

## COMMUNITY DISASTER: PLANNING AND TRAINING ASPECTS

In a major disaster there is no easy way to deal the multitude of problems which occur without an appropriate disaster plan and without appropriately trained personnel. Health organizations must be able to respond promptly, coordinate activities with other agencies, identify and evaluate actual and potential health problems or hazards, mobilize existing resources in health, take those measures necessary to control and/or eliminate hazards and restore facilities. The cooperative functioning of all levels from community through provincial or state to the federal health agency is essential. In Canada, the Emergency Services Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare, has as its mandate the development and maintenance of health care delivery systems and emergency social services in peacetime disasters or major national emergencies. Insofar as the provinces and municipalities are concerned, the Division is responsible for providing advice and assistance in planning and training and for the provision of disaster supplies as they relate to health or social services.

Canada is a large country, divided into 10 provinces and 2 territories, spread over approximately 4 million square miles stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the East to the Pacific Ocean in the West, from the U.S. Border in the South, North into the Arctic. The population of Canada is almost 24,000,000. Major population centres tend to be located close to the southern border of Canada with the United States while the balance of the country is sparsely populated, especially in the

northern parts of the provinces and in the territories. This geography means that, in Canada, we must consider disaster preparedness activities for both health and social services in a wide range of conditions, climate and with a great diversity of resources available. For this reason, a considerable emphasis has been placed on the division's training and education program as a means of assisting all levels of government to acquire the techniques required to develop appropriate disaster plans for the health and social services response to disaster beginning at the community level. Courses to promote the health and social services planning aspects are sponsored at a Federal Study Centre located close to Ottawa, Ontario, by a number of federal government departments and include those conducted by Emergency Services, Health and Welfare. Those courses, offered by the Emergency Services Division include Community Emergency Planning for Health or Social Services. The courses are designed to provide the participants with the general principles of planning, a knowledge of methods and resources available in order to plan for and to operate in a disaster situation. Twenty-eight (28) courses are planned for this year and approximately 650 students will attend. Emphasis is placed on the health and social services requirements and programs which must be available at the community level, as well as responsibilities and capabilities of other levels of government. The courses are multi-disciplinary in nature and provide

for an exchange of ideas by those persons who would have to work closely together in the disaster environment.

The course on Community Emergency Health Planning includes:

- a. emergency health services planning at the federal provincial and municipal levels of governments;
- b. general concepts for community emergency planning;
- c. disasters and their impact on health services;
- d. concept of operations and the principles of mass casualty care;
- e. radiation hazards and safety;
- f. techniques for developing emergency health plans;
- and
- g. group discussions for the purpose of solving community health related emergencies.

Candidates for these courses are selected by provincial EHS\* and come from the following disciplines:

- a. Hospitals - Administrator
  - Medical Director
  - Director of Nursing
  - Senior Pharmacist
- b. Public Health Departments
  - Director, (Medical Officers of Health)
  - Director of Public Health Nurse
  - Senior Public Health Inspectors

\* Emergency Health Services

- c. Ambulance Service Managers
- d. Candidates from schools of nursing, community colleges or universities involved in nurse education programs and who are:
  - Directors of Nursing Education
  - Curriculum Coordinators, or
  - Instructors, lecturers and professors
- e. Education advisors to medical or nursing Associations and schools.
- f. Municipal services (providing vacancies are not required for health personnel) such as,
  - Municipal council
  - Fire/Police (Chief, Deputy, Training personnel)
  - Emergency Measures Coordinators

At the same time that health courses are conducted a similar planning course entitled, Community Emergency Social Services Planning, is also held. The emergency social services include emergency feeding, lodging, clothing, registration and enquiry and individual and family services. A core curriculum concept is used to foster the exchange of ideas and a recognition of the interface required between the health and social services.

The Community Emergency Social Services Planning course includes:

- a. emergency social services planning at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government;
- b. general concepts for community emergency planning;
- c. disasters and their impact on social services;
- d. concept of operations and the principles of emergency social services programs;
- e. techniques for developing emergency social services plans; and
- f. group discussions for the purpose of solving community social services related emergencies.

Candidates are selected from the following groups by provincial Emergency Social Services:

- a. Provincial or Municipal employees involved in emergency planning with the Department of Social Services.
- b. Administrators of special care facilities.
- c. Managers or Assistants of special care facilities responsible for emergency planning.

