



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Department Receives High Marks for Preparedness

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory received high marks for its ability to detect biological and chemical agents during exercises and tests conducted in 2010 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Office of Public Health Preparedness.

The Health Department Laboratory received a score of 100 percent on its ability to detect disease-causing bacteria using advanced DNA tests, and passed proficiency tests to rapidly detect chemical agents sent as blind samples from the CDC, according to a report released today.

The CDC's 2011 State-By-State Update Report on Preparedness and Response Activities tracks continued improvements to the nation's capability to respond to a public health threat. The report describes laboratory capabilities and response readiness planning.

"The Health Department has a highly skilled staff and I am proud of the dedication they showed after Tropical Storm Irene," said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. "The CDC scores are encouraging, but we also understand that emergency preparedness is ongoing, and there is always more that we can do."

Vermont achieved an overall score of 98 out of 100 for its ability to receive, distribute and dispense large quantities of medicine, vaccines and medical supplies from the CDC in the event of an emergency through the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) program. Vermont's SNS plan (designed by the Health Department with state partners) was successfully employed by the Vermont National Guard and pushed supplies into towns in need after Tropical Storm Irene.

Burlington and South Burlington, that have been part of the CDC's Cities Readiness Initiative since 2007, received a score of 95 out of 100 for 2009-2010.

For a copy of the full report visit <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/pubs-links/2011/>

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