



## RC/PIO News & Notes |

February 6, 2026

A Weekly Update from **Eric Jens, Risk Communicator** – Georgia Department of Public Health  
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### News & Notes

BioWatch, more winter weather, and planning for up-coming events are among the highlights for this week.

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### Annual R/C meeting and CERC training

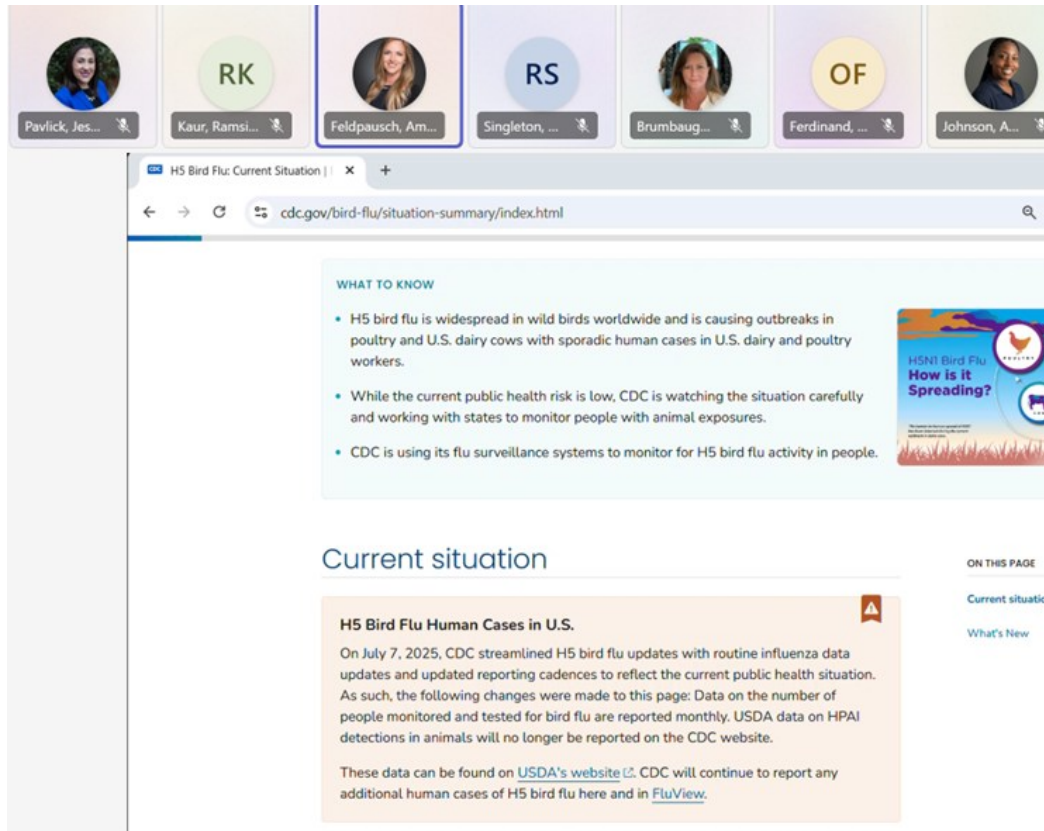
The draft agendas are progressing well and could be finalized by the end of next week for the in-person annual statewide DPH risk communicators meeting and a Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training to be held in Macon. The dates are Thursday, April 9, and Friday, April 10 respectively. Thanks to all who have already agreed to present, covering a wide variety of important topics. Look for registration notices to be posted before the end of the month.

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### BioWatch

The Atlanta BioWatch Advisory Committee held its quarterly meeting Monday with numerous updates from exercise planning, strategic air filter placements, and more. The group heard updates from DPH Emergency Preparedness program leads, along with the latest situation on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza impacting Georgia from both the Public Health and Agriculture perspectives. The meeting was originally

scheduled to be held in person in Lawrenceville, but changed to a virtual setting as cold temperatures kept snow from melting in Northeast Georgia.



## CERC Review

Thanks to everyone who helped organize or participate in the two DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication trainings last month at the state DPH EOC. Based on pre and post test self-assessment surveys, we've determined for class I:

- There was a 60.3% improvement in the knowing roles of developing public messages
- There was a 71% improvement in knowing public message elements
- There was a 110.8% improvement in understanding the Public Information Officer - Subject Matter Expert relationship

For class II:

- There was a 59.1% improvement in knowing roles for developing public messages

- There was a 49.5% improvement in knowing public message elements
- There was a 78% improvement in understanding the Public Information Officer - Subject Matter Expert relationship

In general, the open-ended feedback indicated participants wanted more structure and direction to the mock interview portion of the class, although a majority also cited strong interest in the small group activity. Some were interested in more details on the mis-dis-mal information part, and others wanted more direct references to the PIO One-pager handout.

Other comments:

"What body language and facial expression (should be) while delivering messages to the audience, and the importance of the right message for the right audience at the right time."

"Excellent class! I liked that it was interactive and had some great examples and enthusiasm."

"I don't ever want to be a media spokesperson."



## More Winter

Just less than a week after cold, icy conditions shut down operations and limited travel in metro Atlanta and farther North and East, the same area faced impacts of up to a half foot of snow and even colder temperatures including wind chills below zero. On Monday, Groundhog Day, both the national and state marmots saw their shadows, thus forecasting six more weeks of winter.

## Next Week Preview

Next week Tuesday is the Region C Healthcare Coalition meeting in Waco. Wednesday there will be a DPH Hot Wash for Winter Storm Fern. Thursday there will be a Highly Infectious Disease Concepts and Objectives meeting in the afternoon, followed by a Networking Night at Emory that evening.

### About "News & Notes"

"News & Notes" is a weekly communication aimed at risk communicators and public information officers within Georgia's 18 public health districts. The goal of the communication is to increase preparedness through the exchange of information about significant events, training and other planned activities. Some information herein may be considered FYUO or For Your Use Only. Please be judicious when forwarding. For questions, comments or to submit information for inclusion, contact Eric Jens at [Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov](mailto:Eric.Jens@dph.ga.gov).

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