

# Social Capital

A quarterly newsletter for community agencies  
serving vulnerable populations

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 4, 2008

## Vulnerable Populations Action Team

### Launch of the VPAT newsletter

#### VPAT remains committed to its partners:

Public Health works collaboratively with community based organizations through the Vulnerable Populations Action Team (VPAT) since 2006 to ensure that no one group is more impacted than another in an emergency.

Public Health—Seattle & King County’s Vulnerable Populations Action Team (VPAT) has launched *Social Capital*, a quarterly newsletter intended to provide its growing number of community partners information on getting prepared, staying prepared, and being ready to respond to their clients’ needs in an emergency.

community partners. *Social capital* refers to the trust, reciprocity, information and coordination associated with social networks.



Since its inception, VPAT has partnered with over 200 agencies throughout King County in an effort

to assist community-based organizations (CBO) in their emergency preparedness planning activities.

The newsletter will provide VPAT community partners information on emergency preparedness grants, training and exercise opportunities for staff and clients, personal and agency preparedness tips and will feature a CBO Spotlight section to showcase your agency’s initiatives, programs and events.

*Social Capital*, was selected as the title of the newsletter due to the value Public Health and VPAT, in particular, places on its relationships with

### VPAT updates

#### Community Communications Network Survey

To evaluate and improve Public Health-Seattle & King County’s (Public Health) communication mechanisms, VPAT asked Community Communication Network (CCN) members to complete a short, 10 minute survey using Survey Monkey software regarding the efficacy of the network and to update their agency and personal contact information.

The survey was sent to 266 CCN members on Friday, May 16 and closed Friday, May 30. Approximately 88 CCN members

participated in the survey, resulting in a 33% response rate. The survey findings were relatively consistent with feedback VPAT staff received from CCN members over the past year.

Key findings:  
**VPAT community partners are receiving and distributing information received via the CCN.** Over 77% of respondents recalled receiving a Health Advisory.

**A majority of VPAT community partners would like health information in languages other than English.** Spanish was the



language most requested (86%), followed by Russian (56%) and Vietnamese (47%).

**Community-based organizations are willing to take on a greater coordinating/communication role by considering being communication hubs in their neighborhoods.** 66% of respondents indicated that they would consider acting as a communication hub for their neighborhood.

For more information, please email [pj.redmond@kingcounty.gov](mailto:pj.redmond@kingcounty.gov)

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## What you need to know about pandemic influenza

Washington State Department of Health, July 2008



A pandemic is an outbreak of a disease in many countries at the same time. A pandemic of influenza—or flu—occurs when a new flu virus rapidly spreads from country to country around the world. The swift spread of a pandemic flu happens because people are not immune to the new flu virus, and an effective vaccine would take months to develop.

In addition, sick people who travel from country to country can be a source of infection, as occurred in the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in Asia and Canada in 2003. Pandemics are not just particularly bad flu seasons. In fact, they are not seasonal at all; they can

happen anytime.

### Why should we be concerned about a virus that infects birds?

The strain of avian flu causing the outbreak in Asian and Eastern European birds is of concern for several reasons:

This flu strain can spread from birds to people, and when it does, it can cause very serious human illness and even death. So far, the virus does not appear to spread easily from person to person, but that could change. Whenever a bird flu strain infects people, there is a chance that the virus could change to a brand new flu virus that spreads easily from person to person and causes serious illness. Infections with new

human flu strains can't be prevented by the flu vaccine that people get each year, so no one will be immune to the virus. Making a safe vaccine that can prevent infection with a new human virus can take months. Because this type of new virus couldn't be easily controlled, it could spread rapidly around the world and cause a pandemic.

To view full article visit:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/panflu/qna.htm>

To get **FREE** comic books about pandemic flu (available in 12 languages) and **FREE** business continuity planning DVDs, go to: [www.metrokc.gov/health/pandemicflu](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/pandemicflu)

## Training opportunities

### Home Earthquake Retrofit Class

Sept. 3, 7—9 p.m.  
Come learn how to evaluate your home for needed structural improvements. Learn how to use correct tools, materials and methods to accomplish an earthquake retrofit. A complete set of permit forms, drawings and instructions.

