

Review of West Central Ohio Regional Emergency Response Plans

A CDMH sub-committee met several times with county and regional representatives who develop emergency response plans. In reviewing county and regional plans, it was found there were a broad range of directions regarding how to access Mental Health resources during an emergency event. In discussing this, it was also found that the types of incidents may vary greatly, so a “all-hazards” approach on directions should be taken.

A second issue identified was that not all mental health resources are identified in each plan. There are 24/7 resources noted, however there are also many other organizations who may be able to provide assistance.

To cover the first issue, considering the regional differences covering 8 counties, the CDMH sub-committee has reviewed emergency procedures and suggested the following statement be used in Emergency Response Plans.

“It is crucial that responders be aware of the psychological and emotional issues surrounding many incidents, as well as the physical issues. For Mental Health issues during large scale incidents affecting multiple organizations or jurisdictions (e.g., natural disasters, terrorism, or epidemics) or emotionally significant events (e.g., suicide at a school or business, accidents or the death of a child that impacts a community), or at the discretion of an on scene Incident Commander, contact your county Emergency Management Agency to request Mental Health Services.”

To identify all mental health resources, CDMH has developed listings of mental health resources available in each of our 8 counties. For local coordination, CDMH has teamed up with local county health departments to reach out and collaborate with all of these organizations. As of December, coalition development meetings have been held in half of our regional counties focusing on mental health and functional needs. This focus will continue into 2016.