



Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA)

NEWS

Strengthening Health Systems for the Workforce to be Discussed in International Workshop

KATHMANDU, Nepal (July, 19, 2010) – The US-based Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID)’s Office for Public Health in Nepal held an international civilian-military workshop discussing disaster health care workforce issues in South Asia on July 19-21.

“This workshop focused on public health workforce preparedness during response and how to develop the appropriate knowledge and skills to effectively engage and prepare for crisis response and recovery,” said COE-DMHA’s Pooja Sood-Payeur, who is the course lead for the workshop. “This workshop provided a unique public health perspective by focusing on personnel issues which are critical, but often overlooked in disaster planning. Around the world, underinvestment has led to the lack of skilled health care workers and services that they provide. This has resulted in healthcare workforces not adequately prepared to meet their communities’ needs in a crisis.”

Representatives from Nepal’s Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) highlighted their respective preparedness plans, workforce response and strategies to facilitate emergency training among healthcare providers. Dr. G.D. Thakur, Director of the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), provided the opening keynote speech, along with Dr. Kevin Allyn Rushing, the USAID Mission Director.

Civilian and military participants from India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka also presented on their respective countries’ preparedness plans at the workshop, which will focus on best practices and lessons learned. The goal was to build the resilience of communities in the region during disasters and enable them to recover on their own.

Other participants include representatives from the Nepal Red Cross, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the region, including International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, Operation Smile, the International Medical Corps and the Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), also shared their perspectives at the event.

COE-DMHA, which is based in Hawaii, USA, plans to hold similar follow-on workshops in Indonesia and Fiji later this year to focus on the regions of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific respectively.

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The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA) was established by the US Congress in 1994 to facilitate civil-military management in international disaster management and humanitarian assistance. It partners with a wide variety of national and international governmental, non-governmental and international organizations to provide relevant education, training, coordination and research.

COE-DMHA, a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) organization, is a direct reporting unit to the US military's Pacific Command (USPACOM) in Hawaii, USA, and is establishing field offices at global Combatant Commands (COCOMs) to promote global disaster preparedness and resiliency. <http://www.coe-dmha.org>