

TAKE THE FIRST STEP!

K-12 Schools



The American Public Health Association (APHA) is working to help those most vulnerable to potential public health threats take the first step in developing a customized preparedness plan. During National Public Health Week 2007 (NPHW), APHA will focus on identifying the significant barriers to preparation that vulnerable populations face and provide them with the resources they need to create a plan that is right for them.

✓ **Unique Challenges**

School administrators, nurses, teachers and staff have a multitude of responsibilities in the event of an emergency including each and every one of their students. With school violence all too common, most schools have reevaluated their emergency preparedness plans, but perhaps not in regard to public health emergencies.

✓ **Among the questions school administrators at K-12 schools must consider:**

- **Crowd Control** - *Where will students go if the school is locked down for an extended period of time? Is there enough food on hand to feed students for more than a school day?*
- **Medicine** - *Does the school have first aid supplies that can cover a variety of needs and a majority of the school population? Is there a way to quickly identify students and employees who have specific health concerns/conditions?*
- **Logistics** - *Where can children go if they cannot be connected with their parents or guardians when a threat to public health strikes?*
- **Communications** - *If the power goes out, how will administrators communicate with others in the building? How will the school quickly notify/communicate with parents or guardians?*

✓ **APHA's Recommendations - First Steps**

APHA will use NPHW 2007 to urge K-12 schools to take the first step toward developing a comprehensive plan for their students and employees to be prepared for a public health threat. APHA will provide K-12 school administrators with customized recommendations, tools and strategies to effectively prepare for the unique public health threats they may face.

✓ **What Public Health Departments and Other Organizations Can Do for NPHW**

Public health organizations and APHA members can play a critical role in raising awareness about the importance of schools' emergency preparedness for public health threats. In advance of NPHW, community groups and individuals should meet with school superintendents to talk about how health threats are integrated into their larger emergency plan, attend local PTA meetings to distribute materials about school preparedness and encourage parents to pose questions to the members of their school board.

✓ **For more information, visit: www.apha.org/NPHW**