



Strengthening community resilience in Livingston County through strategic partnerships for effective emergency preparedness.

Taylor Gerber

Livingston County Department of Health



Abstract

As a small rural community, the Livingston County Department of Health (LCDOH) relies on its Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to support health related emergency preparedness efforts. The MRC works to enhance community preparedness in order to effectively respond to emergencies. Low MRC volunteer enrollment can strain the overall impact the LCDOH has on building community resilience. To cultivate community engagement and increase volunteer enrollment, we are establishing new strategic partnerships while we actively continue to foster existing ones. The goal is to increase and maintain current MRC volunteers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we established partnerships that helped to bolster support for testing sites, vaccination clinics, contact tracing, and health education. Our collaborative efforts had resulted in a record high number of community members engaging in response efforts. Simultaneously, we are utilizing recruitment strategies through various modes of communications; such as, billboards, radio, and social media. Since the LCDOH has begun sharing the current MRC recruitment campaign, we have seen an increased interest from our community members. Our partnerships and recruitment campaign have benefited us with an increase in facilitating community engagement and participation during times of need. We will continue to strengthen our MRC through continued partnerships and outreach efforts.

Purpose

To prepare and build resilient communities within Livingston County through strategic Partnerships.

Goals/Objectives

The goal is to enhance preparedness efforts by fostering strategic partnerships among various agencies to strengthen the resilience of communities through sharing resources, coordinating efforts, and improving the capacity to effectively respond to emergency situations.

Methods

Partnerships: Livingston County Department of Health used the Partners In Preparedness (PIP) program to model and tailor a partnerships within the county. There are no evidence-based articles or evaluations that have been conducted for this particular program; however, there have been evaluations conducted on preparedness coalitions that follow a similar concept that has shown success.

Recruitment: To increase community engagement a media campaign was done to recruit additional Medical Reserve Corps volunteers.

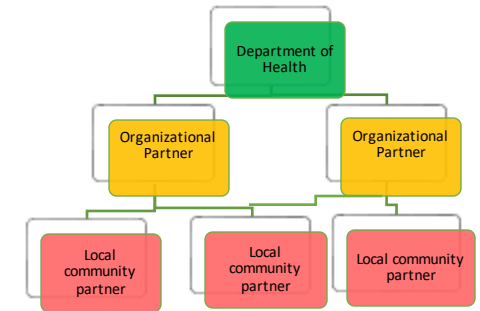


Discussion



The Partners In Preparedness program was originally launched by New Orleans Louisiana (NOLA) Homeland Security after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The goal of the program was to establish a collaborative approach in disaster preparedness to promote community engagement regarding business continuity planning and disaster relief. Primary examples of organizations who have successfully adopted and implemented this program are New York City Emergency Management and Fairfax Department of Emergency Preparedness in Virginia. These two organizations tailored the program to their own approach to meet the needs of their community. Their model was inspiration to tailoring Partners In Preparedness program for the Livingston County Department of Health. Emergency Preparedness is housed within the community health and prevention department and as a result the Partners in Preparedness program was tailored to take more of a public health approach.

Discussion



Our PIP program focuses on partnering with other organizations that offer emergency preparedness trainings to the community. This could be in the form of CPR/First aid, Narcan administration, Citizen Preparedness, etc. We then offer these trainings to local small businesses or organizations that would like to provide these trainings. Benefits of becoming a partner entail real time emergency information, access to preparedness trainings, recognition of commitment to preparedness in the community, and access to a network of partners.

Conclusion

Our vision for Partners in Preparedness is to create a resilient and interconnected community of organizations and individuals, united by a shared commitment to be proactive in emergency preparedness. Every partner will be empowered with knowledge, resources, and a collaborative network. We envision this program to help in fostering a culture of readiness, safety and security while promoting health and well-being within our communities of Livingston County, New York.