Another course conducted by the Emergency Services Division is the Instructor Training Program for Special Care Facilities. This course is designed to provide training in emergency planning for special care

facilities, in other words for nursing homes, homes for the mentally retarded, group homes for disturbed children and so forth. Because there are over 4,000 such institutions in Canada, Emergency Services saw the necessity of developing an instructor cadre which could provide courses at the provincial and municipal levels in order to meet the requirement or the demand for this type of planning expertise.

The course includes:

- a. emergency planning at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government;
- b. general concepts for emergency planning;
- c. emergency planning procedures and techniques for special care facilities to include organization, evacuation, relocation, reception or expansion of services, co-ordination of plans and training;
- d. preparation of an emergency plan;
- e. preparation of a short course in emergency planning for special care facilities.

Candidates selected to attend this course are either responsible for planning and conducting emergency response courses, licencing of facilities or ensuring the compliance to provincial emergency response standards of special care facilities. They may be:

- a. Representatives of provincial/municipal departments

- responsible for special care facilities, or
- b. Administrators/Managers of special care facilities.
  - c. Representatives of special care administrators' associations.

The courses conducted at the Federal Study Centre are for a five day period and have resulted in development and exercise of plans in many communities across the Country. The level of awareness of the need for both plans and an operational capability in disaster appears to be increasing over the past three to four years. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of courses offered at the Federal Study Centre as well as an increased demand for support from the Emergency Services Division through provision of resource personnel and materials to provincial and community training programs and exercises. The content of the courses at community level follows closely the pattern of those offered at the federal level but are tailored to the local capabilities and hazards which exist. In this way, too, a much larger audience is reached and other services, with whom either health or social services agencies must coordinate their activities, are encouraged to participate.

Courses at the local level have included not only health and social services personnel but those from police and fire departments, from military bases located in the area, from non-governmental or voluntary groups as well as a wide range of interested persons who have a capability of providing assistance in first aid or rescue operations.

Emergency Services Division at Health and Welfare Canada is only one of the federal departments conducting emergency courses at the Federal Study Centre. Emergency Planning Canada, the federal agency responsible for overall co-ordination of disaster plans prepared by all federal departments, has a Resident Director of Education at the Study Centre. Emergency Planning Canada also places great emphasis on training and conducts courses on Planning and Operations which are structured to provide the participant with a broad base from which to carry out planning and operations in emergencies. The theory of the planning process is introduced and operating procedures are applied to a spectrum of disasters. This involves the use of case studies, the command, control and coordination functions which are necessary to meet the disaster situations which are examined using illustrations of past disasters and small group discussions.

In addition to the Planning and Operations course, a Seminar is held for Mayors and Elected Municipal Officials. This seminar is organized and designed to assist municipal elected officials in understanding their responsibilities for the development and implementation of plans to meet emergencies. The significance of municipal responsibilities and the extent of local contribution in emergencies are emphasized throughout the course through case studies, demonstrations and lectures. This type of seminar fosters an exchange of experiences and ideas among mayors and elected officials from various levels of government and from across Canada.



Courses and seminars are also conducted in emergency operations, exercise design, public information, communications and safety and rescue.

Examples of other departmental courses include those on topics such as: Agriculture Canada Emergency Planning Courses, Fisheries Emergency Operations and Transportation of Dangerous Goods.

In summary, Canada's Emergency Services Division, Department of National Health and Welfare, has as its mandate the development and maintenance of health care delivery systems and emergency social services in peacetime disasters and in a national emergency. Insofar as the provinces and municipalities are concerned, the Division is responsible for providing advice and assistance in planning and training and for the provision of disaster supplies as they relate to emergency health and social services. Considerable emphasis is placed on the Division's training and education programs as a means of assisting all levels of government to acquiring the knowledge and techniques required for the development of emergency health and social services plans. The Division conducts 28 courses, of one week duration, at a Federal Study Centre located near the capital, Ottawa. The total enrolment each year is approximately 650 students selected from the many health and social services disciplines and representative of all regions of Canada. In addition, Canada through other federal departments and agencies provide education and training programs for a broad range of persons involved in planning and operations for disasters.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY HEALTH PLANNING COURSEAIM

1. To provide selected candidates in the health related fields with the knowledge and techniques for community emergency health services planning.

SCOPE

2. The course will include:
- a. emergency health services planning at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government;
  - b. general concepts for community emergency planning;
  - c. peacetime disasters and their impact on health services;
  - d. concept of operations and the principles of mass casualty care;
  - e. radiation hazards during peace and war;
  - f. techniques for developing emergency health plans; and
  - g. group discussions for the purpose of solving community health related emergencies.