



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

Conferences will tackle difficult issues

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Michele Williams
(334) 206-2958

The Alabama Department of Public Health's Center for Emergency Preparedness is holding a series of 11 conferences intended to educate local leaders about fatality management during an influenza pandemic or other emergency events. Target audience for the conference series includes coroners, medical examiners, funeral home and crematorium directors, first responders, and representatives from Forensic Science, Emergency Management Agency, public health, businesses, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, hospitals and nursing homes.

Mass fatality events can occur any day in any community from a natural disaster such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, multiple vehicle crashes, fires, droughts and pandemic influenza. However, mass fatalities can also occur as a result of human intervention—such as school, mall and church shootings, or terrorist attacks.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that approximately 28,500 individuals would die in the state in a severe pandemic, and an estimated 1.3 million would become ill.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "All counties need to conduct operational planning for a pandemic and other mass fatality events. The conference agendas will include local issues that need to be addressed to ensure that fatalities are managed in a timely and respectful manner."

The one-day conferences in each of Alabama's 11 public health areas will provide an overview of mass fatality events, such as pandemic influenza, that the response planning communities need to finalize. Fatality management activities at the state level will be discussed as will community issues and coordination of response.

Among the agenda items are state-supported resources, body storage and emergency burials, law enforcement, deaths in institutional settings, cultural and religious considerations, and legal issues.

Conferences will be held in the following cities and towns from March through early May. The statewide kickoff will be held at the Northport Civic Center on March 5, followed by these local conferences:

Selma, March 12; **Talladega**, March 18; **Millbrook**, April 2; **Huntsville**, April 3; **Atmore**, April 10; **Mobile**, April 17; **Ozark**, April 23; **Homewood**, April 28; **Gadsden**, April 30; **Florence**, May 6.

For more information visit www.adph.org/cep/ and select Trainings or contact Michele Williams at 334-206-2958.

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