



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Ranks High on 2013 Health Security Preparedness Index



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BURLINGTON – Vermont scored above the national average in five of six categories of a new **National Health Security Preparedness Index** that measures a state's ability to protect public health in the event of epidemics, foodborne disease outbreaks, terrorism and other emergencies.

Overall, Vermont scored 7.7 out of 10 points, compared to the national average of 7.2. States were rated on 128 measures from 35 data sources, including the United Health Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The index results are not intended for ranking states, according to the report, because states face varying threats and should apply common preparedness principles in locally relevant ways.

Administered by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the index shows strengths and challenges in health surveillance, incident and information management, countermeasure management, community planning and engagement, surge management, and Emergency Medical Services.

“Preparedness is an ongoing process and we have steadily built our capacity to respond to a public health threat along with key partners in emergency response in every corner of the state,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “This is a responsibility we take very seriously, and these national reports are helpful in showing us areas that may need additional work.”

Vermont earned a perfect score in several measures, including the ability to manage and dispense emergency drug supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile, and for its emergency public information and communication plans.

An area where Vermont scored low was managing volunteers during emergencies (1.9 points compared to the national average of 3.7).

To view the report visit: <http://www.nhspi.org/>. For information on public health preparedness in Vermont, go to: http://healthvermont.gov/e_ready.aspx.

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