

# Currently in the Coalition

Updates from the Tampa Bay Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition—*February 2023*

## Health-Care Workers Struggle to Recall Emergency Codes

-Lauren Baggett, [UGA Today](#)

### Workers only matched code words to corresponding emergencies 44% of the time

A new study by University of Georgia researchers reveals that many health care workers cannot accurately identify emergency codes. Researchers tested the ability of health care staff to identify their facilities' codes. Having this knowledge front of mind is critical for responding quickly and appropriately to emergencies.

"Health care facilities have traditionally relied upon code-based notifications to quickly and efficiently alert employees to ongoing emergencies within or affecting the facility," said co-author Morgan Taylor, a doctoral student with UGA's College of Public Health.

Not all hospitals use color codes, but those that do, use separate code words for each emergency. For example, a "code blue" call is often used to alert all hospital staff that a patient's heart has unexpectedly stopped or that they've stopped breathing, and they need to be resuscitated.

However, there is no universal standard to assign certain codes to specific emergencies. Prior research in this area has shown significant variation among different hospital emergency code systems across the United States and internationally.

Taylor and her co-authors focused on the ability of clinical and non-clinical employees in five Georgia health care facilities to correctly identify their facility's emergency codes. They also assessed employees' opinions of emergency alert systems and determined individual factors that enabled more accurate identification of emergency codes.

The study surveyed 304 employees, testing them on codes for 14 emergencies. On average, participants could identify the correct emergency codes 44% of the time. Codes for fire, infant abduction and cardiac arrest were the most well known.

"The results of our study suggest a prompt response to such incidents is likely to be poor, as most employees were unaware of the meanings or actions of these notifications," said Taylor.

On top of that, many participants reported that the codes were only introduced at orientation, and they had little training on them.

"Codes are often confusing because we do not use or practice them regularly. It is unreasonable to assume that staff will retain the knowledge they receive during orientation, disaster simulations, or once-a-year in-service reminders," said Curt Harris, director of the Institute for Disaster Management and lead investigator of the study.

*Article continued on page 2....*



Tampa Bay Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition

Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk & Sumter Counties

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### Upcoming Coalition Meetings

**Pinellas CHAMP:**

February 3rd

**Hardee County ESF-8**

**Working Group:**

February 9th

**Pasco County Health**

**& Medical Coalition:**

February 13th

**Sumter County ESF-8**

**Working Group:**

February 16th

**Citrus County ESF-8**

**Working Group:**

February 22nd

**Polk County ESF-8 Health &**

**Medical Coalition:**

February 23rd

*For more info on attending these meetings, please reach out to the County Chairperson. Contact info is available on [our website](#).*

There is evidence to suggest that transitioning from color codes to plain language reduces employee confusion and training time. Employees in the current study expressed concerns that a plain language system would cause extreme panic and fear for visitors and patients. “We know plain language communications reduce bystander panic and confusion. Our study highlights the continued need for effective training and education that helps translate this research into practice,” she said.

The paper, “[Breaking the Code: Considerations for Effectively Disseminating Mass Notifications in Healthcare Settings](#),” was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

In 2002, the Florida Hospital Association (FHA) recommended [standardized color codes](#). In 2014, FHA recommended a combined color and plain language code system. FHA’s plain language codes are similar to Missouri’s ‘Category + Alert + Location + Directions’ plain language alert model. FHA makes similar recommendations to those of the Missouri Hospital Association on when overhead paging vs. silent notification is appropriate. The document includes a detailed implementation strategy checklist, education materials and sample hospital policy. The recommended color codes are:

<b>RED</b>	Fire	<b>PINK</b>	Infant/Child Abduction
<b>BLUE</b>	Medical Emergency	<b>BLACK</b>	Bomb
<b>ORANGE</b>	Hazardous Materials	<b>GREEN</b>	EOP Activation
<b>GRAY</b>	Need for Security Personnel		

Plain language overhead codes are recommended for the following situations, incidents:

- Active shooter, armed violent intruder;
- Hostage situation;
- Facility evacuation;
- Plant facility system alert (e.g., generator failure, etc.)

