

**PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES  
PROGRESS STATEMENT  
PREPARED BY  
CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF BINATIONAL BORDER HEALTH  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

**MARCH 2003-NOVEMBER 2003**

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS), via its California Office of Binational Border Health (COBBH), has participated in the planning and development of bioterrorism and public health emergency preparedness activities with its sister border state, Baja California, the other three U.S. border states, and the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC).

The following are summaries of activities describing the different levels of interactions that CDHS/COBBH has either initiated, participated, or are planning to engage in as a key member.

**1. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY THE USMBHC:**

- In February 2003, California and the other three U.S border states requested, and received, from the USMBHC funds to support public health emergency preparedness planning along the U.S.-Mexico border. The funds were to assist the U.S border states conduct vertical and horizontal planning with border sister states and on both a regional and border wide basis.
- In March 2003, the U.S. border states, with California assuming the lead role, worked with the USMBHC to submit a solicited proposal to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for supporting the USMBHC in preparing a comprehensive plan that would assist in coordinating public health emergency preparedness along the border.
- During March-September 2003, California met numerous times with Baja California to informally discuss an approach for conducting a vertical planning strategy and identifying a formal schedule in order to proceed with developing a public health emergency preparedness plan. These informal discussions did not advance beyond the exchange of conceptual ideas since Baja California needed to first prepare, and submit, to the Mexican federal government its own public health emergency preparedness plan.
- In October 2003, California officially met for its first time with Baja California to discuss an approach to formally initiate a schedule of vertical planning meetings. It was agreed that Dr. Vera would communicate with Dr. Kuri and secure the approval for Baja California to officially commence work with California. It was also agreed that a more comprehensive approach would be adopted to include the work that the four U.S. states would be undertaking with the new CDC bioterrorism preparedness grants and the new USMBHC Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance Project (EWIDS) with the six Mexican states.
- In November 2003, California's State Health Director and Baja California's Secretary of Health met to formally adopt an approach for the sister states to follow in their mutual quest to prepare a Binational Public Health Emergency Response Plan. It was agreed that California would take the lead role in preparing the Plan (for convenience and financial purposes) and that all information would be shared and presented to the Director and Secretary's office, or their designee, before it could be used elsewhere. It was also agreed that both states would work closely together to coordinate the concerted work of the four U.S. border states and the work of USMBHC EWIDS' project.

It was further agreed that California would support Baja California's priorities of: constructing a Level B Public Health Laboratory; establishing a formal notification and response structure; and securing the appropriate communication equipment in its response network that would have an acceptable redundancy feature. A proposed schedule of vertical planning meetings is currently being prepared.

## **2. FOCUS AREA ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED FOR CDC GRANT AWARD**

California has identified the following eleven activities for the border wide bioterrorism preparedness activities required by CDC. The following activities will be coordinated with Baja California, the U.S. border states and the USMBHC. A more detailed outline of these activities has already been shared with the USMBHC and the other U.S border states.

### Focus Area A: Preparedness Planning and Readiness Assessment

1. Borderwide coordination with the four US border states.
2. Borderwide coordination with the USMBHC.
3. Border coordination with Baja California.
4. Development of a Binational Needs Assessment Tool.

### Focus Area B: Surveillance and Epidemiologic Capacity

5. Expansion of BIDS programs in Imperial and Los Angeles Counties.
6. Formulation of a Binational 24/7 Notification and Response Plan.
7. Conducting a Binational Terrorism Preparedness Tabletop Exercise.
8. Formulation of a Binational 24/7 Border Infectious Disease Surveillance Plan.

### Focus Area C/D: Laboratory Capacity

9. Assess Binational Laboratory Infrastructure Capacity.
10. Assess the Integrated Regional Binational Laboratory Response Network.

### Focus Area F: Risk Communication and Health Information Dissemination

11. Assess the Binational Health Risk Communication System

## **3. ACTIVITIES WITH THE USMBHC'S EWIDS PROJECT**

As explicitly stated in the CDC Work plan, California fully intends to integrate its bioterrorism preparedness activities with the EWIDS project. In doing so, it will pursue the following activities:

- Continue to work with the USMBHC's Ad Hoc Committee on Public Health Emergency Infrastructure, and seek to continue to assume a lead role, in developing the strategies the states will undertake with the EWIDS project and work with the six Mexican states, particularly Baja California.
- Incorporate the activities identified in #2 above with the activities identified by other U.S. border states and the EWIDS project.
- Recommend appointments for California to the EWIDS' Advisory and Technical Committees.
- Provide consistent and substantive input, advise and support to EWIDS priorities, especially as they relate to Baja California.
- Remain a strong partner to the USMBHC and support EWIDS activities as it interacts with U.S. and Mexico leadership representatives in Washington D.C. and Mexico City.