Preparing for Climate Effects at the Municipal Level: A Public Health Symposium

Friday, April 22, 2016
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Hosted at the Endicott House, Dedham, MA

Brookline Project to Protect Public Health from Effects of Climate Variability

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Summary

- Review hazard vulnerability assessments for Brookline
  - 2013 by Emergency Preparedness Region 4b
  - 2015 by Massachusetts Area Planning Council (MAPC)

- Use hazard vulnerability assessment data
  - Identify key stakeholders and partners
  - Share information among all members of Brookline’s Emergency Management Team

- Promote and expand on the Emergency Preparedness (EP) Buddies program
  - Develop additional programs & methods for reaching Brookline’s most vulnerable residents
Challenges

• Reaching vulnerable populations via the organizations that serve them
  – Barriers include language, social isolation, transient populations
  – Lack of interest in hazard preparedness related to climate variability

• Recruiting/Retaining EP Buddies program volunteers
  – Concerns regarding anticipated time commitment and/or responsibilities in the event of an emergency
  – Significant time lag between training and assignment
Outreach:

• Foster new partnerships with community, faith-based, and culturally-focused organizations

• Develop relationships with management of housing complexes geared toward elderly, low-SES, and transient populations

• Comprehensively update the Vulnerable Populations list
Actions

EP Buddies Program:

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Whole Community:

• Build on the EP Buddies program to reach a variety of at-risk populations
• Work with partners
• Translate materials
• Focus on rental housing
  – Lower SES
  – Transient
Community Impact & Benefits

- Reduce health burden of climate change hazards, including heat, floods, and vector-borne disease
- Increase collaboration with community-based organizations, including faith-based and culturally-focused groups
- Decrease the vulnerability of groups most at risk, including elderly, low-SES, and transient populations
- Increase community-level resilience via preparedness and connectivity