Decision Making in Disasters: Lessons from the Field

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Course Description

The current increasingly technical and urbanized centers of human population present critical challenges and opportunities to the profession of Disaster Management in the early 21st century. The lessons and practices of yesterday no longer address a widening and diversifying pattern of population vulnerabilities which modern medical therapeutics, evolving demographics and lifestyle enhancement have generated on a global scale. The vital needs of a population at risk have expanded vastly over the past half century with enormously expanded percentages of individuals in medically vulnerable states; these individuals are potentially pushed to seek critical support in the face of environmental or social catastrophe through means which have been impaired by the imposition of external perils on the community. Those needs impact the welfare and serenity of a much wider population at large whose related needs may be entangled by a need to assist stricken neighbors or citizens. Needs of a population at risk are addressed in the context of enabling a population at large. Morale of a responding team is improved by designing response as an extension of routine practice. A mandate to plan for the worst evolves where time is of the essence. Refinement in sheltering, evacuation and community action is considered under circumstances where you can't always get what you want. Planning and communication in a new age provide means and avenues for bridging present and impending shortfalls on the journey into tomorrow.

Learning Objectives

- Examination of the practical consequences impacting population vulnerabilities which modern medical therapeutics, evolving demographics and lifestyle enhancement have generated
- Addressing the crisis needs of a population at risk through extension of routine operations including the enabling of a population at large
- Refinement in sheltering, evacuation, planning and community action under circumstances where you can't always get what you want

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals *Council on Linkages between Academia and Public Health Practice*

- 4C2: Ensures the consideration of the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in the accessibility, availability, acceptability and delivery of public health services
- 7A1: Describes the local, state, and federal public health and health care systems
- 8B4: Analyzes internal and external problems that may affect the delivery of Essential Public Health Services
- 8A8: Describes the impact of changes in the public health system, and larger social, political, economic environment on organizational practices

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