

PUBLIC HEALTH
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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON

The Pacific Northwest Alliance

Tracking Infectious Disease Across Borders
in the Pacific Northwest

Washington State Department of
Health **The Physical Challenge**

- Washington state
 - Over 66,582 square miles of largely remote terrain
 - 325-mile international border with Canada with several border crossings
 - 157 miles of coastline
 - Heavily-utilized ports for state, national, and international transit

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Washington State Department of
Health **The Jurisdictional Challenge**

- **US Jurisdictions**
 - Federal
 - Washington state (35 local health jurisdiction)
 - Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, Montana, N. Dakota
- **Canadian Jurisdictions**
 - Federal
 - British Columbia
 - Yukon
 - Alberta
- **Tribal/First Nation**

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Goal

- Establish a seamless cross-border / cross-jurisdictional public health infectious disease surveillance and response network





Mechanism

- Annual cross border workshops
- On-going cross border workgroups





Cross-Border Workshops

- Bellingham, WA – Tracking Infectious Disease Across Borders
 - August 9-11, 2004
- Vancouver, BC – Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
 - April 18-20, 2005





Target Audience

- Epidemiologists
- Public Health Labs
- Public Health Lawyers
- Hospital and Health Authorities
- Communications
- Emergency Managers





Charge to Participants

- Build and strengthen relationships
- Understand response systems across borders
- Identify obstacles to a seamless response
- Identify actions needed to overcome obstacles
- Establish workgroups, plans, timelines to address the needed actions





Workshop Breakout Sessions

- **Discipline-specific workgroups**
- **Multi-discipline groups (cross-pollination):**
 - Surveillance
 - Infection control
 - Surge capacity
 - Communication





Identified Obstacles

- **Surveillance Workgroup**
 - Legal issues regarding transfer of information
- **Infection Control Workgroup**
 - Lack of cross-border consistency in:
 - Infection control-related guidance
 - Community containment strategies
 - Respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette





Obstacles (cont.)

- **Surge Capacity Workgroup**
 - Resource shortages:
 - Staffing/workforce
 - Medication and medical equipment
- **Communications Workgroup**
 - Lack of common messages across borders





Surveillance and Response Activities

- 24/7 emergency contact list
- Electronic connectivity
 - BC-CDC added to CDC Epi-X electronic alerting system
 - Adjacent states and provinces being added to Washington state SECURES electronic health alert network
- CDC Laboratory Response Network
- Continued cross-border communication
 - Surveillance plans for the 2010 Olympics





Written Agreements / MOUs

- **Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)**
 - Mutual emergency assistance between states
- **Pacific NW Emergency Management Arrangement (PNEMA)**
 - Civil emergency preparedness and response
 - AK, ID, OR, WA, BC, Yukon – April 1, 1996
- **PNEMA Implementing Procedures (Annex B)**
 - Projected adoption date: June 19, 2006?





Written Agreements / MOUs

- **Public Health Annex to PNEMA (Draft Draft)**
 - Address public health issues
- **Public Health Laboratory MOU**
 - AK, ID, OR, WA (Adopted in 2004)
 - Addresses laboratory surge capacity
 - Plans for developing an MOU with BC
 - Can be more specific when CDC includes BC-CDC in the Laboratory Response Network





Third Annual Cross Border Workshop

- **Building Cross Border Infectious Disease Surveillance and Response Partnerships**
 - May 8-10, 2006, Bellingham, WA
- **Institutionalize informal arrangements with written agreements**
 - Refine the elements of a seamless cross border system
 - Examine authorities under existing agreements
 - Itemize authority gaps and needs (e.g., PNEMA, Annex X)
- **2010 Olympics Panel**





Staffing

- EWIDS cross border coordinator (WA)
- On-going Workgroups -
 - US/Canada Pacific NW leads and SMEs
 - Staffed by WA Department of Health
- Cross Border Workshop Planning Committee
 - Pacific NW multi-jurisdictional representation





**Pacific NW Workshop Summary Reports
2004, 2005, (2006)**

- Electronic copies are available by contacting:

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