Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Public Health Preparedness: Challenges and Strategies from the National Perspective and the California Experience

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Overview

- About our Center for Health Equality (CHE)

- Impetus for our Preparedness and Diversity Work
  - National Review of Research and Programs

- Our Major Preparedness and Diversity Initiatives
  - National Consensus Panel
  - California State, Local and Community Panel Sessions
  - Review of California's Diversity & Preparedness Efforts
  - National Resource Center (www.DiversityPreparedness.org)

- Future Directions

The Center for Health Equality

Mission: To eliminate health disparities and improve the health and well-being of communities by:

- Providing expert assistance to local, state and national organizations on cultural competence and disparities reduction;

- Conducting applied research;

- Developing curricula and education programs;

- Convening national, state and local conferences;

- Communicating related information and innovations.
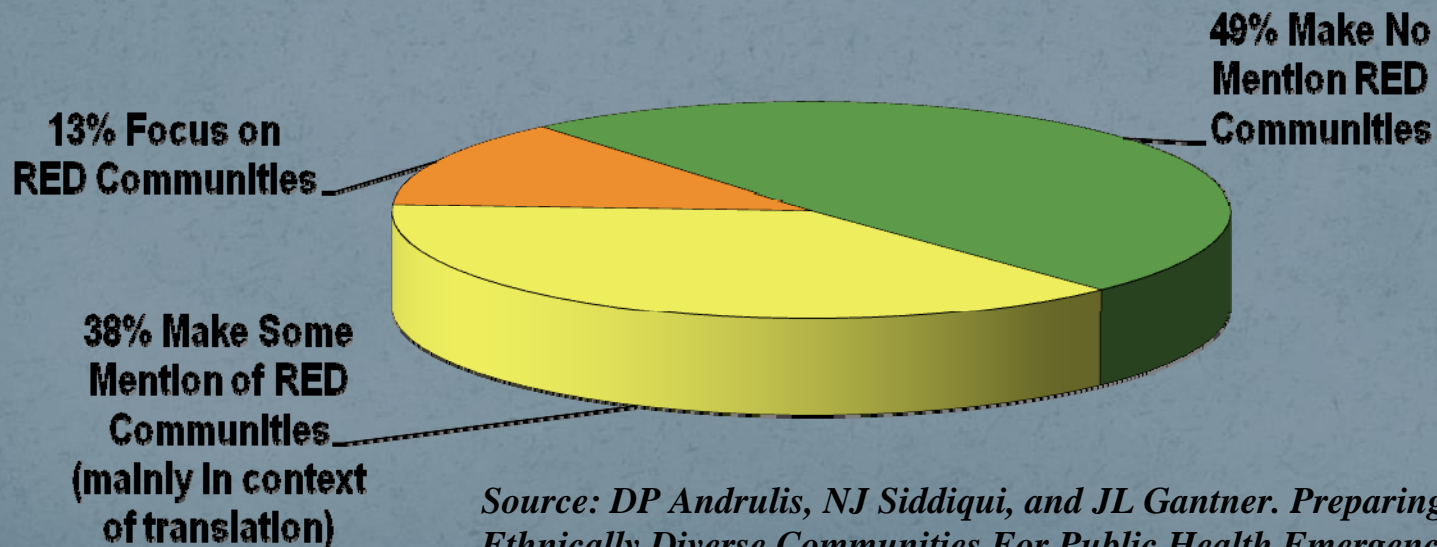
Impetus for our Preparedness & Diversity Work

- Tragedy surrounding Hurricane Katrina provided graphic evidence of the serious and longstanding inequities faced by racial and ethnic populations in preparedness, response and recovery

- Prompted CHE to conduct a national review of research and programs in 2007 to:

  - To determine to what extent racial/ethnic minorities have been considered in public health emergency preparedness programs, strategies and efforts;

  - To identify leading research, promising practices and resources for training, education and initiative development.

