

LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

Project ID	HS-10
Title of Program	Military-Civilian Zika Tabletop Exercise
Program Category	Human Services
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Implementation Date	3/7/2016
FLSA Designation	Both (if applicable to a team)
Project Team Members	Eric Carlson, Emergency Manager, Camp Lejeune-exercise coordinator and facilitator members of the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team

Description of Productivity Improvement

The Military-Civilian Zika Tabletop Exercise, held on March 7, 2016, was a culminating activity that showcased the improved coordination and communication between the public health communities and their partners on and off bases located in eastern North Carolina. Started in Onslow County in 2015, the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team that participated in the exercise has attracted the attention of senior public health officials at the state for its unique partnership and goals. What began as a meeting to bring together the Camp Lejeune public health team with health leaders from surrounding counties has now grown to include most military installations and civilian public health agencies in central southeastern North Carolina as well as partners from other agencies. While Onslow County has had a Military-Civilian Task Force for Emergency Response that has met monthly for years, there was no group focused on public health issues. When confronted with jurisdictional issues surrounding a tuberculosis patient, military and civilian agencies realized that they needed coordinated processes to avoid duplication of services or jurisdictional confusion during a public health emergency as well as in day-to-day operations. The fact that the Zika tabletop occurred and involved so many from the regional team shows how the coordination and cooperation has been furthered in our area. This team, and its ability to participate in the tabletop exercise, is not

something that every military community has, but it makes all residents of our region stronger, healthier, and safer.

Description of why this project was initiated

Due to jurisdictional issues surrounding an active duty military member with tuberculosis who lived off base along with the Ebola crisis exploding in western Africa, the Onslow County Health Department and Camp Lejeune Naval Hospital, Public Health realized that an avenue to routinely share information and develop plans and processes to integrate responses to communicable disease situations and other public health threats was needed. In February 2015, representatives from these agencies held the first Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team meeting to work on these concerns. Realizing that 20% of those who live off base reside in surrounding counties, we invited other local health departments and military installations to participate. The response was overwhelming. We quickly discovered that both military and civilian public health entities were eager for coordinated plans and regular information sharing and that neither had all of the resources necessary to respond to public health events of concern. Since that initial meeting, representatives from MCAS Cherry Point, Fort Bragg, Seymour-Johnson and their civilian counterparts have joined the group, which now also includes Emergency Management, hospitals, schools, EMS, and other regional and state partners. The groundwork that began in 2015 led to increased coordination and sharing as we planned for Zika response in 2015-2016. A culmination of the group's ability to coordinate was the Zika tabletop exercise hosted by Camp Lejeune Emergency Management but involving the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

As a result of the establishment of the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team, we have clarified jurisdictional and procedural public health processes involving military members and their families, worked on integrating one another into emergency plans, and solidified day-to-day operational issues, such as the notification process if someone is confirmed to have a reportable condition. This closer coordination increases individual agency efficiency and saves staff time since it reduces duplication of services. For example, during Ebola planning, the Onslow County Health Department and Naval Hospital Public Health determined which agency's staff would be assigned to monitor travelers with a military affiliation who live off base. This kept both agencies from dispatching staff to directly monitor the travelers. Sharing of information, expertise, staff, and resources means that more can be accomplished across the community. The work of this team has strengthened the public health infrastructure in this area, which has made everyone, on and off base, safer.

The planning and coordination of the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team and the results of the Zika tabletop exercise informed the decisions about how and where to allocate additional state funding provided to local health departments for Ebola and Zika response preparations. In fiscal years 2015 to 2017, the state provided over \$20,000 for planning, training, purchasing personal protective equipment, and conducting surveillance for mosquito populations.

Other descriptive information

While the tabletop exercise was planned and facilitated by Eric Carlson, Emergency Manager for Camp Lejeune, much of the groundwork for regional Zika planning as well as participation in the exercise came from the Military-Civilian Regional Public Health Team.