Public Health Disaster Planning in Georgia
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In May 2009, a group of leaders representing Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health in the state of Georgia were called together by the Georgia Composite Medical Board to discuss a potential partnership to advance emergency response to the H1N1 virus in Georgia. The focus of the partnership was to develop a protocol as a part of Georgia’s Public Health Disaster Planning to increase the utilization of pharmacists in the education and distribution of influenza antivirals in a declared state of emergency.

The Archway Partnership Health Committee was approached to facilitate the meetings and connect higher education resources to help reach the goals of the initiative. One of the fundamental goals of the partnership was to provide disaster preparedness training for every pharmacist in Georgia. Representatives from the Institute for Health Management and Mass Destruction Defense in the University of Georgia College of Public Health provided expertise on issues pertaining to mass distribution of influenza antivirals in the event of a declared emergency. The University of Georgia College Of Pharmacy’s Office of Continuing Pharmacy Education and Outreach played a key role by leading the development of a training curriculum and adapting their continuing education infrastructure to reach Georgia’s pharmacists.

There are several key factors in making this infrastructure a reality:
1. The development of legislation for the 2010 Georgia Legislative Session to provide pharmacists direction from the District Public Health Director while operating under the protocol.
2. The Georgia Board of Pharmacy approved a rule change mandating every licensed pharmacist in the state of Georgia to receive three hours of approved disaster preparedness training from a Board approved program by December 2010.
3. To meet the demands of pharmacists’ training needs, the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy is working to develop disaster preparedness training modules which were launched in February 2010.

This proposal has resulted in a collaborative effort across all three disciplines to develop a plan for utilizing pharmacists in a declared state of emergency. Tailored disaster preparedness modules have been created to enable Georgia pharmacists to dispense the necessary medications by an approved protocol under the direction of the Georgia Department of Public Health.

Advancing Community Priorities: The Washington County Archway Partnership: Health Committee has worked to create an infrastructure that will provide better quality healthcare for residents all over the state of Georgia. This project was a great relationship where the Archway Partnership offered the facilitation, coordination, and higher education resources necessary to provide the health sectors in Georgia with a public health disaster plan.