NHSPI

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First-of-its-kind U.S. Preparedness Index Shows Great Strengths and Challenges in Protecting Nation's Health During Disasters
2013 results are most complete assessment of national health security preparedness to date

[Washington, DC] – The Association for State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 20 development partners, today announced the release of the National Health Security Preparedness Index™ (NHSPI™), a new way to measure and advance the nation's readiness to protect people during a disaster. The Index results will be updated annually.

The NHSPI™ measures the health security preparedness of the nation by looking collectively at existing state-level data from a wide variety of sources. Uses of the Index include guiding quality improvement, informing policy and resource decisions, and encouraging shared responsibility for preparedness across a community.

"Few things are as important as protecting people's health and safety in times of emergency," said Ali S. Khan, M.D., M.P.H., Director of CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response. "This first-of-its-kind Index allows us to gauge how prepared we are as a nation, and as individual states, to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from public health threats."

2013 NHSPI™ results show that substantial health security preparedness capability exists across the nation, reflecting important gains made in recent years. While areas of strength differ from state to state, overall Index results vary only moderately across states, indicating that each state takes these responsibilities seriously.

The 2013 Index results identify the nation's strengths:
- *Health Surveillance* – detecting and investigating health threats
- *Incident and Information Management* – the ability to mobilize resources and coordinate emergency response across a community
- *Countermeasure Management* – the ability to manage and use medications and other materials to prevent or treat health problems resulting from a variety of high risk exposures

Efforts to sustain and build upon these strengths, many put in place over the past decade, are critical to our nation's health security.

The 2013 Index results also reveal areas in greatest need of development and work yet to be done:
- *Community Planning and Engagement* – the ability of communities to engage the full network of neighborhoods, schools, community-based organizations, government agencies, and citizens to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster
- *Surge Management* – the ability to rapidly expand health and medical services during disasters to meet the needs of large numbers of seriously ill, injured, at risk, or displaced persons

In these areas, continued work, investment, and development of new and innovative approaches are critical to securing the health of the nation.

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The NHSPI™ was developed by a Steering Committee, chaired by John R. Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and three workgroups comprised of more than 75 experts from public health, emergency management, private sector, nonprofits, government, and academia.

"Policymakers, practitioners, researchers, communicators, and others interested in strengthening the health security of states and the nation are invited to explore and utilize the NHSPI™," said Dr. Lumpkin. "Exploring the Index can deepen understanding of what influences our national health security and what is needed to sustain and advance it."

The 2013 NHSPI™ is primarily made up of public health and health care system measures. Over time, other sectors and concepts may be incorporated as new partners are engaged and data are identified. For example, environmental and occupational health, the pre-event health status of a community, and federal contributions to state preparedness are new areas now being considered for inclusion in the next version of the Index.

"The NHSPI™ was developed by the community, for the community. We invite new partners to join the effort, making it an even stronger tool for measuring and advancing our nation's preparedness for disasters," said Dr. Lumpkin.

To learn more about the NHSPI™ and the 2013 results, visit www.nhspi.org.

The National Health Security Preparedness Index™ (NHSPI™), www.nhspi.org, is a new way to measure and advance our nation's preparedness. The Index examines the health security preparedness of the nation by looking collectively at the health security preparedness of states. Index results are updated annually.

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