PLANNING SKILL TRAINING

Writing a Disaster Response Plan

Planning Concepts

- Purpose of a plan
- Strategic versus tactical
- Aggregation vs disaggregation
- Self-directive language
- Making proposals
- Strawman plans
- Attachments and annexes
- Planning templates
- Plan integration across the agency
- Elements of a plan
- Mature vs immature plans

Purpose of a Plan

- Define a framework for shared understanding of a disaster and its potential consequences
- Identify information needed to make decisions
- Create a format for discussing response actions
- Document decisions that have been made
- Identify gaps and propose solutions
- Numerical estimates (e.g., calculate POD throughput, resource requirements)
- Aggregate relevant technical attachments
- Communicate / educate (partners, public)
- Use during event (by Planning Section) to identify potential issues and solutions

Strategic vs Tactical

- **Strategic – High level, policy level**
  - Sheltering plan
  - Health Care Response plan
- **Tactical – In the weeds, how-to**
  - Examples: MCF plan, shelter operations plan
  - Could be multiple tactical plans for one strategic plan (e.g., sheltering plan also has tactical plan for shelter triage)

Aggregation vs Disaggregation

- Option 1 (aggregate): Build complete plan around a specific disaster type (e.g., flood)
- Option 2 (disaggregate): Build modular components and select only needed modules during the event
  - Evacuation used for severe storm, utility loss, flood
  - I&Q used for TB outbreak, influenza pandemic, BT
- Option 3: Build to meet CDC submission requirements (e.g., SNS, pan flu)
- Option 4: Duplicate language in more than one plan

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Self-Directive Language

- Used to (poorly) fill planning gaps
- "We will plan where to put the bodies." or "We will identify safety requirements for response."
- Almost all planning can be done pre-event
  - Exception: Response entirely dependent on circumstance (e.g., which PODs will be open)
  - BUT, contingency planning is still usually possible
- Identify the gaps and label as such
- If possible, create draft proposals to fill gaps

Proposals

- Especially used for policy or procedural gaps
  - Where will patient dialyze if Devils Lake floods?
  - May first require filling an information gap: What are alternatives, distance, capacity?
- May want to set off your solution in the plan as tentative (e.g., red text)
  - Especially if it makes you more willing to make up a proposal
- If people don't like your solution, it forces them to come up with a better one

Strawman

- Assume: You are part of a multi-person planning group to develop a plan for a coordinated task
- Planning by committee rarely works
- Volunteer to do the strawman proposal* (assuming you have a vision of what is needed)
  - Group is likely to accept (Nobody else wants to do the heavy lifting)
  - Gives you control over the future dialogue and direction
  - Makes sure your needs are met
  - A good strawman builds political capital and professional credibility
- Don't protect the strawman, but defend good ideas where ever they come from

* A draft proposal intended to generate discussion to create a better proposal.

Attachments and Annexes

- Attachment – Reference content that comes at the end of a plan (each one brief)
- Annex – A stand alone component plan which is part of a larger plan
  - A pandemic influenza plan may have many annexes (e.g., community containment, medical surge)
- Appendix
  - Inconsistent usage but usually the same as an attachment

Templates

- Templates vs Templates
- Fill in the blank templates
  - Valuable for standardization (e.g., local POD plans) but at potential cost
    - Will short circuit the planning process
    - For POD plans, the planning happens in attachment development
  - Valuable for meeting worthless deadlines with worthless plans
- Outline templates
  - My recommended planning tool to guide plan development
  - Attempts to identify and organize every issue and sub-issue

Plan Integration Across Agency

- Do response sections have response plans or protocols separate from EPR?
  - E.g., Does Environmental Health have safety plans for boating /water sampling?
- Once ICS is active, all plans come under the IC, but non-integrated plans
  - May be inadequate
  - May contradict other plans
  - May not be ICS compatible
  - May not have been identified by EPRS or exercised pre-event
  - May be territorial and protected by the owning section

Elements of a Plan

- Factual information – not specific to jurisdiction or problems to be solved
  - Remains with radiological contamination should not be cremated
- Situational assessments – factual info specific to jurisdiction and event
  - If the reservation is cut off from the City of Devils Lake, the nearest dialysis unit is in Jamestown
- Who is responsible?
  - Public health is responsible for sheltering all persons who cannot stay in a general population shelter
- Assumptions
  - If the levee breaks we will have about six hours to empty HCF X, varying depending on breach size and water level