National Review of Research & Programs

- Our study revealed that the vast majority of organizations involved with emergency preparedness did not sufficiently address or integrate the needs of racially and ethnically diverse (RED) communities.

In 2007, of 301 organizational websites on emergency preparedness:

49% Make No Mention RED Communities

13% Focus on RED Communities

38% Make Some Mention of RED Communities (mainly in context of translation)

Source: DP Andrulis, NJ Siddiqui, and JL Gantner. Preparing Racially And Ethnically Diverse Communities For Public Health Emergencies. Health Affairs, September/October 2007; 26(5): 1269-1279.

Primary Conclusions

- Lack of a unified voice and a national presence on the issue
- While promising programs and efforts existed, we found a lack of coordination of resources as well as roles and responsibilities across agencies, sectors and regions
- Lack of guidance on promising and evidence-based practices
- Few agencies and organizations were making concerted efforts to adapt and tailor risk communication, drills and exercises to diverse community needs
- Limited funding at all levels to explicitly address and incorporate diversity issues in PHEP

Source: DP Andrulis, NJ Siddiqui, and JL Gantner. Preparing Racially And Ethnically Diverse Communities For Public Health Emergencies. Health Affairs, September/October 2007; 26(5): 1269-1279.

To address these program and policy gaps, the Center for Health Equality received support to undertake four major preparedness and diversity initiatives

1. National Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness and Cultural Diversity

2. California State, Local and Community Panel Sessions

3. Review of California's PHEP and Diversity Efforts

4. National Resource Center (www.diversitypreparedness.org)

National Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness & Cultural Diversity

- Supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (HHS/OMH)

- First national initiative to address fragmentation among sectors and to bring together expertise and perspectives of key agencies and individuals to create cohesion around priorities and advance a national program/policy agenda on emergency preparedness for diverse communities.

- *Mission:* To provide guidance to national, state and local agencies and organizations on the development of effective strategies to advance public health emergency preparedness and eliminate disparities for racial and ethnic communities across all stages of an emergency event.

National Consensus Panel Members

- 34 federal, state and local government, academic, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations representing:

  - Emergency Management and Homeland Security
  - Healthcare and Public Health
  - Emergency Risk and Crisis Communication
  - Racial and Ethnic Communities
  - Cultural Competence and Disparities Reduction

National Consensus Panel Objectives

- To develop a national consensus statement on integrating RED communities across the full spectrum of emergency preparedness activities and strategies.

- To establish guiding principles of what would comprise a culturally competent approach to emergency preparedness and would eliminate disparities for racial and ethnic communities.

- To develop specific action steps to operationalize priorities and guidance identified in the consensus statement and guiding principles across sectors and organizations.

National Consensus Statement on Integrating Racially & Ethnically Diverse Communities into Public Health Emergency Preparedness

The integration of racially and ethnically diverse communities into public health emergency preparedness is essential to a comprehensive, coordinated federal, state, tribal, territorial and local strategy to protect the health and safety of all persons in the United States. Such a strategy must recognize and emphasize the importance of distinctive individual and community characteristics such as culture, language, literacy and trust, and promote the active involvement and engagement of diverse communities to influence understanding of, participation in and adherence to public health emergency preparedness actions. Additionally, this strategy must acknowledge the critical commitment to developing effective and sustainable services, programs and policies and building mutual accountability. Only through these comprehensive, unified efforts can we work to counter the legacy of racial and ethnic disparities and ensure that quality and equality for all communities form the foundation of the Nation's planning for any and all public health emergencies.

National Consensus Panel
June 11, 2008

Guiding Principles

1: Identifying, locating and maintaining a profile of diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) populations within the community.

2: Establishing sustainable partnerships between community representatives and the public health preparedness system to assess, build, and sustain trust with diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant and LEP populations.

