



We Are GO Health PHEP:

The Role NYSPHC Fellows in Redefining Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) for Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health)

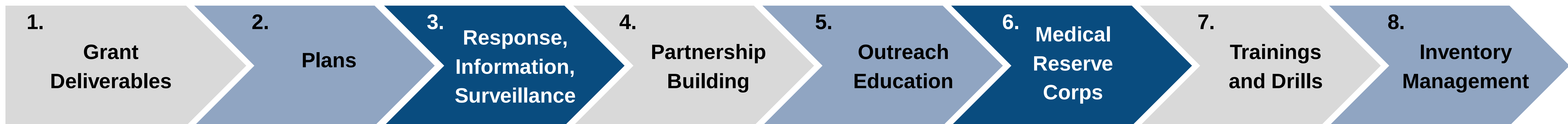


David Bell, PhD, MPH, GO Health Emergency Response Coordinator
Coro Young, BS, GO Health Emergency Response Educator
Emily Nojeim, BS, NYSPHC Fellow

The strain of COVID-19 pandemic response combined with the NYSPHC (New York State Public Health Corps) Fellowship program has supported a significant shift in GO Health PHEP outlook and scope. Previous assumptions of PHEP focused more on a singular “advisory” role within NYS rural local health departments such as Genesee and Orleans, with emphasis on select educational outreach and partnership building amid grant deliverable submission and preparedness plans. Fellows have supported the evolution of a GO Health “PHEP Team”, reconfigured with new goals to better implement plans and act as an engaged community response partner throughout all levels of the preparedness cycle. GO Health has now identified 8 substantive Critical Responsibility Areas, along with Essential Tasks within these areas, that have been supported by NYSPHC PHEP Fellows, as described below.



PHEP Critical Responsibility Areas (CRAs)



Essential Tasks within the CRA's Supported by NYSPHC Fellows

1. Grant Deliverables

- Quarterly NYSDOH Core Deliverable and Annual Preparedness Surveys
- Quarterly participation in Western and/or Finger Lakes regional Health Emergency Preparedness Coalitions, run by NYSDOH
- Quarterly activities and tasks, including testing of emergency communications and annual drills
- Final evaluation of deliverables prior to the end of the PHEP grant year on June 30th

2. Plans

- Annual review and update of the all-hazards public health emergency operations plan
- Creation or update of specific hazard or function annex plans as needed
- Collaboration for county-level plans of mass sheltering, mass fatality, and continuation of operations
- Assistance for county specific Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs) and Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)

3. Response, Information, Surveillance

- Collaborative response partner
- Identifying and developing new surveillance systems and mechanisms
- Information and preparedness app management
- Maintaining dedicated icons within the preparedness app, such as those for infectious disease, emerging issues, and outreach events

4. Partnership Building

- Facilitating greater response collaboration with County Emergency Management, local EMS councils, healthcare networks, school districts, VOADs/COADs, and other key response partners

5. Outreach Education

- Attending diverse public events for wider promotion of emergency preparedness awareness
 - General education at County 4-H Fair and other fairs
 - First aid awareness with safety trainings and warming/cooling/dehydration centers
- Specific themed outreach events involving emergency preparedness or the medical reserve corps

6. Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

- Overall unit leadership and administration
- Regular review and updating of the MRC Policy Handbook
- Creation of deployment-specific MRC Mission Sets
- Maintenance of both membership and event records
- Equipping members with materials, including appropriate safety vests and photo ID badges

7. Trainings and Drills

- Organizing, overseeing and record keeping for emergency preparedness training needs and materials for all public health staff and immediate partners
- Regular availability of safety trainings
- Critical asset training including specialized vehicles, radios, or detection equipment
- Training for surge staff supervisory roles and participation in annual full scale preparedness drills

8. Inventory Management

- Assisting with assessment, new acquisition, and maintenance for all PHEP material supplies
- Coordinating an inventory management system
- Regular distribution and record keeping of all public health assets available to staff and the public