare is responsible for maintaining all of these plans for distribution.



## State Wide Effort

AppHealthCare collaborates with Public Health Preparedness and Response (PHP&R). PHP&R is the branch of the NC Division of Public Health that monitors and strengthens the abilities of our public health and healthcare systems to protect the public health in disaster situations such as disease epidemics, chemical and radiological releases, severe weather and natural disasters. Since the start of the PHP&R program in 2002, NC has established a multi-faceted public health preparedness and response infrastructure that involves multiple agencies and includes:

- ✓ [Regional PHP&R teams](#) that provide localized support and expertise to public health officials across the state;
- ✓ [Public health epidemiologists](#) based in our largest hospital systems;
- ✓ A [registry of potentially dangerous biological agents](#) possessed or maintained in our state;

- ✓ Public Health access to the [Strategic National Stockpile](#);
- ✓ Provision of [potassium iodide \(KI\)](#) for persons in NC's nuclear emergency planning zones (EPZs);
- ✓ [Public health laboratory](#) capacity for identifying biological agents, emerging pathogens and chemical agents;
- ✓ The [NC Health Alert Network](#)  (NC HAN), a secure intrastate system for health alerts and crisis communications between state and local health departments, hospital emergency departments and law enforcement officials;
- ✓ Model practices for [post-disaster epidemiological investigation and surveillance](#);
- ✓ A statewide [Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool](#) (NC DETECT) that monitors disease patterns in emergency department visits, EMS responses and poison center calls;
- ✓ Strategic partnerships with [CDC](#), universities, hospitals, community-based organizations, state and local agencies and other public health stakeholders;
- ✓ [Training](#) and capabilities assessments for local agencies.



#### Related Reports Publicly Available

- ✓ [AppHealthCare's Annual Report](#)
- ✓ [Radiation and Nuclear Power Plants Information and Reports](#)
- ✓ [Public Health Assessments of Hazardous Sites by County](#) - Status updates and summary reports of assessments conducted by the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch.
- ✓ Public Health Practices: [NC Public Health Practices Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- ✓ CDC: [Rapid Community Health and Needs Assessments After Hurricanes Isabel and Charley - NC, 2003-2004](#) (Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report)
- ✓ NC Floodplain Mapping Program: [Floodplains](#)
- ✓ NC DPS: [Hazardous Materials Regional Response Teams Primary Response Area Boundaries](#)

#### Related Additional Information

- ✓ [CDC Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response](#)
- ✓ CDC: [Public Health Preparedness Capabilities: National Standards for State and Local Planning](#)

#### What can you do?

Stay educated on how to prepare your home and protect your family and community, get a flu shot, wash your hands, make a kit of necessities.

#### Resources and Information for Individuals & Families

- ✓ NC DHHS: [Family Disaster Plan](#) (PDF) - Use these checklists and templates to develop your family disaster plan; [Disaster Preparedness and Aging or Disabled Adults](#) - Disaster preparedness information from the N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services; [Find your regional office, N.C. Division of Services for the Blind](#); [Emergency Preparedness and the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing](#); [Hurricane Health & Safety](#); Keep your family's vaccinations current - [N.C. Immunization Branch](#); Seasonal influenza vaccination information and weekly updates on the number of flu cases in NC are available May-October at [flu.nc.gov](#); [Potassium Iodide Program - Information for Individuals and Families](#) - Fact sheets, opt-out forms and more; ["Be Prepared, Not Scared."](#) - Disaster preparedness tips from the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.
- ✓ NC DPS: [ReadyNC](#) - The N.C. Department of Public Safety's Ready NC website provides North Carolinians with preparation tips for all types of emergencies, including severe weather, accidents, and terrorist attacks.
- ✓ Find information about emergency management in your area:
  - NC DPS: [List of county emergency management agencies](#)
  - NC DPS: [About Local Emergency Planning Committees](#) (LEPCs)
  - NC DPS: [Chemical Hazards - Citizens' Right to Know](#)
- ✓ [Emergency Preparedness and You](#) - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Red Cross have teamed up to answer common questions and provide steps you can take now to protect yourself and your loved ones.