



RC/PIO News & Notes |

June 12, 2026

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

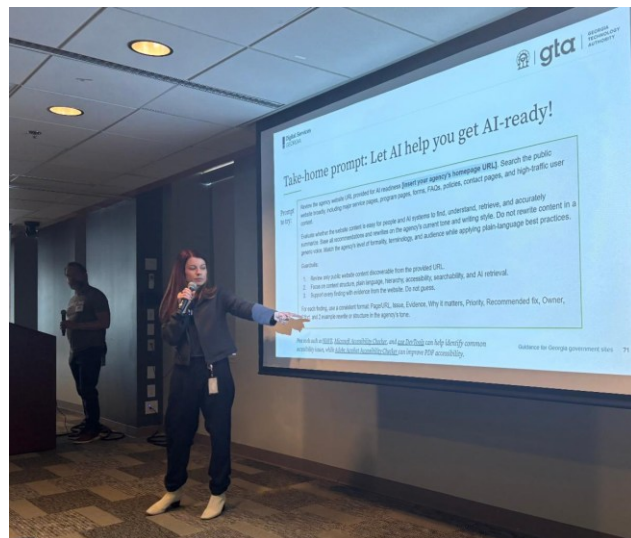
A variety of topics will be highlighted this week, including an alert and warning FEMA workshop, wildfires, and planning for upcoming events. Thanks to those who read this newsletter and who point out when there are errors in content, spelling, or just bad grammar. Last week's issue fell victim to either poor proof-reading or a yet-to-be-determined cyber incident. Either way, appologies for that, and working to prevent a repeat of such occurrence.

GovTalks '26

The Georgia Technology Authority hosted GovTalks 2026 on Thursday, covering a multitude of recent topics and endeavors.

Presenters talked about the significance of making digital platforms accessible, and shared ways to make sure that it is all in place. The new deadline is April of next year.

They also discussed new options and considerations for content creators, and stressed the significance of making sure web-based informaiton stays updated. Also addressed during the session were the pro's and con's of Artificial Intelligence and bots, which now make up 57% of website traffic overall. GTA anticipates unveiling additional resources by the end of next month.





When Minutes Matter

FEMA hosted a 10-hour technical workshop on Wednesday and Thursday, 'When Minutes Matter-All Hazards Alert and Warning Communication.' Instructors outlined the purpose of timely alerts to prompt quick action in a variety of emergency situations. Through full group and breakout sessions, the group of 231 from throughout the country shared alert challenges and success stories. There was also a presentation of a mapping tool called RAPT (Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool) that can highlight risks, population demographics and additional information that may be helpful in response planning and messaging for alerts and warnings.

How Do People React to Alerts?

People do NOT automatically act on warnings.

THE CHALLENGE: Convincing the public that they are at risk and should take effective action in a timely manner.



Dennis S. Mileti and John H. Sorensen, A Guide to Public Alerts and Dam and Levee Emergencies (United States Army Corps of Eng

Helping people before, during and after disasters

Wildfires

Project ECHO hosted a webinar on wildfires Tuesday, with a focus on health effects. Among the speakers, Dr. Joshua Weil told about how he was working at a California hospital in 2017 when he lost his house to a wildfire; and had to make the call to evacuate the hospital, overturning the shelter in place previously ordered. Other presenters pointed out that firefighters face not only the dangers posed by fire and smoke, but also poison oak and physical strains while in the line of duty. Recent data suggests the number of fires nationally have been increasing with the total acreage burned going down. In Georgia, recent rains have lowered the fire risk but much of the state remains in drought conditions so that may be a temporary reprieve.

The 2 am Command Center:

- Who do have to assume roles?
- Where are you plans?
- Who's in the hospital?
- How/what do you communicate?



Photo by Cathy Gutfreund



Joshua Weil, MD, FACEP

Next Week Preview

The calendar for next week includes staffing of the Atlanta FIFA Joint Information Center as match play gets underway and Fan Fest events continue. Dekalb County Health District is hosting a couple of events next week. On Tuesday there will be a Media Training Day, and on Thursday there will be a Meales Tabletop exercise. Also on Tuesday there will be a State Board of Health meeting and the monthly state DPH-EPR staff meeting. The annual HURREVAC hurricane tracking platform training will be held Monday through Thursday. Next Friday is a state holiday, hence News and Notes will go out on Thursday.



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.

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