3: Engaging community representatives to design, implement, and evaluate emergency risk communication strategies, ensuring that they are culturally and linguistically appropriate

4: Developing and testing drills and exercises that reflect the community and incorporate scenarios that explicitly take into account situations involving culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Guiding Principles

5: Building capacity within the public health preparedness system to respond to unique needs of diverse communities.

6: Measuring and evaluating emergency plans and actions from preparedness to recovery, ensuring the active involvement of participants from the public health preparedness system and the community in a continual process of review.

7: Coordinating information, resources and actions within and across organizations as well as with diverse communities in a concerted effort to maximize compliance and adherence to preparedness practices.

8: Ensuring the availability of funds to develop and sustain services, programs and policies that strengthen diverse communities' ability to prepare and respond to as well as recover from emergency events.

Operationalizing National Consensus Statement & Guiding Principles

- The Panel is currently in the process of developing specific guidance on "operationalizing" recommendations in the statement & principles

- *Purpose:* Offer local health agencies and other community organizations practical and tangible recommendations for engaging diverse communities across the continuum of preparedness activities

- Specific guidance for operationalizing will be grounded in:

- Ensuring efforts are "ground level up", with active involvement and engagement of community leaders and representatives across planning, implementation and evaluation;

- Ensuring that efforts are coordinated across agencies and sectors;

- Ensuring that broader social and economic needs and circumstances of communities are fully considered.

e.g., Operationalizing Guiding Principle 1

"Identifying, locating and maintaining a profile of diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant and LEP populations within the community."

- Examples of tangible action steps/strategies for achieving this include:

  - **Identifying demographic, social, economic and health characteristics of RED communities through publicly available national data**

    - Guidance will be provided on: data sources; how to access data; level of data profiling (e.g., census tract, MSA, city, county, etc)

  - **Collecting data on RED communities through qualitative research methods—e.g., focus groups, key informant interviews and other community-based needs assessments**

    - Guidance will be provided on: questions to ask; how to enlist local community participation

e.g., Operationalizing Guiding Principle 1

Continued…

▪**Identifying resources and capacities within local/county public health and/or emergency management agencies as well as the community to identify and collect necessary data**

▪Guidance will be provided on: developing a survey/questions to assess agency capacity and needs; how to work with communities to obtain data and conduct interviews

▪**Consider utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to locate and map high diversity communities by emergency preparedness resources, services and programs**

- ▪ Guidance will be provided on: how to map; what to map; and what information mapping will yield

e.g., Operationalizing Guiding Principle 2

"Establishing sustainable partnerships between community representatives and the public health preparedness system to assess, build, and sustain trust with diverse racial/ethnic, immigrant and LEP populations."

▪Examples of tangible action steps/strategies for achieving this include:

- **Inviting community representatives & leaders to actively participate in planning, implementation & evaluation**

  - Guidance will be provided on: level of engagement of representatives from planning through evaluation; which community reps to engage; how to invite and engage them; format of invitation and venue for engaging; kinds of specific content needs—e.g., language, liaisons with community, etc.

- **Consider developing "oversight taskforces" or "advisory groups" consisting of representatives from FBOs, cultural associations, neighborhood councils, community health clinics and other CBOs**

  - Guidance will be provided on: who would serve on taskforce; level of committees—e.g., state, regional or local; the purpose of committees; length and frequency of meetings; monetary support; and intended outcomes

e.g., Operationalizing Guiding Principle 2

Continued…

▪**Building trust by ensuring mutual respect and transparency in relationships and giving all parties a voice in decision-making**

▪Guidance will be provided on: the processes for assuring voices are respected; defining voices (e.g., are parties intended to influence policies/programs or to serve as content experts); how to give communities a chance to participate; how to balance power between parties;

▪**Drawing on partnerships established for public health and non-public health purposes as well as collaborating with non-traditional partners (e.g., ethnic media and schools)**

