

Nuclear Incident Communication

- Effective communication has an enormous potential to:
 - reduce deaths, injuries, illnesses from a nuclear incident
 - reduce the social and psychological footprint
 - foster resilience and facilitate recovery
- Major research initiatives (e.g., PEMDP & follow-on studies, KCL-HPA, START) have greatly increased understanding
- Findings have been utilized in a new generation of nuclear incident communication tools developed by CDC, EPA, DHS, FEMA, ASPR and others
- These tools contribute significantly to preparedness
- But strategically important gaps remain
- Can be addressed relatively inexpensively

Next Steps

- Going forward, all nuclear incident drills and exercises should include substantial attention to communication issues
 - Provide opportunities for *realistic* practice
 - Practice when things go well *and* when things do not
 - Practice dealing with unanticipated developments
 - Exercise guide/module
- More efforts to engage/involve communities

Next Steps

- Children: A nuclear detonation event could result in large numbers of orphans, children separated from parents
 - There is a pressing need for specialized, age-appropriate materials to answer children's questions, explain key aspects of the situation, explain screening process, screening results, etc.
- Create an interdisciplinary working group that brings together experts in pediatrics, behavioral health, risk communication, radiation emergencies, etc.

Next Steps

- Need to initiate additional peer-reviewed nuclear incident communication research
- Basket One: Studies to systematically test the effectiveness of already-developed tools across regions, population subgroups, different demographics, etc.
 - What can be learned from experience with innovative initiatives (eval component), real-world events

Next Steps

- Need to initiate additional peer-reviewed nuclear incident communication research
- Basket Two: Studies to inform the next stage of development of nuclear incident communication tools
 - Messaging focused on receiving areas, problem of stigma (short-term, longer-term)
 - WEA: How can longer (360 character) alerts be most effectively used?
 - Responders!

Next Steps

- Essential to have messaging and communication strategy for proactively addressing concerns and information needs of:
 - Responders
 - Important to develop collaboratively *with* responder groups
 - Peer to peer approach
 - Responder families
 - Need to remember that healthcare involves more than clinicians, public health
 - Hospital staff
 - Other key personnel (e.g., utilities)