Elements of a Plan

- **Resources**
  - The state has a contract with Dietrich bus in Jamestown to convert school buses to wheelchair and stretcher buses in a disaster
- **Policy**
  - Persons 16 and older are eligible to come to a POD and pick up medication
- **Priorities**
  - If sufficient vaccine is not available for all hospital staff, ICU nurses and ER staff are highest priority
- **Procedures**
  - Sequence of events to open a POD

Elements of a Plan

- **Contingencies**
  - If throughput in available community PODs is insufficient, preferred methods for increasing rate of prophylaxis will be…
- **Triggers**
  - Water level triggering evacuation of a HCF that cannot vertically evacuate will be …
- **Calculated estimates**
  - If a round trip takes 45 minutes, it would take three buses three hours to evacuate the LTC facility

Elements of a Plan

- **Limitations and gaps**
  - In the absence of prior flooding, evacuation triggers are based on estimated elevation of the HCF that is derived in one of two methods, either of which may be off by up to several feet (limitation)
  - Locations where remains can be stored during a pandemic need to be identified (gap)
- **Attachments**
  - Contacts, directions, tabular data, diagrams, resource rosters, pre-prepared documents, supply lists, job actions sheets, MOUs, forms, training material

Mature vs Immature

- Mature plans (e.g., pandemic influenza)
  - Extensive planning process
  - Partners included where indicated
  - Both strategic and tactical components
  - All elements included
  - Few gaps
  - Vetted
  - Exercised

Mature vs Immature

- Immature plans (e.g., radiation response)
  - Long on information but short on other elements
  - Many known gaps and many unrecognized gaps
  - Missing tactical plans
  - Partners not engaged
  - Never exercised

One Approach to Writing a Plan

Create a Planning Template

■ Identify the major areas that need to be covered. This isn't complete…

	TEMPLATE FOR RADIATION MASS SCREENING SITE
I	Location for the facility
II	Staffing the facility
III	Wrap-around services
IV	Patient flow and service provision
V	Facility setup
VI	Material needs
VII	Worker Protection
VIII	Managing person who present ill
IX	Security

Issue Identification

- Prior plans of similar nature

- Prior events

- Reading written literature

- Plans from other jurisdictions

- Mental walkthrough of disaster event e.g., temporal

Create a Planning Template

- Now drill down into each category (e.g., IV. Patient Flow and Service Provision)

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					TEMPLATE FOR RADIATION MASS SCREENING SITE
IV					**Patient flow and service provision**
	A				Patient entry to site
	B				Waiting areas
	C				**Patient evaluation stations**
		1			Greeting and information
		2			Illness assessment
		3			Education
		4			History
		5			**Radiation screening**
			a		Non-directional radiation screening
				i	Instruments needed
				ii	Equipment source
				iii	Equipment maintenance and calibration
				iv	Training requirements
				v	Clean-up
			b		Directional radiations screening
			c		Staff required for screening
			d		Source of subject matter expertise
			e		Response to different levels of radiation screening
			f		Patient education specific to findings
		6			Decontamination
		7			Provision of clothing
		8			Medical evaluation
		9			Epidemiological assessment of risk for home contamination
		10			Disposition
	D				Regulation of flow
	E				Entering and leaving line

So section IV.C.5.a.i. is Instruments Needed

Expand the Template

- The template can get quite long - that's what you want
- Next
  - Add narrative text to each section and sub-section
  - Either paragraph or outline form is acceptable (or combination of the two)
  - Mark gaps and make proposals
- May be time to bring in partners
  - Small expert group - discuss your way through the plan taking computer notes right on the template
  - A planning tabletop – clarify issues, find and fill gaps, engage a larger group (different from tabletop designed to exercise plan)

Finishing the Plan

- Vetting
  - May need to occur at multiple levels
  - May need to occur at multiple times for plan relevance
- Plan review
  - A method for summarize the plan for vetting with a large group
- Exercise
  - Tabletops are excellent tools for planning
  - Functional exercises are better for improving plans and training personnel
- Revision
  - Revisions potentially need to occur after every event, exercise or discussion relevant to a plan