  ▪ Guidance will be provided on: the kinds of agencies and sectors that may be considered in forging partnerships; identifying purpose of collaboration—e.g., information dissemination, language assistance, responding to questions from the community; how to expand existing partnerships; how to establish new partnerships

Value of National Consensus Panel's Efforts for Local Public Health Agencies

- A cohesive set of practical strategies on integrating diversity issues into preparedness planning, implementation and evaluation activities

- Guidance on forging partnerships across agencies and sectors as well as working with RED communities and their representatives

- Directions for funding and program/policy development

California Panel Sessions

- Supported by The California Endowment and HHS/OMH

- Recognizing the core, central role that communities play in the creation of any effective PHEP strategy for RED populations, we convened two local panels in California

  - *State/Regional Preparedness & Diversity Panel:*
    - Purpose: To identify state/regional priorities for integrating diverse communities into preparedness planning and implementation

  - *Local/Community Preparedness & Diversity Panel:*
    - Purpose: To identify strategies for partnering and engaging community-based organizations and representatives

California Panel: Conclusions and Themes

- Both Panels identified a shared set of priorities for integrating diverse communities into PHEP

  - *Engaging Communities and Building Partnerships:*
    - e.g., Building on already established public-private partnerships; providing leadership and volunteer training to community members; involving community members in drills; inviting community reps to participate in planning committees; and partnering with ethnic media

  - *Addressing Social Determinants and Broader Community Context in PHEP Planning for Diverse Communities*
    - e.g., Educational materials with information that communities can identify with, access and afford; drills that consider unique community circumstances such as transportation needs and housing conditions

California Panel: Conclusions and Themes

- ***Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services***
  - e.g., increasing diversity among responders by recruiting and training members from local community; partnering with academic centers to provide cultural competency education and training to responders; developing culturally appropriate translated materials

Value of Findings from California Panel Sessions for Local Public Health Agencies

- Offers program/policy directions for integrating diversity into preparedness from a local perspective (including a local public health agency perspective)

Review of California's PHEP Efforts for RED Communities

- Supported by The California Endowment and HHS/OMH

Study Objectives:
- To conduct a point-in-time review of California's state, local and community preparedness programs and efforts to identify:

  - Barriers and challenges to reaching racially and ethnically diverse communities;

  - Programmatic and policy gaps and priorities for integrating these communities into preparedness planning and implementation; and

  - Successes, promising efforts and lessons learned.

Rationale for Focusing on California

- A state rich in racial/ethnic diversity:
  - Over 40% non-white
  - 1 in 3 is Hispanic/Latino
  - 1 in 3 is foreign born
  - 43% speak a language other than English
  - 1 in 5 (~6.8 million) speaks English less than very well
  - Estimated 2.4 million undocumented immigrants

  - A long history of coping with disasters

  - Leading in state and local initiatives for preparing and responding to RED communities which largely emerged in 1989 following the Loma Prieta Earthquake

Methodology

- Three-pronged approach:

  - Conducted a review of 148 websites originating from state, local and community public and private sector organizations across California and focusing on preparedness and public health issues;

  - Conducted a review of disaster and public health literature focusing on emergency preparedness for racially and ethnically diverse communities in California;

