

This is an official **CDC HEALTH UPDATE**

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Message to HAN Coordinators

Thanks to all who were able to participate yesterday in the HAN Coordinators conference call. We know the call came at an inconvenient time for many, and are sorry if you were unable to participate. We will be following up with a full meeting summary in the next few days.

One of the issues we discussed was the expansion of the Health Alert Network to national associations like the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association and to local public health agencies. We are currently talking with each of these associations--and others--regarding the distribution of health alert messages targeted for public access. In addition, following our discussion yesterday and after further consultation with State health officials, we have agreed, because of the speed with which events are unfolding, to add local public health departments as soon as possible. As we discussed, we encourage each state to use the health alert messages as the basis for state specific messages that could add important state specific context and contact information and to use all network features to their fullest.

At the present time we have e-mail addresses for roughly half of the local public health departments in the country. In the next day, we will send you a listing of the health departments in your state with the current contact information and are hopeful that you will review and add the information necessary to provide for electronic contact.

Our goal continues to focus on building public health infrastructure at the state and local level throughout the country. It is our intention that the Health Alert Network will provide both the necessary funding and the platform for emergency communication systems. We realize that for many states, the challenges you face in building and then operating your communication network on a 24-hour/7 day per week basis is extremely challenging. Our hope is that we will be able to build on each other's strengths and experience through regular conference calls, email, and face-to-face meetings. We look forward to our work together in building a strong public health system.

If you have any questions or concerns I would invite you to be in contact with your project technical officer or Steve Boedigheimer (bfs5@cdc.gov), Chief of the State and Community Services Branch, or myself at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Paul K. Halverson, DrPH

Director, Division of Public Health Systems Development and Research

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issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES