



# RC/PIO News & Notes |

March 20, 2026

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

Multiple FIFA planning meetings were held this week. We'll have an overview of that effort, an update on next month's CERC training, and more to highlight this week. If you have something you wanted to do before the end of winter, and you are reading this as soon as it arrived in your in-box, you now have about 90 minutes to get that something done. Spring officially begins at 10:46 AM.

## FIFA Planning

In fewer than three months the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) events begin in and around Atlanta. Among the preparations for the events was the Atlanta Urban Area Security Initiative Regional FIFA World Cup 2026 Executive Seminar held Thursday at the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center. Local and state elected officials, first responder agency leaders and others discussed existing plans and partnerships. They also verbally responded to a series of mock incidents as presented by a team from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security. The 39 days of FIFA events in Atlanta begins June 12. It also spans the Fourth of July when the country celebrates its 250th anniversary, and coincides with the annual Peachtree Road Race.



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## CERC Training and RC Meeting

Registration is open for the April 10 DPH Media / Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication training to be held Friday, April 10 at the North Central Health District office in Macon: [register](#)

We have space for 60. At last count this week we had 32 signed up to take part.

The objective of the training is to bring Communicators and Subject Matter Experts and anyone who has the potential of interacting with the public and/or the media together to learn from each other. Message development and dissemination is most effective if everyone involved understands their role and the roles of others.

The annual statewide DPH Risk Communicators meeting will be held at the same location as the CERC training on the previous day, April 9. Those who indicated they would be attending virtually should have received a Teams link this week.

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## State DPH EPR Monthly Meeting

Tuesday was the March meeting for the state DPH EPR team. Following updates from the leadership and finance teams, Frank Daniell showed everyone the latest rendition of the Web EOC Healthcare Operation status board. The newly approved State DPH Emergency Operations Plan was unveiled by Mackenzie Newsome, Amanda Durden, and Aaron Biggs. They then facilitated a passport activity to highlight ten major components of the plan.



## Environmental Health Strike Team Summit

Thanks to Byron Lobsinger for sending a more detailed synopsis of last week's Environmental Health Strike Team Training Summit X held last week in Macon alongside the Epidemiology Statewide Meeting:

*This tenth training summit represents a significant milestone and highlights the years of dedication invested in preparing Environmental Health professionals throughout the State to respond with surge support after disaster strikes. EH Strike Team surge support promotes expedited socioeconomic recovery to return communities to near normal activities during recovery operations. Day one was a combined EH and EPI meeting with program leads from both sections presenting on legionella disease outbreaks, and foodborne illness investigations. Days two and three included several presentations covering topics from internal and external agency partners, with a wake up alert to a real-world tornado warning, affecting some of the attendees' jurisdictions.*

*(Top picture = 2026, Bottom Picture = 2015)*



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**Next Week Preview**

More FIFA planning meetings are in store for next week. There will also be meetings to plan for the Atlanta BioWatch full-scale exercise to be conducted in May.

### 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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