  - Conducted 17 key informant interviews with individuals representing: county public health departments; local emergency management and response agencies; private non-profits; community based organizations; state health and emergency agencies; and academic institutions.
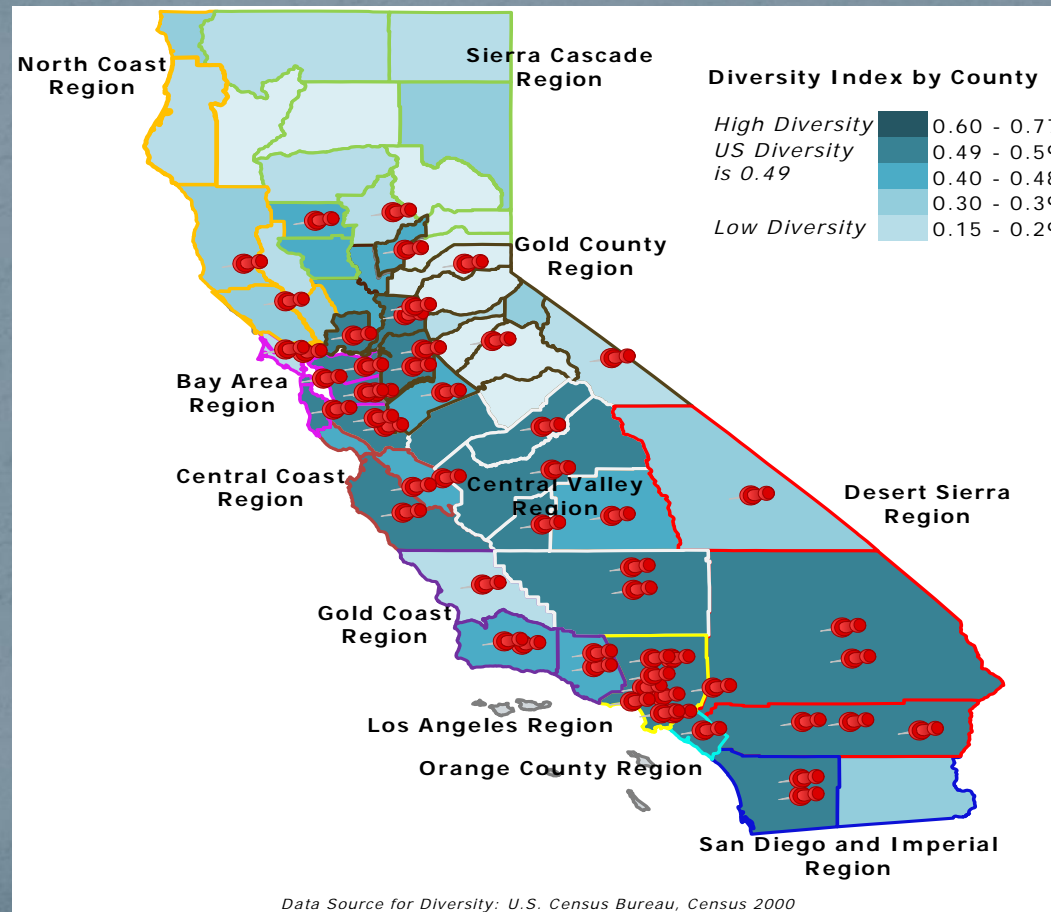
Findings: Web-based Revew

Findings from a Web-Based Review:
Percentage of State, Local and Community Organizations with
Emergency Preparedness Initiatives for Diverse Communities
California, June-August 2008

