Disaster Responders in Puerto Rico

Web seminar - 2020 Emory University/NIEHS Workshop:
Protecting Infectious Disease Responders During COVID-19 Outbreak
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Rafael A. Caballero, MSEM
Director, Institute for Environmental Education (INEDA)
Atlantic OSHA Training Center – Puerto Rico
NJ/NY Hazardous Materials Worker Training Center
About Puerto Rico

- Territory of the U.S. since 1898
- Population: 3.2 million
- Citizenship: USA
About

• Aprox. 34,000 students
  • 11 campuses in Puerto Rico
• 70 years of history
• Facilities in Texas, Florida and Washington D.C. area
About INEDA-AOTC

• Born in 1990 as an environmental education center of the UMET (Universidad Metropolitana)
  • today known as Universidad Ana G. Méndez – UAGM
• NIEHS grantee since 2000 - with Rutgers University
• 2003 – School of Asbestos (authorized by the PR-DNER)
• 2003 – became part of the Atlantic OSHA Training Center consortium
  • Only OTIEC in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean
  • Only OTIEC with 100% courses in Spanish
• 2004 – received the EPA Environmental Quality Award
  • Environmental, health and safety education through a radio program
    • On The Air for 11 years
• Since March 2019 – weekly participation on 96.9 FM radio morning show
  educating about environmental, health and safety issues
  • “Ambiente Seguro, Entorno Saludable” (“Safe Environment, Healthy Surroundings”)
Who are the responders?

- Municipal
- State
- Federal
- NGOs and churches
- Volunteers
- Training needed for all
- Collaborations are key
Trainings

• Several funded by NIEHS (HWWT – Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program)
• HAZWOPER 40-hr and 8-hr Refresher
  • (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response)
• HAZMAT
  • Awareness
  • Operations
• RCRA – Hazardous waste handling
• DOT – Hazardous material transportation
HDPT Program
(“Hazmat Disaster Preparedness Training”)

• **Objective** (until 2019-2020):
  
  • Train new instructors for Disaster Site Workers
    
    • **Government employees** (Municipal, state and federal), **NGOs and industry**
    
  • 155 hours of training
  
  • 2020-2025 – projecting expansion to greater and more diverse type of workers

• **Funded by NIEHS**
Trainings

• Several funded by NIEHS (IDRT)
• Ebola, infectious disease and personal protection equipment
• Mold remediation
  • Workers and supervisors
• Leptospirosis and other hazards in disasters
• Resiliency for disaster responders
• Asbestos inspectors
Mold remediation seminar for mayors, government officials and managers
(April 2019)
Impact of INEDA-AOTC UAGM

• 1,494 workers and community leaders 2018-19
  • Trainings
    • Occupational health and safety
    • Hazardous waste/materials
    • Infectious diseases (Ebola, Leptospirosis)
    • Resiliency for disaster site workers
    • Mold
  • Public outreach activities
    • Weekly radio participation
PR Recovery Stakeholders meetings

• After Hurricanes Irma and María

• Multisector initiative
  • Federal agencies
  • PR Government
  • Private sector
  • Academia
  • Community leaders
  • Volunteers

One of the main needs identified is training for all sectors
Disaster challenges
Colaborations and educational campaigns
Who are the people INEDA impacts?

• Workers
  • Government (federal, state, municipal)
  • Industry
    • Manufacturing
    • Services
    • Commerce

• Communities

• Families
¡Gracias!

rcaballero4@uagm.edu