

Collaboration Between Nebraska Schools of Medicine and the Public Health Association of Nebraska in a Multidisciplinary Bioterrorism Education Consortium

Sharon Medcalf RN MEd, Associate Director, Nebraska Center for Bioterrorism Education

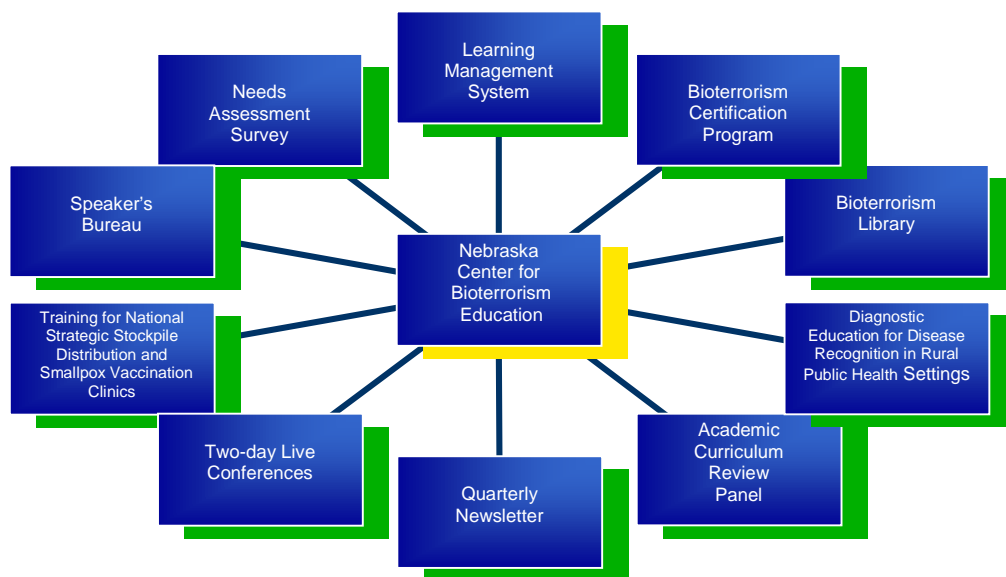
Rita Parris, BA, Executive Director, Public Health Association of Nebraska

Philip Smith MD, Professor and Chief of Infectious Diseases, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Gary Gorby MD, Associate Professor of Medical Microbiology and Immunology and Medicine, Creighton University School Medical Center

The leaders of Nebraska Health and Human Services System realized that collaboration with academic institutions and public health organizations was beneficial to ensure expertise in curriculum design, and would avoid wasting existing resources. A consortium was formed to serve as a governing body to oversee all educational programs designed by the Nebraska Center for Bioterrorism Education. In addition to representation from academic institutions and public health, it was deemed important to include other members that have a stake in bioterrorism education and overall preparedness. Today, all educational projects are overseen by this multi-disciplinary education consortium of over twenty members representing academic institutions (to include both medical schools in Nebraska), professional associations, state agencies, emergency management, medical libraries and health delivery systems. The audiences served by the educational programs are public health providers, healthcare providers (physicians, nurses, mental health and others), veterinarians, first responders and law enforcement.

The need for consolidation and collaboration of curriculum and delivery venues for bioterrorism education was recognized early in Nebraska. It is also a priority of the training and education component to the CDC public health preparedness for bioterrorism program that is funding this project. Project coordinators began with the creation of a central repository for all educational programs to support needs assessment, delivery, competency assessment, and accreditation. This central repository is called: "The Nebraska Center for Bioterrorism Education" (NCBE). The center is co-directed by physicians from two schools of medicine. After an initial needs and resources assessment, the following educational programs were identified and graphically represented as follows:



Successful collaboration has been demonstrated between entities that had not previously interacted and consortium member willingness to assist with various projects was much higher than expected. Benefits derived from the networking between public health and academic clinicians are immeasurable. Difficulties in differing institutional missions are overcome in this program of joint coordination towards a common goal of public health preparedness. All educational projects serve to enhance the public health provider's ability to respond to bioterrorism as well as any other public health emergency.

Sharon Meaker-Medcalf, RN, MEd.
Associate Director
Nebraska Center for Bioterrorism Education
University of Nebraska Medical Center
985400 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha NE 68198-5400
Phone: (402) 552-2529; fax: (402) 552-2769
smedcalf@unmc.edu