## Important Info & Updates

### 2023 Coalition Project Funding Process & Timeline

It’s that time of the year again—Preparedness Project Funding Time! This is an opportunity for our HCC members to look back over their past experiences and lessons learned to develop projects. These projects will request funding to assist in closing identified gaps or areas for improvement within the healthcare sector, organization, county, or region. What does your facility, organization, or agency need to close those gaps and enhance your existing or create new capabilities? Projects can include training/education or physical assets.

This year the timeframe has moved up in comparison to previous years, to better align with our state and federal budgetary requirements. All project submissions will due to TBHMPC (Regional Coalition) by Friday, April 14th. Your individual county representatives typically like to have projects submitted to them two weeks prior. We will discuss exact dates at each county level meeting, but two weeks is a timeframe for planning purposes.

To be eligible to apply for project funding your organization must have a current Memorandum of Agreement on file with the Coalition, and a minimum participation rate of 50% in your respective county meetings. The updated project application form and guidance documents can be found [on our website](#). You will be prompted to login to the members portal to download these documents.

TBHMPC wants to see you successful in your submissions, so we will host technical assistance / project writing workshops via zoom in both February and March. The workshop schedule is as follows (click on the date below to register):

- [Tuesday, February 21st at 1:00pm](#)
- [Wednesday, March 15th at 10:00am](#)

Of course, we will also be available to assist you at any time, by simply contacting us.

Happy Project Writing!



## Upcoming Trainings & Events

### 2023 TBHMPC Great Tornado Drill

The TBHMPC Great Tornado Drill will take place on Wednesday, February 8th at 10am. This drill will allow you to test your organization's severe weather/shelter-in-place plans and have discussions regarding response actions for a tornado scenario. All Coalition members are welcome to participate. [More info & register here.](#)

### 2023 Hazards & Healthcare

Hazards and Healthcare is the region's annual health care preparedness conference, attended by hundreds of health care professionals and first responders. Each year the planning team strives to bring the most pertinent and relevant information, lessons learned, preparedness exhibitors, and community partners to support our front line and first responder community. This is the only conference designed for this community, with a focus on enhancing preparedness efforts at the local level. This year's conference will take place on March 23rd & 24th at the Sheraton Brandon Tampa Hotel.

The theme for this year's conference is Resiliency through Preparedness. For more information on speakers, please visit our [website](#). [Register here today!](#)



## 2023 HAZARDS & HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE

Resiliency through Preparedness



The Tampa Bay health and medical community invites you to the 2023 Hazards & Healthcare Conference. This year's theme and agenda – Resiliency through Preparedness – will share best practices from experts in the fields of healthcare administration and disaster recovery.

CEUs will also be available for licensed professionals. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

**For more information, please visit:**  
[TampaBayHMPC.org/hazards-healthcare](https://TampaBayHMPC.org/hazards-healthcare)

**Presented by:**



**March 23 - 24, 2023**

**Sheraton Tampa Brandon Hotel**  
10221 Princess Palm Ave, Tampa, FL 33610

### Tickets

- Early Bird Workshop & Conference: \$125
- Workshop & Conference: \$150
- Conference Day Only: \$100
- Student Conference Day: \$75

**REGISTER HERE**

**Questions? Please contact:**  
[Franklin.Riddle@TampaBayHMPC.org](mailto:Franklin.Riddle@TampaBayHMPC.org)

## Hospital First Receiver Decontamination Instructor Certification Course

The Coalition is partnering with HotZoneUSA to offer a 24-hour **First Receiver Decontamination Instructor Certification Course** for acute care hospitals at St. Joseph's Hospital (Main) in Tampa on February 28th – March 2nd. This training will allow each facility to have a certified, qualified individual on staff to set up, train, and sustain their decontamination programs and teams. [Register Here.](#)



## 2023 Plugged In Series: Climate Change

The next webinar in our **2023 Plugged In Speaker Series** will take place on Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm on **Climate Change & Its Effects** with **Eric Alberts**, Senior Director, Emergency Management with Orlando Health. After this webinar, attendees will have a much better understanding of all things Climate Change, including what is and why it's important, what the environmental consequences of climate change are, if it is already here, if it affects our health, how it impacts animals, what we could expect in the future, what is being said and what is being done about climate change, and lastly what WE can do about it! We hope you will join us – [Register here.](#)

A promotional poster for a webinar. At the top left is the Tampa Bay Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition logo. The main title is "THE 2023 PLUGGED IN SERIES PRESENTS CLIMATE CHANGE & ITS EFFECTS". A circular portrait of Eric Alberts is on the right. Below the title is a list of topics to be covered. At the bottom, it says "Thursday, February 16th at 1:00pm via Zoom" and "Register here." with a link to the registration page. The footer includes "QUESTIONS? CONTACT HUNTER.ZAGER@TAMPABAYHMPC.ORG".

