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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA OPERATIONAL AREA COVID-19 AFTER-ACTION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



INTRODUCTIONS

Katie Freeman

- Lead for COVID-19 After-Action Report.
- Led efforts to collect and analyze information specific to the response to the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow.
- Previously led development of the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill After-Action Report.



AGENDA

- 1 Critical Considerations
- 2 Process Overview
- 3 After-Action Report Organization
- 4 Successes & Enhancements
- 5 Primary Areas for Improvement & Recommendations
- 6 Questions & Discussion

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Focus of Report is the County's response:
 - Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation Period (March 2020 – May 2021);
 - County Continuity of Operations (COOP).
- Report aligns with California Code of Regulations Title 19. Public Safety Division, 2. Office of Emergency Services, Chapter 1. Standardized Emergency Management System, Article 8. After-Action Reports.
- Recognize that as of June 2022 COVID-19 Pandemic continues:
 - Public Health Department (PHD) Response and County support.
 - Community Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing.
- PHD will write and present a separate After-Action Report (AAR) focused on:
 - PHD and the Department Operations Center (DOC);
 - Health Care Coordination; and
 - PHD Field Response.



PROCESS OVERVIEW

Review of Relevant Documentation

- a. Situation Status Reports
- b. Other response documentation.



Interviews

- a. Focus groups across areas of analysis.
- b. One-on-one interviews with response and executive leadership.



Two Surveys

- a. EOC response.
- b. County COOP.



Report Writing & Revision

- a. December 2021 through March 2022



AFTER-ACTION REPORT ORGANIZATION

- Document Handling Instructions
 - Executive Summary
 - Introduction
 - Findings and Analysis
 - Conclusion
 - Appendix A: Improvement Plan
 - Appendix B: Surveys
 - Appendix C: Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Findings and Analysis
 - Overall
 - Emergency Operations Center Functions
 - Emergency Operations Center/Department Operations Center Coordination
 - Operational Area Coordination
 - Public Information Management
 - Community and Business Recovery Coordination
 - Continuity



TIMELINE OF EVENTS (1 OF 3)



JAN 30 | 2020

- World Health Organization Declares Novel COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern



FEB 6

- County COOP Planning Initiated



MAR 12

- County Activates EOC to Level 3
- County Issues Health Officer Order for Social Distancing
- County Issues Local Emergency Proclamation
- County Issues Local Public Health Emergency Declaration



MAR 22

- President Donald Trump Declares Major Disaster Declaration FEMA-4482-DR-CA
- County Initiates Daily Press Conferences for COVID-19
- Joint Information Center Launches <https://recoverysbc.org> for Community and Business Recovery Information



MAR 19

- Governor Newsom Issues Executive Order N-33-20 for Stay-at-Home Order



MAR 15

- First Confirmed Positive Case of COVID-19 in County



MAR 23

- County Escalates EOC to the Highest Level



APRIL 20

- Project Roomkey South Opens to Provide Non-Congregate Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness



APRIL 28

- County Establishes Reopening in Safe Environment (RISE) Task Force



TIMELINE OF EVENTS (2 OF 3)



MAY 4

- First Wave Case Peak



MAY 5

- California Public Health Department and County Open Community Testing Site in Santa Maria – Fairpark



MAY 18

- County Releases RISE Guide



AUG 28

- RISE Ambassador Program Launches
Governor Newsom Debuts the Blueprint for a Safer Economy; County in Purple Tier



DEC 6

- Regional Stay-At-Home Order Goes into Effect for County and Region Due to Intensive Care Unit Capacities Declining Below 15%



DEC 3

- County EOC Initiates Recurring COVID-19 Partners Vaccination Planning Workshop



OCT 13

- County Schools are Allowed to Reopen



SEPT 29

- County Advances to California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy Red Tier



DEC 8

- Board of Supervisors Approves Amendment of County Code Chapter 2B to Permit Outdoor Dining Areas



DEC 14

- The First Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine are Administered in California
- COVID-19 Cases Peak in County of Santa Barbara



JAN 1 | 2021

- PHD Activates a Mobile Testing Option



TIMELINE OF EVENTS (3 OF 3)



JAN 5

- PHD Vaccination Point of Dispensing Operations Begin



JAN 10

- Second Wave Case Peak



JAN 15

- County Begins Vaccinations for People Aged 75+



JAN 21

- County Vaccination Call Center Expands



JAN 25

- Governor Newsom Lifts both the Regional and Limited Stay at Home Orders for California



FEB 16

- PHD Declares Individuals Aged 65+ Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine



APRIL 15

- Vaccination Expands to Ages 16+



APRIL 1

- Vaccination Expands to Ages 50+



MAR 17

- County Transitions to California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy Red Tier



MAR 5

- Vaccination Expands to Eligible Sectors: Emergency Services, Agriculture and Food Service, and any Remaining Phase IA Health Care Workers



APRIL 21

- County Transitions to California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy Orange Tier
- County EOC Demobilization Efforts Start



MAY 28

- County Deactivates EOC Call Center
- County EOC Transitions to Remote Operations
- County Joint Information Center transitions to the PHD DOC



Ongoing Response Activities Outside of EOC



557,238+

Hours Dedicated to
COVID-19 Response Efforts



2,205

County Personnel
Involved in COVID-19 Response



24,225,455+

Pounds of Food
Distributed by the Foodbank of
Santa Barbara County



323

Personnel Engaged in
Emergency Operations Center



22

Departments Involved
in COVID-19 Response



98

COVID-19 Press
Conferences Held by the County



This represents a fraction of the efforts of the County and partners across the OA to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data current as of August 30, 2021.



