Background

In recent years, health educators and other public health professionals have grappled with the need to communicate quickly and effectively with communities during events such as hurricanes, the anthrax attack and the 9-11 attack. Recognizing the particular challenges in these situations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a model for crisis and emergency risk communication (CERC), defined as: “an effort by experts to provide information to allow an individual, stakeholder, or an entire community to make the best possible decisions about their well-being within nearly impossible time constraints and help people ultimately to accept the imperfect nature of choices during the crisis.” Crisis and emergency risk communication reflects the challenges of such communication in key ways: (1) decisions must occur in a compressed time frame; (2) the decision may be irreversible; (3) the outcome may be uncertain; and (4) the information necessary for that decision may be incomplete or uncertain.

With the looming threat posed by the transmission of H5N1 (Avian flu) around the world, we now face the possibility of an influenza pandemic that will demand ongoing health education and crisis and emergency risk communication.

Focus of this theme issue

Crisis and emergency risk communication is a relatively new field that draws upon crisis communication, risk communication, public relations and health education. Literature is just emerging that examines past events, explores theoretical foundations, and reports early research.

This theme issue provides an opportunity to examine current efforts and prepare health educators to address future needs in crisis and emergency risk communication (CERC). Manuscripts can be either research or descriptive in format (noting a focus on the journal’s mission of focusing on implications for practice), including policy analyses, intervention descriptions and evaluations, case studies, ethical issues, historical perspectives, point-counter point dialogues, or interviews with policy and community experts.

Important themes of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promising strategies for crisis and emergency risk communication in the context of pandemic influenza or other emergencies;
- Commentaries or descriptions of meeting the communication needs of special populations such as minority communities, the elderly, immigrant populations, hearing/vision impaired, persons with low literacy, schools/day care settings, and others that address concerns such as stigmatization, self-efficacy, and resilience;
- Theoretical frameworks that may be applicable to CERC in a pandemic;
- Consideration of the role of health educators in crisis and emergency risk communication especially as it relates to community mitigation measures, community hardiness, and social/behavioral impacts.
Authors should follow the “Instructions to Authors” found in issues of Health Promotion Practice or on the webpage http://www.sophe.org/public/docs/Guidelines3.rtf. Manuscripts should not exceed 30 typed pages, including figures and references.

**Deadline for all manuscripts is October 1, 2007.**

**Theme Issue Editors**

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Potential authors are welcome to contact both editors to discuss their interest in submission to the theme issue.

**About the Journal**

*Health Promotion Practice* (HPP) is an official journal of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). Launched in 2000, this journal publishes authoritative, peer-reviewed articles devoted to the practical application of health promotion and education. HPP is unique in its focus on critical and strategic information for professionals engaged in the practice of developing, implementing, and evaluating health promotion and disease prevention programs. In addition, HPP serves as a form to promote linkages between researchers in the academic and private sectors with health promotion and education practitioners and to address the health issues of ethnic and racial minority populations. Explored are public policy issues and successful theory-based interventions relevant to health care, community, worksite, school, and international health settings. Edited by Randy Schwartz, MSPH, Senior Vice President, American Cancer Society, New England Division, the journal is rapidly becoming one of the most widely read publications by health care practitioners and policymakers.

**About SOPHE**

Founded in 1950, SOPHE is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to promoting the health of all people by: stimulating research on the theory and practice of health education; advocating policy and legislation affecting health education and health promotion; and developing standards for professional preparation of health educators. SOPHE is the only professional organization devoted exclusively to public health education and health promotion.