

Public Health Planning for Vulnerable Populations: Lessons Learned from Three Local Health Departments

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Abstract: Enhancing preparedness, planning for and responding to the needs of vulnerable populations during an emergency offers challenges and opportunities for local public health. These include relationship building with key organizations that serve those who are not only least likely to be prepared during a disaster, but who also present with unique needs. This session will provide a framework for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations using processes underway at Public Health-Seattle & King County, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department, and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department as examples. Lessons learned will be shared including how to select priority vulnerable populations and those organizations working with them, strategies and methods for engagement and relationship building with community organizations, and strategies for developing a partner-centered strategy that includes training. As an example of how planning shifts to response, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department will share emergency shelter lessons learned from the 2009 flood response.