Tampa Bay Health & Medical Preparedness Coalition  
THE 2023 PLUGGED IN SERIES PRESENTS  
**CLIMATE CHANGE & ITS EFFECTS**  
WITH ERIC ALBERTS  
SENIOR DIRECTOR,  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
ORLANDO HEALTH  
Learn more about:  
• What climate change is & why it's important  
• What the environmental & health consequences of climate change are  
• What is being said & done about it  
• What we could expect in the future  
• What we can do about climate change.  
Thursday, February 16th at 1:00pm  
via Zoom  
[Register here.](#)  
QUESTIONS? CONTACT  
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## 2023 Plugged In Series: Mental Fitness

In January's Plugged In webinar, Loree Draude covered the concept of Mental Fitness and shared tools that you can use to help improve your resilience. **Recording:** <https://youtu.be/2s5rO-GvjOs> (Available until February 19th, 2023 only.) Discover Your Saboteurs with this Assessment - <https://www.positiveintelligence.com/saboteurs/>

## Radiological & Nuclear Emergency Webinar Series

The Southern Regional Disaster Response System is hosting a series of webinars focusing on Healthcare and Public Health Planning for a Radiological/Nuclear Emergency in partnership with the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT), the Association of Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Professionals (AHEPP), Radiation Injury Treatment Network (RITN), and the Region 4 Poison Control Center Collaboration (R4PC3). The topic of the Webinar #3 is **Prehospital Setting and Community Reception Centers: Pearls of Wisdom for Safe and Assessment of Victims of a Radiological Emergency** and will be held on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> from 3pm – 4pm EST. [You can register here.](#) [Recordings of the previous two webinars in the series are available [on the SRDRS website.](#)]

## Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Development Series

The next webinar in the IPC Development Series is coming up on Tuesday, February 21st at 1:30pm. The series will cover **Environmental Cleaning & Disinfection** – [Register here.](#) This Zoom webinar will be presented by Jacqueline Whitaker, RN, MS, CPHRM, CPHQ, CIC, FAPIC. Jackie is the Infection Prevention & Control Education Specialist for the Florida Department of Health in the greater Tampa Bay region.



## KCER & ESRD National Emergency Exercise

The Kidney Community Emergency Response (KCER) Program and End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Networks 7, 8, 13, and 14 invite you to participate in the 2023 KCER National Exercise on February 22, 2023.

This two-hour virtual event on February 22, 2023, from 2:00 – 4:00 P.M. EST. will include a table-top exercise and short after-action review session focused on how the Networks and KCER, along with the dialysis community, respond to an emergency or disaster.

Join the exercise [via WebEx HERE.](#)

Meeting number (access code): 2337 649 2222

Meeting password: Drill

Join by phone: 1-415-655-0003 (United States Toll)



Kidney Community  
Emergency Response

## CISA Active Shooter Preparedness Webinar

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Region 4 is hosting a two-hour **Active Shooter Preparedness** webinar to enhance your organization's resilience in case of an active shooter incident on Wednesday, March 8th at 1pm EST. These webinars fill up quickly so if you are interested, please register now! Registration is live at this time and the limit is 350 participants. An additional 50 will be placed on a waitlist to be contacted the week prior and will have 5 days to register at that time. [Register here.](#)



## Free Webinars from All Clear Emergency Management Group

- **An Introduction to the Incident Command System** on Thursday, February 23rd at 4pm EST. Join All Clear Emergency Management Group to better understand the practical implementation of the Incident Command System in a healthcare setting. This webinar will provide healthcare organizations of all sizes and experience levels with a few tools to advance their emergency preparedness and response capabilities. [Register here.](#)
- **An Introduction to the Incident Action Planning** on Tuesday, March 14th at 2pm EST. The incident action planning process and IAPs are central to managing incidents. The incident action planning process helps synchronize operations and ensure that they support your organization's incident objectives. Join All Clear as we discuss why incident action planning is more than producing an IAP and completing forms. [Register here.](#)

## Emergency Management Training

Here are upcoming EM trainings available for registration on [SERT TRAC](#).

