

Waterworks Operator Training Newsletter

May 2017

Good afternoon! Attached is the May 2017 Operator Training Newsletter for all MSDH-BPWS Regions and following this message are the trainings for your particular region. If you have questions about the counties in your MSDH region, please see the map on the second page of the attachment to this e-mail.

Also, remember to please contact the training agency to make sure the training will be held. The information contained in this document was gathered from the MSDH-BPWS Training Calendar, so we have no information about if a particular training may be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

From an article from the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, April 20, 2017:

Mississippi has plenty of work left to do, but a national report card shows the state has made significant gains in being prepared for public health emergencies. Since 2013, Mississippi improved in four out of the five broad categories on the National Health Security Index, according to a report released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“It appears Mississippi is improving at a faster rate than the country as a whole,” said University of Kentucky Professor Glen Mays, who lead the team of researchers. Mississippi still lags the nation with a score of 6.3 out of 10, compared to a national average of 6.8. States in the Deep South and Mountain West continue to trail states in the Northeast and on the West Coast. “Equal protection remains an elusive goal in health security, as rural and low-resource regions have fewer and weaker protections in place,” Mays said.

Public health emergencies can arise during a disease outbreak, but they can also come with natural disasters like tornadoes and hurricanes and man-made catastrophes like chemical spills or explosions. While state health departments are key players in preparing for and responding to these disasters, the index looks at a broader range of resources needed to respond in a crisis. Researchers look at more than 130 measures in five broad categories. The index was originally put together by the Centers for Disease Control. Now more than 30 organizations collaborate on the index, which is designed to be a tool to drive improvement.

“We only have about two-thirds of the protections the experts say we need,” Mays said. “We need to find ways to accelerate the improvement.” Mississippi had its biggest leaps in measures that reflect the ability to collect and analyze data to identify possible threats – going from 5.7 to 6.9 out of 10 – and communities’ capacity to work together in a disaster – from 4.2 to 6.0 out of 10. It also showed steady gain in the ability to mobilize and manage resources. The state scored above the national average in the community category, which includes measures that look at collaboration between public and private partners and volunteerism in preparing for and responding to crises. “That’s a very good sign,” Mays said. “It’s not just about resources. It’s about relationships.”

There were only small gains in measures that looked at the state of health systems and the ability to mitigate biologic, chemical or nuclear agents. The state remained level on the ability to prevent impacts from environmental and occupational hazards. That category includes

traditional health department functions like water and food inspections. That's a problem around the country.

"We know we have an aging infrastructure for water and power," Mays said. "It's definitely an area of vulnerability." As the recovery from the recession has picked up speed, many states have reinvested in public health infrastructure, Mays said. Mississippi has seen an erosion as the state health department has been hit with deep cuts.

In 2016, the Mississippi State Department of Health had to shutter some county health departments, cut hours at others and reduce services. The health department is facing more cuts in the budget approved by the Legislature last month.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

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MSDH-BPWS Region Map

