



Supplement G: Communication and Education

II. Lessons Learned

After the SARS response of 2003, federal, state, and local public health colleagues conducted internal debriefings to prepare for a future SARS occurrence. At CDC, communications officers, in consultation with state and local partners, identified the following as “lessons learned” for the next SARS response:

- Timely dissemination of accurate and science-based information on what is known and not known about SARS-CoV disease and the progress of the response effort builds public trust and confidence.
- Coordination of messages and release of information among federal, state, and local health officials and affected institutions are critical to avoiding contradictions and confusion that can undermine public trust and impede containment measures.
- Information should be technically correct and sufficiently complete to support policies and actions without being patronizing.
- Guidance to community members on actions needed to protect themselves and their family members and colleagues is essential for crisis management.
- Information presented during an outbreak should be limited to specific data and results; messages should omit speculation, over-interpretation of data, overly confident assessments of investigations and control measures, and comments related to other jurisdictions.
- Rumors, misinformation, misperceptions, and stigmatization of affected groups must be addressed promptly and definitively.
- Education and training of healthcare workers and public health staff on appropriate strategies to recognize SARS-CoV disease and implement control measures is key to containing a SARS outbreak.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)