



## NATIONAL ACTION AGENDA FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LEGAL PREPAREDNESS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and partners have issued the National Action Agenda for Public Health Legal Preparedness as a resource that public health officials, policy makers, and colleagues in related sectors may use in assessing and improving their jurisdictions' legal preparedness for public health emergencies.

Law plays an essential part in protecting the public's health. In the context of public health emergencies, law enables and undergirds the critical roles of public health, emergency management, law enforcement, health care, and other key sectors. CDC and 18 national, multidisciplinary partners convened the June 2007 National Summit on Public Health Legal Preparedness to assess public health emergency legal preparedness, identify legal preparedness "best practices," and create a shared agenda for action to improve legal preparedness for public health emergencies of all kinds. The lead CDC units were the Public Health Law Program and the Coordinating Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response.

The summit was attended by 242 representatives from public health, emergency management, law enforcement, the judiciary, and other key sectors. Participants reviewed four papers reporting on the status of public health emergency legal preparedness and contributed to four "action" papers with options that organizations in those sectors can consider taking to improve legal preparedness.

The published action agenda contains all eight papers, addresses given at the summit, a forward jointly authored by Rear Admiral W. Craig Vanderwagen, MD, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by Tanja Popovic, MD, PhD, Chief Science Officer, CDC, and additional information. The action agenda, and steps to implement it, will be presented and discussed in meetings of the summit partner organizations beginning in 2008.

The action agenda appears in volume 36 of the Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics, published by the non-profit American Society for Law, Medicine & Ethics (ASLME), a professional society that provides high-quality scholarship, debate, and critical thought to the community of professionals at the nexus of law, medicine, and ethics. The agenda is posted on the website of CDC's Public Health Law Program at [www.cdc.gov.phlp](http://www.cdc.gov.phlp) and at [www.aslme.org](http://www.aslme.org). ASLME will publish a paper edition in early 2008.

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