To register call 206.783.2244. Fee \$20/PNA Member or \$25/Non-member.  
Agency/location:

**Phinney Neighborhood Association Classes**  
6532 Phinney Ave North

Seattle, WA 98103

### Search and Rescue Class

Sept. 6, 8:30 a.m.—3 p.m.  
Hands-on class provides instruction on safe, effective simple search and rescue methods. Learn basic rescuer safety, five stages of rescue, search methods and markings, first-aid triage, basic construction practices, utility safety and control, safe lifting of heavy objects.

Bring hard hat, leather gloves, flashlight. Wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes to practice on the floor. Cost: \$25

For more information call 206-233-7123. Location:

**Warren G Magnuson Park**  
7400 Sand Point Way NE

For trainings provided by the **Seattle Red Cross**, please visit: [www.seattleredcross.org/show.aspx?mi=4022](http://www.seattleredcross.org/show.aspx?mi=4022)

**Renton Technical College** offers **FREE** disaster preparedness courses (pgs 78-80): <http://www.rtc.edu/StudentServices/ClassSchedule/files/LifeStyle.pdf>

## Tools and resources

- The Mission of the **National Resource Center** is to serve as a central clearinghouse of resources and an information exchange portal to facilitate communication, networking and collaboration to improve preparedness, build resilience and eliminate disparities for culturally diverse communities across all phases of an emergency. For more information on the National Resource Center for Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Cultural Diverse Communities, please visit: <http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/>

*Section continues at the top of page 3...*



## Tools and resources, cont'd...

- A report commissioned by the National Governor's Association finds **immigrants less prepared for a disaster**. Limited-English Proficient (LEP) immigrant communities are less prepared than other groups for a major disaster, according to a new study released by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California.

The report states that government officials and disaster service personnel should have a key role in improving disaster preparedness for LEP immigrants. The study offers the recommendations to better serve the needs of immigrants.

To read the report visit: <http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga>

- The **King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative** takes aim at long-standing and persistent local inequities and injustices. Government and local communities are better prepared than ever before to address these challenges. The initiative aims to end persistent local inequities and injustices that result in, among other things, higher rates of disease among low-income populations and disproportionate rates of young black men in jail. For more information, please visit: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/equity/>
- "What is Public Health?" was created to answer three questions:
  1. What does public health encompass?
  2. What impact does public health have on our lives?
  3. What types of careers are available in the field of public health?

While viewing this website, we hope you will gain a better understanding of the various roles public health professionals play each day to ensure a healthy American public. For more information, please visit: <http://www.whatispublichealth.org/>

"It is unacceptable that the color of your skin or your home address are good predictors of whether you will have a low birth weight baby, die from diabetes or your children will graduate from high school or end up in jail."

- Ron Sims, King County Executive

## Quarterly quick tip

### The Plan Myth

The mantra of emergency management has long been to "have a plan." Conversations about disaster preparedness rarely proceed without stressing the importance of having a plan - but they also rarely address what it takes to have an effective one. A disaster plan is to readiness what a gym membership is to fitness: a great resource if used properly. To make a difference, it takes resources, commitment, buy-in and repeated testing and refinement. A truly effective plan is the physical documentation of shared agreements, created through a dynamic process, in an empowered relationship with the people who will implement it and will be impacted by it. When you speak of having "a plan", be sure you also articulate the bigger, more nuanced picture.

This quarterly quick tip was provided by Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters (CARD). To receive weekly Safety Team Action Tools (STAT) messages, please visit: <http://www.firstvictims.org/STAT.html>

### Comment box

If you have a question or comment about an article you read in this newsletter, or an issue or concern regarding Public Health's emergency preparedness and response, please send your message to PJ Redmond at [pj.redmond@kingcounty.gov](mailto:pj.redmond@kingcounty.gov).

We would like to "spotlight" a CBO partner in each newsletter. Our spotlight segment will include 300 words about your agency, the clients you serve/programs offered and explain upcoming opportunities, events, activities your agency has scheduled in the coming weeks.

If you are interested in having your agency featured in our spotlight segment, please contact PJ Redmond.



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**Helping community agencies get prepared, stay prepared and be ready to respond to their clients' needs in a disaster**

**Public Health**   
Seattle & King County

For important information, please visit our website at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/health>

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