



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**FISCAL YEAR 2014**

**HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM**

**OFFICE OF HEALTH AFFAIRS: MEDICAL  
AND HEALTH EXPERTISE IN SUPPORT OF  
THE DHS**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

# MISSION

## **A. OHA Mission**

The DHS Office of Health Affairs (OHA) is at the intersection of homeland security and public health, better known as health security. OHA's mission is to advise, promote, integrate, and enable a safe and secure workforce and Nation in pursuit of national health security. OHA achieves this by enhancing the health and wellness of the DHS workforce, and by protecting the Nation from the health impacts of incidents, including biological and chemical events.

Specifically, OHA provides medical and health expertise in support of the DHS mission to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all threats. OHA serves as the Department's primary point of contact for State, local, territorial, and tribal governments on medical and public health issues. OHA's responsibilities include serving as the principal advisor to the Secretary, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator, and other DHS officials and components on medical and public health issues; leading and coordinating DHS biological defense activities supporting pandemic preparedness and chemical defense activities; providing medical and scientific expertise to support DHS preparedness, response, and resilience efforts; and leading the Department's medical and public health activities, including providing policies and guidance. OHA also leads the Department's food, agricultural, and veterinary defense efforts in support of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-9 (HSPD-9) Defense of United States Agriculture and Food.

## **B. Building Capabilities and Available Resources**

OHA leads DHS engagement on public health and medical issues to enhance preparedness and response capabilities, and is developing and implementing a multi-layered defensive strategy to protect the Nation from chemical and biological attacks by terrorists. OHA is responsible for developing or enhancing chemical or biological detection and response programs, pandemic influenza preparedness and planning activities, and enhancing medical surge and mass prophylaxis capabilities/ capabilities, to ensure that programs are effectively integrated into current and future Federal capabilities listed below.

### **Medical First Responder Coordination**

Provide Medical Guidance, Standards, Policy, and Outreach to Medical First Responder Stakeholders.

Activity 1: Provide standards and guidelines to DHS components consistent with national and state requirements for the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Activity 2: Ensure that the medical standards and guidelines of care are met by all DHS providers through the delivery of education, medical oversight, continuous quality improvement and related subject matter.

Activity 3: Identify gaps in first responder preparedness, planning, resources and education to ensure seamless integration into readiness and response; and facilitate the integration of the EMS community into Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial preparedness activities.

Activity 4: Address medical first responder and EMS all-hazard readiness needs in order to provide medical and public health expertise and guidance to other DHS entities.

Activity 5: Partner with other DHS offices, the interagency and the first responder community to address all-hazards preparedness and incorporate medical first responder capabilities into the Department's contingency planning and consequence management efforts.

### **Medical Liaisons**

Provide medical guidance to the DHS operational components on issues related to planning, policy, and response and workforce health protection in order to ensure standardization and alignment with DHS headquarters policy and mission.

Activity 1: Serve as the "trusted agent" of the A/S and CMO to DHS operating components ensuring fulfillment of his statutory role and DHS authorities.

Activity 2: Provide medical and public health subject matter expertise on policy, planning and operations to DHS operating components in line with the DHS and OHA missions.

Activity 3: Provide guidance to operating components related to workforce health protection policy issues.

### **State and Local Initiatives**

Serves as a coordinator of all state and local community activities across OHA to develop preparedness and response capabilities and ensure information sharing.

Activity 1: Enhance coordination of public health and medical information & intelligence sharing strategies with Federal, state, and local stakeholders.

Activity 2: Advance Public Health and Medical preparedness through capabilities development and subject matter expertise to build a more resilient nation to counter a all-hazards event of catastrophic potential.

Activity 3: Improve community and broader societal capabilities to withstand all-hazards events that significantly impact community health and safety, and to rapidly recover to normal or new normal conditions. (Integrating Health security activities into National and local programs that build community resilience)

This initiative supports the National Preparedness Guideline's National Priority: *Strengthen Information Sharing and Collaboration Capabilities*

Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers

<http://www.it.ojp.gov/documents/baselinecapabilitiesa.pdf>.

Health Security: Public Health and Medical Integration for Fusion Centers  
[health security appendix.pdf](#)

Fire Service Integration for Fusion Centers  
[Fire Service Integration April 2010 508 comp.pdf](#)

## **Planning and Exercise Support**

Provides overarching health security-focused contingency planning and exercise expertise to the Federal Interagency, the Department, and State and local entities; and formulates Federal policy recommendations related to Federal and National health security preparedness.

Activity 1: Provide expert health planning support related to Federal planning efforts for CBRNE events.

Activity 2: Provide expert health planning expertise to DHS department planning efforts related to CBRNE preparedness.

Activity 3: Plan for, support and conduct health security-related exercises that focus on developing and enhancing CBRNE preparedness within DHS and among the Federal government.

Activity 4: Develop and promulgate health policy recommendations across the Federal Interagency having Homeland Security and Global Health interests.

## **Detection**

Provide and maintain a continuous bio-terrorism air monitoring system in large metropolitan areas and coordinate with state and local public health communities to prepare for and respond to a bioterrorist event.

Activity 1: Establish processes and methods that evaluate and enhance current laboratory and field operations and that can be adapted for use with automated detection technologies.

Activity 2: Support federal, state and local partners in executing effective BioWatch Actionable Result (BAR) responses using the existing detection technology and adapt responses to automated detection technologies.

Activity 3: Support current automated detection technology acquisition and deployment efforts in coordination with local, state and federal partners.

Activity 4: Develop and establish efficient interagency cooperation and support to state and local partners during a BAR response.

## **Surveillance**

Leads integrated national biosurveillance and provides situational awareness to support the Department's response to incidents of national significance.

Activity 1: Develop and maintain a scalable and flexible capability to support the AS/CMO and senior leaders with situational awareness and provide for information and work flow within OHA during incidents or exigent circumstances.

Activity 2: Develop and implement improvements to the National Biosurveillance Integration Center (NBIC) program to support mission as directed in Public Law 110.53 and the 911 Commission Act of 2007.

Activity 3: Enhance OHA ability to provide coordinated subject matter expertise and situational awareness; and advise on Biological and Chemical Incidents or concerns.

## **Food Defense and Agriculture Security**

Lead the coordination of the Department's programs to ensure the defense of our Nation's food, agriculture, human and animal health in the face of all hazards.

Activity 1: Provide food, agriculture and veterinary subject matter expertise to senior leadership and components of DHS.

Activity 2: Advance State, local, tribal and territorial food, agriculture and veterinary preparedness through capabilities development.

Activity 3: Coordinate, monitor and manage the Department's responsibilities for the implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-9 and collaborate across the interagency for the development of National policy and planning related to the defense of the Agriculture and Food Sector.

## **C. Conclusion**

During FY 2014, OHA will continue to refine and expand program offerings and assistance to State, local and tribal stakeholder partnerships to coordinate delivery of medical surge, biosecurity, and food and agriculture security to enhance local capabilities to respond to and recover from public health and medical events regardless of causation. If you have any questions or comments for OHA, please send an email to [healthaffairs@dhs.gov](mailto:healthaffairs@dhs.gov).