

# **Improving Emergency Preparedness – Developing an Environmental Emergency Response Plan**

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**Feb. 2007**

# Background

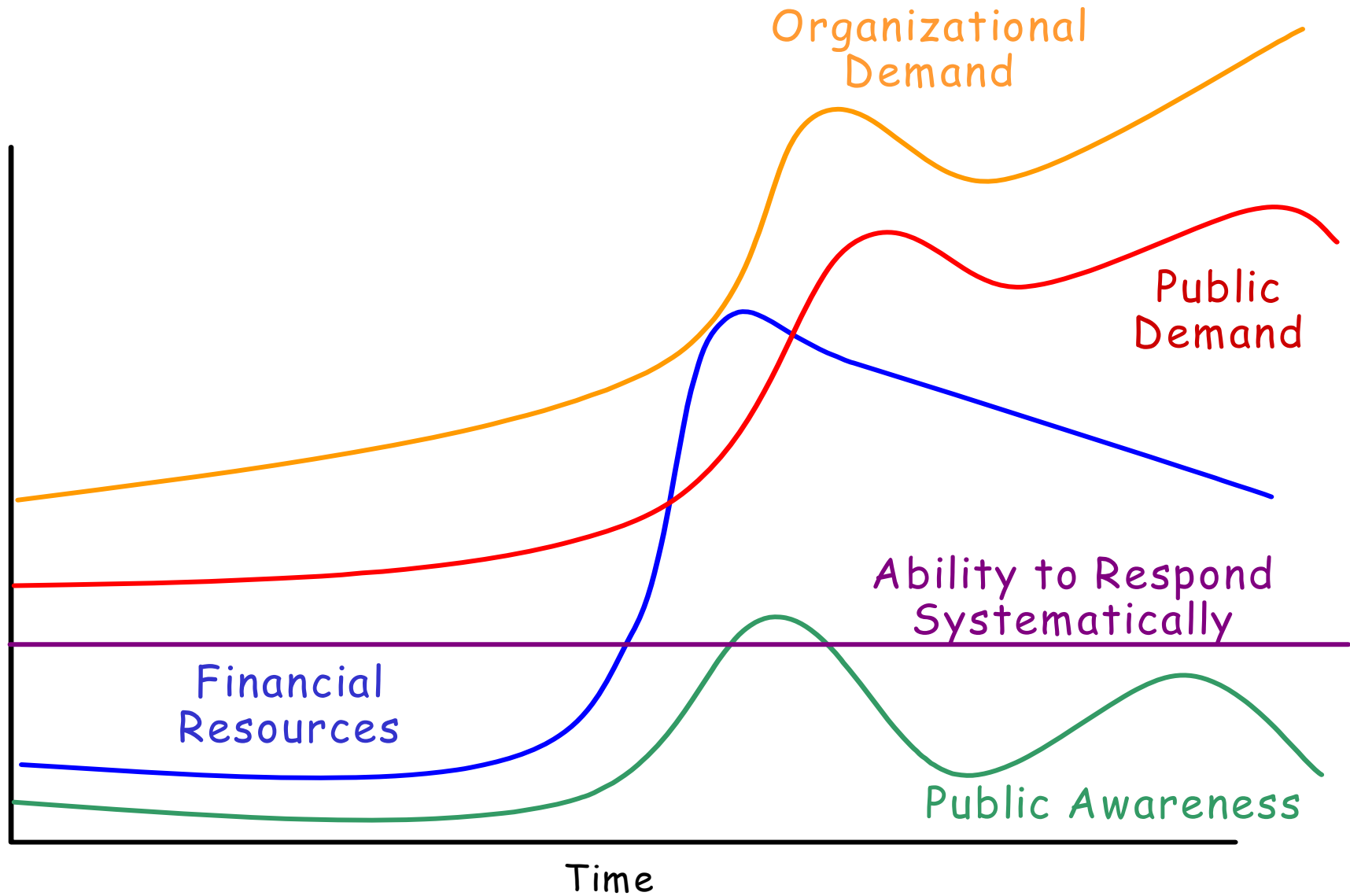
**The need for environmental emergency preparedness planning has become especially evident due to several factors including:**

- **Recent emergencies and other events that have reinforced the need for a systematic, pre-planned response – such as 9/11/01, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and also other less-serious events such as an illness outbreak, power outage, or flood.**
- **Media and other coverage has highlighted the role of the environmental health practitioner and made the public more aware of their role in environmental emergencies, which increases expectations of the public.**
- **The State of Iowa will be requiring local agencies holding state contracts to develop a working plan.**
- **Current funding is probably as good as it will ever be for items related to emergency response and preparedness.**
- **Environmental Division employees need and want to know what their role will be during an emergency.**