N = 148 Organizational Websites

Category	Percentage
Links to other websites providing translated...	72%
Translated materials provided directly on website	42%
Courses, drills and trainings	14%
Actively collaborating with CBOs and others	12%
Research, measurement and evaluation activities	5%
Policy and advocacy work	5%
Guidance on promising practices	5%
Funding activities	5%
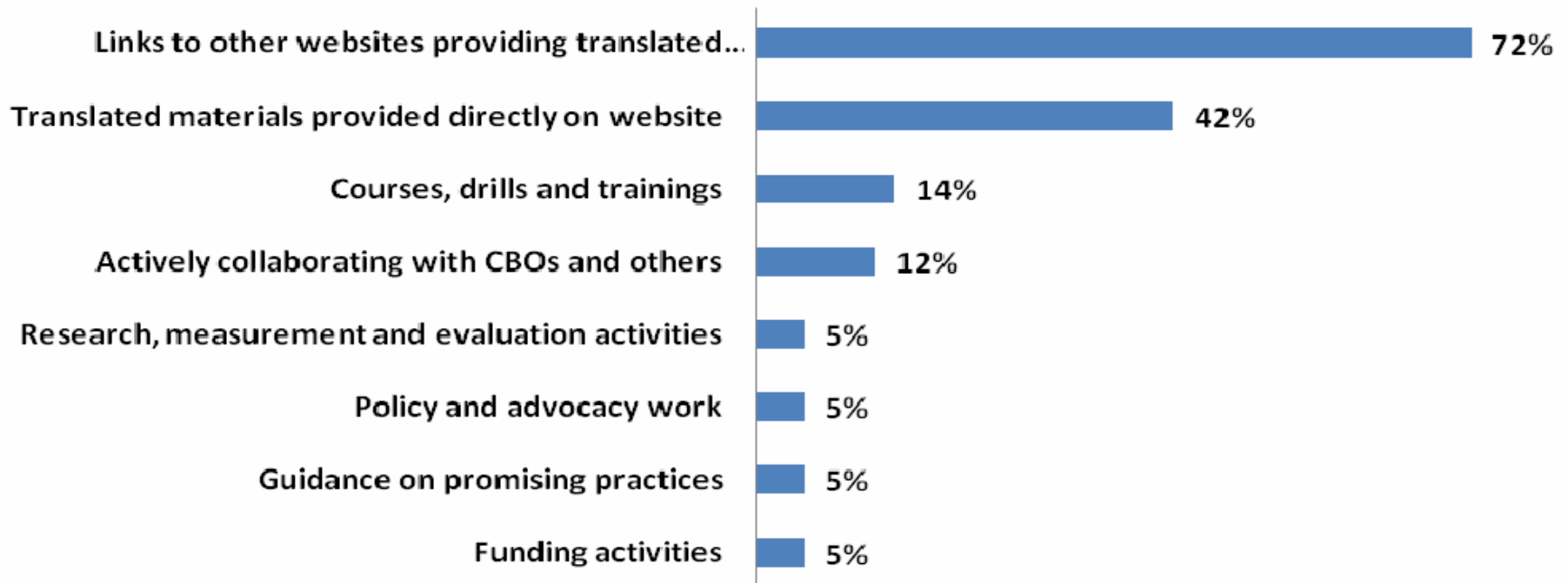
Findings: Web-based Revew

Where are the local agencies that provide translated resources located across California?

North Coast Region

Sierra Cascade Region

Gold County Region

Bay Area Region

Central Coast Region

Central Valley Region

Desert Sierra Region

Gold Coast Region

Los Angeles Region

Orange County Region

San Diego and Imperial Region

Diversity Index by County

High Diversity
US Diversity is 0.49

0.60 - 0.77
0.49 - 0.59
0.40 - 0.48
0.30 - 0.39

Low Diversity 0.15 - 0.29

Data Source for Diversity: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Findings: Web-based Revew

Where are the local agencies that provide training and education programs on diversity preparedness located across California?