- [February 7th—9th](#) or March 1st—3rd (in [Lecanto](#) and [Tampa](#)) or [March 21st—23rd](#)—**G-300: Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents** at the Polk County Emergency Operations Center in Winter Haven OR at the Citrus County Emergency Operations Center in Lecanto OR at the Hillsborough County Emergency Operations Center in Tampa OR the Pinellas County Public Safety Complex in Largo.
- [February 14th & 15th](#)—**MGT-319: Medical Countermeasures: Points of Dispensing (POD), Planning and Response** at the Pasco County Emergency Operations Center in New Port Richey.
- [February 21st—24th](#)—**L-962: NIMS All Hazards Planning Section Chief** at the Manatee County Emergency Operations Center in Bradenton.
- [February 27th—March 1st](#)—**G-2300: Intermediate Emergency Operations Center Functions** at the Pinellas County Public Safety Complex in Largo.
- [February 28th—March 2nd](#)—**G-141: Instructional Presentation and Evaluation Skills** at the Manatee County Emergency Operations Center in Bradenton.
- [March 8th—10th](#)—**L0105: Public Information Basics** at the Pinellas County Public Safety Complex in Largo.
- [March 13th—16th](#)—**L-965: NIMS All Hazards Resource and Mobilization Unit Leaders** at the Pasco County Emergency Operations Center in New Port Richey.
- [March 27th & 28th](#)—**G-400: Advanced Incident Command System Command & General Staff: Complex Incidents** at the Pasco County Emergency Operations Center in New Port Richey.
- [March 27th—31st](#)—**L-449: Incident Command System (ICS) Curricula: Train-the-Trainer** at the Manatee County Emergency Operations Center in Bradenton.

**Save the date for the Coalition's Region-wide Mass Casualty Exercise**

**April 27th, 2023 from 9am—Noon.**

This exercise will allow healthcare facilities and agencies to exercise their emergency plans and incident management teams in the face of a utility outage scenario (with a cyber twist!). Look for a participation survey in your inbox later this month. (*Hospitals—Your survey was due last Friday. If you missed it, reach out to [Hunter.Zager@TampaBayHMPC.org](mailto:Hunter.Zager@TampaBayHMPC.org) ASAP.*)

### TBHMPC at the FEPA Annual Meeting in Orlando

Last week, Coalition members and partners from across the region joined Executive Director Franklin Riddle at the Annual Meeting of the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association in Orlando. Congratulations to Vicki Buchanan for receiving her FPEM-HC Certification and to Krista Ditoro and Krysta Johnes for their FAEM Certification! For more information on these certifications and future FEPA events, check out the [FEPA website](#).



### HCA Florida Healthcare

One of the ways in which we show up for our Florida communities is by supporting local food banks, pantries and soup kitchens. Throughout the year, our colleagues help provide food to families in need by volunteering their time and contributing financially to organizations dedicated to fighting food insecurity.

Several of our colleagues continued to show up for those in need by participating in HCA Healthcare's Healthy Food for Healthier Tomorrows Food and Nutrition Drive. They collected canned goods and monetary donations over the course of a month. Some even competed in a creative food sculpture contest for the chance to win a grant to the local food bank of their choice.

Out of all the contestants nationwide, **HCA Florida Citrus Hospital** took third place for their sculpture of a backpack made of jelly and earned \$15,000 in grants for their local food bank. The backpack symbolized their collection efforts to provide jelly for the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches going to children in their community for weekly “blessings in a backpack.”

Congratulations to our colleagues at Citrus Hospital, and big thanks to all who participated! Check out some of the top creative food structures from some of our other HCA Florida Healthcare hospitals!

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3Wq1uns>



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**We want to hear from you!** If you would like to share a highlight or from your organization in a future Coalition newsletter or publication, please email it to Turea at [TBHMPC2@gmail.com](mailto:TBHMPC2@gmail.com).