# Problem Statement

- **The Siouxland District Health Department Environmental Division responds to emergencies on a reactive basis, instead of proactively developing a written plan for systematic response to events such as storms, fires, floods, power outages, or illness outbreaks.**

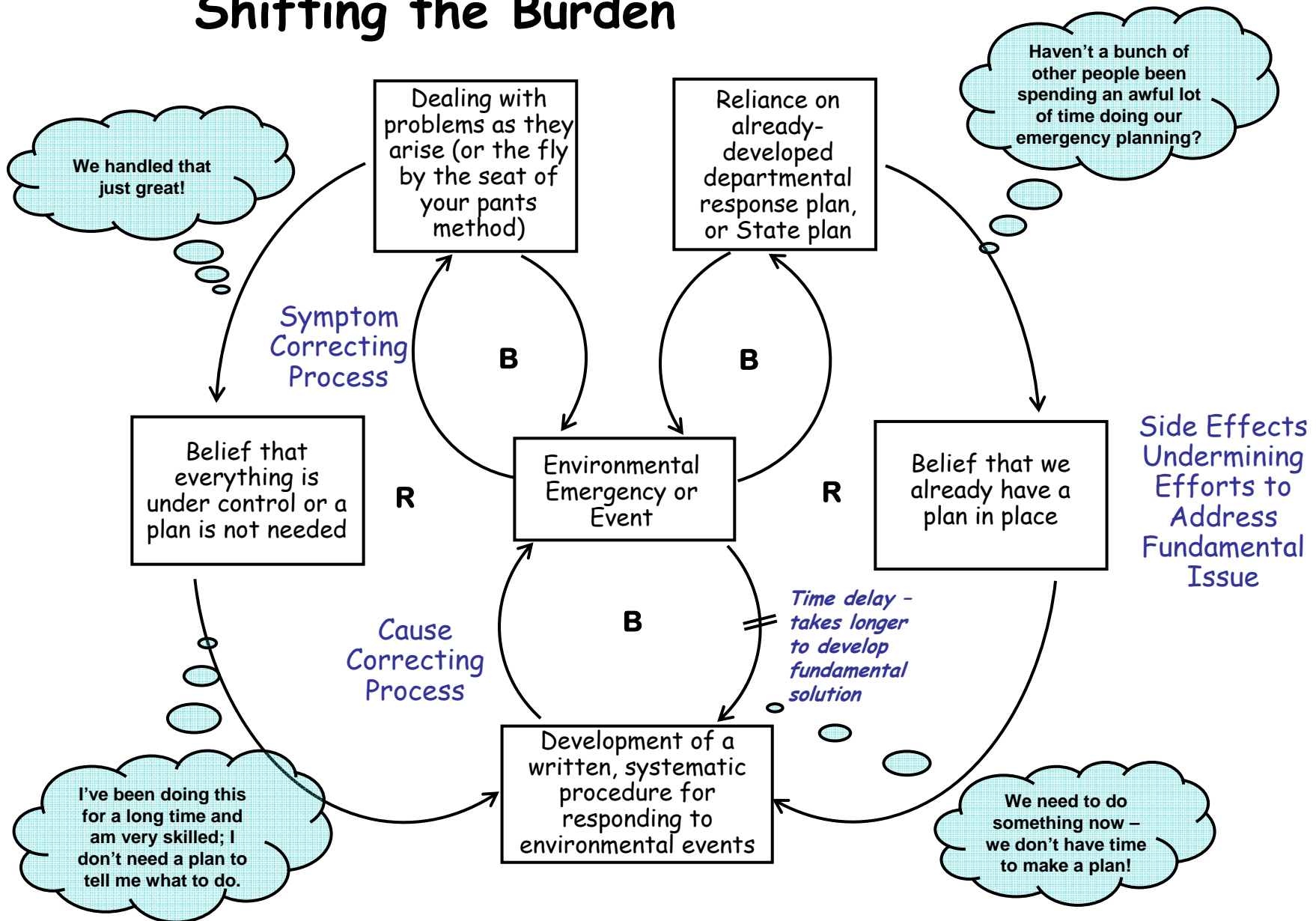
# Behavior Over Time Graph



# Contributing Factors

- **Lack of staff time**
- **Already experiencing increased workload for most environmental employees**
- **Development of a Health Department emergency plan that covers primarily illness outbreaks and mass drug dispensing sites leads to the perception that we do have an emergency response plan in place that will cover all events and emergencies**
- **Lack of a major environmental event within the service region to bring the problem of lack of a response plan to the forefront**
- **Concern that a written plan would be too rigid and not adaptable to various situations**

# Shifting the Burden



# Program Goal

- **To enhance the preparedness and effectiveness of the Environmental Division of the Siouxland District Health Department in responding to environmental emergencies in order to increase safety for the public and environment, and minimize the impact during an event.**