Data Source for Diversity: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000
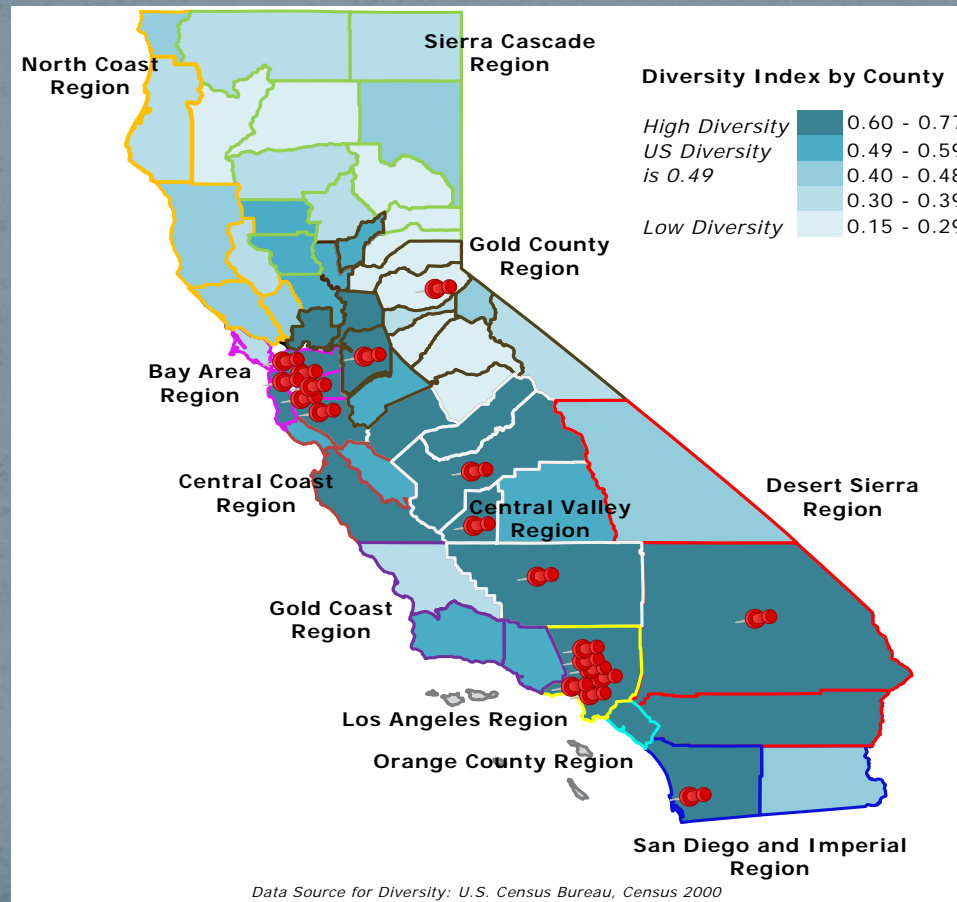
Findings: Literature Review

- **Individual/community level barriers to preparing and responding to RED communities:**

  - *Low socioeconomic status:* limited financial resources; substandard housing; low literacy; and limited transportation.

  - *Culture and language:* limited English proficiency; little familiarity with U.S. culture, customs and programs; and information received from non-mainstream sources.

  - *Trust and perceived fairness of government response:* low trust in warning messages and service providers; less likely to believe that government will respond fairly to needs.

Findings: Literature Review

- **Institutional/organizational level barriers to preparing and responding to RED communities:**

  - *Limited knowledge* about diverse communities and their distinct needs;

  - *Limited infrastructure support* to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services (e.g., workforce diversity, availability of on-site bilingual interpreters, and cultural competence training for service providers); and

  - *Limited funding, resources and collaboration* between agencies and across sectors

Findings: Key Informant Interviews

- Key informants reaffirmed challenges and barriers identified through our literature review.

  - *Individual-level barriers:*
    - Economic and social stressors within communities
    - Limited trust
    - Culture and language
    - Geographic Isolation

  - *Institutional/Organizational-level barriers:*
    - Lack of funding and flexibility in funding for culturally and linguistically appropriate services
    - Limited collaboration for these efforts

Findings: Key Informant Interviews

- Key informants provided several examples of strategies and practices adopted by their organizations:

  - *Community Engagement:* establishing planning committees and advisory groups; and building informal partnerships.

  - *Infrastructure support for culturally and linguistically appropriate services:* recruiting bilingual and racial/ethnic staff; and establishing policies to encourage use of professional interpreters.

  - *Community needs assessments and surveys:* identifying the distinct and specific needs of culturally diverse communities as well as community resources and assets and current programs.

  - *Establishing collaborations:* partnering to share resources, information and services.

Findings: Key Informant Interviews

- Recommendations on coordinating activities across agencies and sectors:

    - *Establishing mandatory steering committees* with community representatives within CA's Office of Emergency Services and other emergency management and response agencies.