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Successes and Enhancements



DEDICATED STAFFING

Strengths

- Creation of Human Resources (HR) Liaison Position in EOC.
- HR Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Job Matching Portal:
 - Internal & External.
 - California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Award.

Enhancements

- Provide resources to address employee burnout and mental health during incident response activations. (Finding 1.6)
- Strengthen volunteer management capabilities to support response operations. (Findings 4.4, 4.5)

COVID-19 Response

EOC Days Operational: 442

County Staff Hours: 557,238
(between Jan 2020-Aug 2021)

Thomas Fire & I/9 Debris Flow

EOC Days Operational: 43

County Staff Hours: 18,904



PUBLIC INFORMATION

Strengths

- Training of employees to conduct press conferences and briefings.
- Consistent outreach materials were available in English and Spanish.
- Executing 98+ press briefings, majority in English and Spanish (As of August 30, 2021).

Enhancements

- Continue to build and enhance the County's public information functions, including personnel and technological capabilities. (Findings 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6)
- Enhance and deepen the County's communications capabilities for all populations. (Findings 5.3, 5.4)



CALL CENTER

Strengths

- Built upon framework from previous activations in a challenging environment.
- Peak volume of 400 calls per day and a total of 46,418 calls.

Highest Number of Operators on Shift	22
County Staff Reassigned	95
MRC Personnel Assigned	6
Non-County Mutual Aid Staff	5
Total Staffing	106

CALL CENTER (CONTINUED)

2020
Mar 12 – April 11, May 1 – Aug 21

8,292 Calls

2021
Jan 12 – May 28

38,126 Calls

Calls for Spanish Speakers*

6,472 Calls

TOTAL:

46,418 Calls

2020
Operations Days

106 Days

2021
Operational Days

129 Days

TOTAL:

235 Days

*This statistic is believed to be significantly undercounted.



COST RECOVERY

Strengths

- Effectively activated cost recovery functions early in the incident.
- Continually worked to ensure alignment with changing State and federal recovery programs.
- Established new workgroups/partnerships when new funding streams became available to ensure communication, collaboration, and prioritization within and across grant dollars.

Enhancements

- Memorialize and enhance planning to support cost recovery. (Findings 1.4, 1.9)
- Ensure purchasing authorities are clearly documented to streamline process and limit risk. (Findings 1.9, 1.10, 7.1)





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Primary Areas for Improvement & Recommendations



COMMAND & CONTROL

Area for Improvement

- Varying command structures over the course of the response resulted in confusion, duplication of effort, and inefficiencies. (Timeline on Page 37)
- Incident organization and management for COVID-19 response is not aligned to current plans, compounding inefficiencies.
 - Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) concepts have been used to great effect by the County but are not formalized.

Recommendations

- Memorialize leadership structures and organizational concepts, such as MACs, including incident adaptive policies. (Findings 1.5, 1.11)
- Ensure documentation associated with decision-making structures is maintained and shared between leadership models. (Findings 1.5, 1.12, 2,4)
- Codify and formalize purchasing authorities to support leadership structures. (Findings 1.9, 1.10)

CHAPTER 12, SBC CODE OF ORDINANCES, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Area for Improvement

- Utilized (and modified as needed) several other response and recovery structures:
 - Each of these structures were reviewed between the County Executive Officer and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors.
 - Joint Decision-Making Authority (JDA) and JDA Policy Group longest standing structure (Finding 1.5, 1.11).
- Current County Code lacks specificity on roles, requirements, and delegations of authority for some positions and structures.

Recommendations

- Revisit and revise Chapter 12 with consideration for roles, responsibilities, advisory bodies, and requirements for activation. (Finding 1.11)



DISASTER SERVICE WORKERS

Area for Improvement

- Response required coordination between EOC, DOC, and numerous field-based locations.
- Nature of the incident (geography & time) required extensive staffing.
- Anxiety or misperception of what some work entailed lead to hesitancy or refusal to fulfill some needs.
- DSW concepts were not always consistently enforced.

Recommendations

- Ensure County personnel understand and are ready to fulfill roles as DSWs. (Finding 1.7)
- Provide training to develop depth of EOC/response staffing capability and reinforce DSW concepts. (Findings 1.7, 2.6, 7.5)

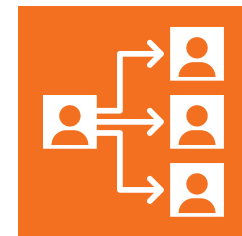
ADDITIONAL SUCCESSES

Effective Engagement with OA Partners

- OA Partners collaborated effectively via OA Liaison and resource sharing (Finding 4.2)
- City of Santa Barbara provided volunteer management capability (Finding 4.2, 4.4)
- Education and Enforcement Task Force successfully engaged all enforcement agencies (Finding 1.2)

Support and Tools Provided for Business Community

- The RISE Guide and Ambassador Program provided an effective mechanism for engagement and compliance (Finding 6.1, 6.4, 6.5)
- Changes to County Code (Chapter 28B) provided pathways for local businesses to remain operational (Finding 6.1)





Q&A