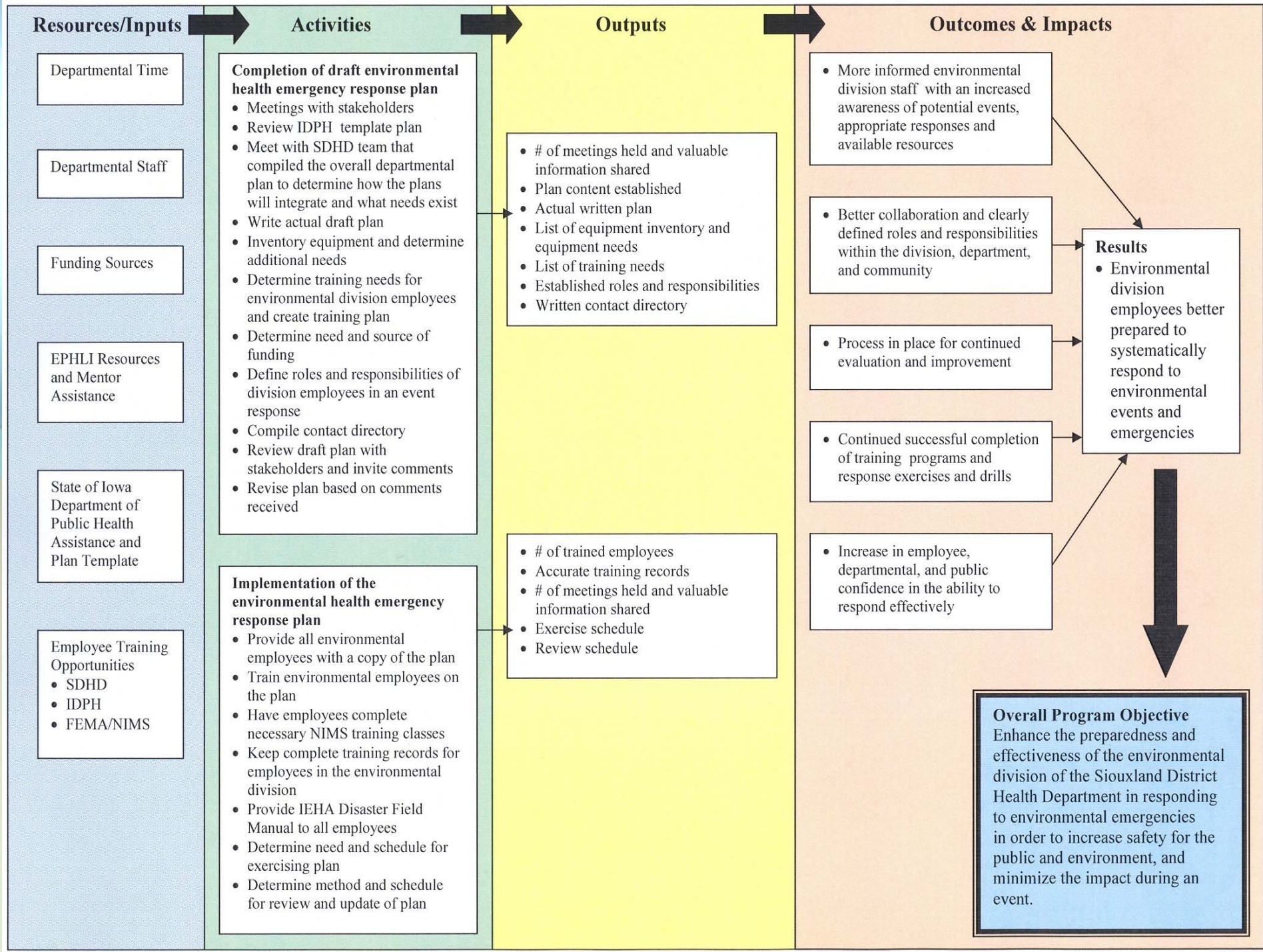
# Process Objectives

- 1. By July 31, 2007, complete a draft environmental health emergency response plan including introductory information, response guidelines for particular incidents, equipment inventory and needs, training needs, defined roles and responsibilities, and other necessary information.**



# Process Objectives

- 2. By December 31, 2007, complete integration of the environmental response plan with the overall Departmental plan, train environmental employees on the plan, and complete any other implementation steps to ensure a systematic, competent response in the event of an environmental emergency or event.**



# National Goals Supported

- **10 Essential Services**
  - Inform, educate, and empower
  - Mobilize community partnerships
  - Develop policies and plans
  - Enforce laws and regulations
  - Assure a competent workforce
  - Evaluate effectiveness
  - Research innovative solutions
- **CDC Health Protection goals**
  - People prepared for emerging health threats
- **CDC National Strategy to Revitalize Environmental Public Health**

**Thank You!**

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