    - *Reaching out to ethnic media* to develop and disseminate preparedness information

    - *Working with neighborhood councils* to provide basic preparedness information.

    - *Working with schools* to disseminate basic preparedness information.

Findings: Key Informant Interviews

- Recommendations for policy changes:

  - ***Encouraging collaboration across organizations:*** encouraging jointly-funded projects; financial incentives for active collaboration (e.g., subsidizing travel); building cordial and personal relationships across sectors.

  - ***Increasing programmatic flexibility for local agencies:*** providing opportunities for local agencies to innovate and tailor plans to communities' distinct and specific needs.

  - ***Increasing funding for programs, resources and services***: funding to hire professional interpreters or provide printed translated resources (as opposed to online materials).

Program and Policy Directions

- Based on findings from the California study, we suggest five areas for concentrating future programs and policies at the state/local level:

  - Harnessing and coordinating programs, resources and information across agencies, sectors and regions

  - Providing infrastructure support for developing culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services

  - Collaborating between public health/emergency agencies and the local community to foster trust and understanding

  - Tailoring emergency preparedness plans and actions to the broader social, economic and political circumstances of communities

  - Assuring sufficient, sustainable and flexible funding opportunities to meet the needs of diverse communities

Value of California Preparedness/Diversity Study for Local Public Health Agencies

- Provides a prototype for conducting regional/local review of PHEP initiatives for RED communities
  - e.g., community need and asset mapping
  - e.g., environmental scan of regional efforts

- Provides at least some indication on promising practices—i.e., what works and what does not work in effectively engaging and reaching RED communities in emergencies

- Utilizes a major state's circumstance to identify key priority areas and directions for program and policy development

National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities (www.DiversityPreparedness.org)

- Supported by HHS/OMH

- *Mission:*
  - To provide a central and comprehensive database of resources and an information exchange portal to advance preparedness and eliminate disparities across all stages from planning to recovery.

- *Target Audience:*
  - Communities, government, emergency planners, emergency managers, first responders, health care providers, public health professionals, researchers, businesses and policymakers

National Resource Center Objectives

- Highlight best practices and provide concrete and practical information on: successful programs; evaluation design and tools; education and training; and research on advancing emergency preparedness for racial and ethnic communities.

- Highlight relevant policy developments and trends to stimulate innovation and new directions in policymaking and service implementation.

- Examine lessons learned by state agencies and service providers in their practices to instruct others in resolving similar issues.

- Facilitate communication, information exchange and networking, as well as promote collaboration among stakeholders and experts across the spectrum of agencies, sectors and communities.

A Central Repository of Resources

- Over 350 English-language resources
- Translated materials in 47 languages
- Information on promising practices and lessons learned
- Conferences, courses, drills and training programs
- Assessment tools
- Research articles
- Policy documents

An Online Portal to Facilitate the Exchange of Information, Ideas and Practices

- E-Newsletter

- Voices from the Field

- Discussion Forum (coming soon!)

- Professional Member Directory (coming soon!)

Demonstration

www.DiversityPreparedness.Org

Value of Diversity Preparedness Website for Local Public Health Agencies

- Offers opportunity for accessing and exchanging information with other local agencies on experiences, lessons learned, and promising practices

- Provides a database of local agencies and community-based organizations undertaking diversity/preparedness efforts in local areas across the nation

- Provides tools (e.g., needs assessments, surveys, training, courses, and others) for integrating diversity issues into preparedness

Future Directions

- National/State Planning and Policy Development: Inform Congressional/Administrative and state discussions on strategies to assure that all individuals and communities regardless of race, ethnicity, or immigrant status are effectively integrated into emergency preparedness, response and recovery activities.

- Community Engagement: Learn from and actively work with communities of concern across the U.S. on applying the Consensus Statement and guiding principles to meet local level needs.

- State Engagement: Encourage California-type state assessments of their preparedness status and capacity concerning their diverse communities.

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