

RC/PIO News & Notes 8-29-2025



FROM Eric Jens, GA DPH Risk Communicator
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News and Notes

We have a wide variety of topics in this longer-than-usual edition of News and Notes. While we wait to see who is actually the head of CDC, many other happenings are going on.

Katrina

Thanks to Districts 2 and 5-2 Emergency Preparedness for sending the information, images, and reminder, that today marks 20 years since Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the U.S.



The DPH North Georgia and North Central Health Districts were among many involved in the historic response that called for innovative solutions to challenges that had not heretofore been encountered. In the Cobb-Douglas Health District many hard hit Louisianians landed at Dobbins AFB for triage and a safer environment. Shelters were set up statewide for evacuees, including a pet friendly shelter at Rock Eagle 4-H Camp supported by the Macon Health District. The shelter opened to 600+ evacuees on September 4, 2005, and stayed open through September 22 when the remaining 48 individuals were placed in motels, moved to other shelters, or found local housing.



As cited in the DPH Northwest Georgia EmPulse August newsletter: *"In 2005, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's hotline for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita received over 34,000 calls. In addition, it took six months to reunify 5,192 missing children and their families. To avoid these complications, CDC recommends that each family make emergency contact cards for children to carry in their school bag or backpack and help older children memorize important names and phone numbers (parents, other trusted adults)."*

Helene in North Carolina

Multiple states are still recovering from last year's devastating Hurricane Helene, whose impact was felt well beyond coastal regions. 'A hurricane is only going to minimally impact Western North Carolina,' was the initial perception for many, and one that was grossly misjudged according to Wyatt Chocklett, CEO of HCA Healthcare, NC. He said food, water and fuel were consumed two to three times faster than expected in the days following the storm. He and Melissa Harvey of Mission Hospital shared their experiences on an [ASPR TRACIE](#) webinar Wednesday.

Hurricane Helene | Economic Impact



8 |

HCA
Healthcare

School Safety

A day following the deadly mass shooting at a grade school in Minnesota this week, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) hosted a Back-to-School Safety virtual training. Last year's training nearly coincided with the mass shooting at a school in Winder, GA. Speakers on the training yesterday acknowledged the recent tragedy, stressed the vital role of Public Health partners, and said the focus remains on improving school safety.



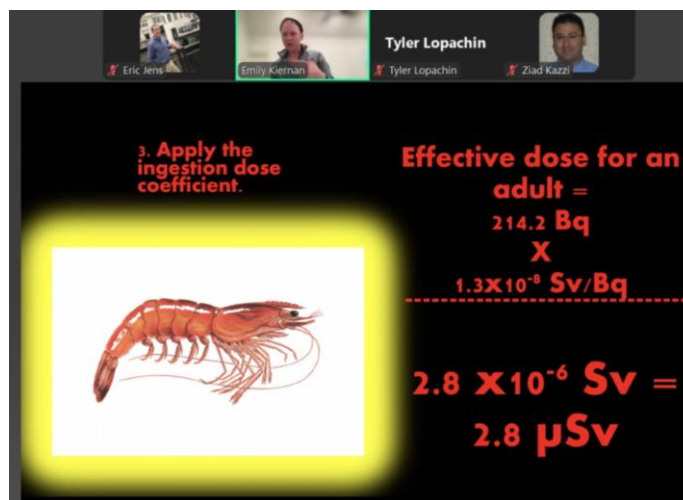
GPHA

The Georgia Public Health Association executive board held a virtual meeting Monday. A GPHA virtual meeting is planned for September 24. The GPHA Communications Section will have a couple of speakers sharing their expertise on the use and best practices regarding drones. All district risk communicators and PIO's should have received an invitation to this meeting next month. If not, please reach out. The board also heard a financial report and began early discussion related to the in-person annual meeting to be held next spring.

Radioactive Shrimp

There are certain topics that will inevitably make news headlines. Flesh-eating bacteria, rabid buffalo, and radioactive shrimp are phrases sure to grab the attention of even the most discriminant web surfer. The situation with the shrimp relates to last week's FDA recall notice:

At this time, no product that has tested positive or alerted for Cesium-137 (Cs-137) has entered the U.S. commerce. FDA is working with distributors and retailers that received product from PT. Bahari Makmur Sejati after the date of first detection of Cs-137 by Customs & Border Protection (CBP), but from shipments that did not alert for Cs-137, to recommend that firms conduct a recall. In conjunction with other information, FDA determined that product from PT. Bahari Makmur Sejati violates the Federal Food, Drug, & Cosmetic Act in that it appears to have been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with Cs-137 and may pose a safety concern.



3. Apply the ingestion dose coefficient.

Effective dose for an adult =
214.2 Bq
X
 $1.3 \times 10^{-8} \text{ Sv/Bq}$

 $2.8 \times 10^{-6} \text{ Sv} =$
 $2.8 \mu\text{Sv}$

There is an increased risk of cancer that would result from consumption of the shrimp, but it would require eating the shrimp regularly for several years. Doctors Ziad Kazzi and Emily Kiernan spoke on an informational webinar last Friday, hosted by the Southern Regional Disaster Response System along with the Georgia Poison Center to review the detailed science behind the situation, which can be quite complex. Dr. Kazzi notes that effectively communicating the risk at hand is key to having people take the appropriate level of action.

Radiation Related Cancer Risk

- 5 mSv exposure increases the risk of cancer by about **5 in 10,000**
- In a population of 10,000 individuals: you will have 5 additional cases of cancer over a lifetime with 5 mSv radiation exposure.
- This will increase the number of cancers approximately from 4000 to 4005.



The increased cancer risk indicated in the slide above is based on the radioactive shrimp being 30 percent of one's diet. Dr. Kazzi says we are all exposed to radiation every day. It's important to limit the amount of radiation, he says, but it cannot be eliminated completely.

Dekalb Tabletop Exercise

Thanks to Eric Nickens for sending us an overview and images of last week's exercise: *A Tabletop Exercise was held last Monday at DeKalb County Emergency Management. The exercise was planned to test the coordination between DPH, DeKalb Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), DeKalb Fire Rescue, DeKalb Public Health and other agencies, in the event of a potential biohazard release and improvised explosive device (IED) at the Georgia Public Health Laboratory in Decatur. A full-scale simulated exercise is planned for late 2026.*



FIFA planning

Numerous state and national meetings and webinars have been held in the past two weeks, all aimed at being as prepared as possible for contingencies related to the FIFA World Cup soccer matches next year. Atlanta is one of the venues that will host a portion of the possibly record-setting number of games, teams, and fans next year in late spring and early summer.



Next Week Preview

Next week is the start of National Preparedness Month. We'll have more on that next Friday.

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