

Delaware General Health District
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NEWS RELEASE

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND CONFERENCE PREPARES FOR MASS FATALITY INCIDENTS

P.O. Box 570 1-3 W. Winter St. Delaware OH 43015
740-368-1700 FAX 740-368-1736 Web Site: www.delawarehealth.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

DELAWARE, Oh., Sept. 3, 2009 – Ohio Public Health and Hospital leaders, coroners, funeral directors, and emergency responders gathered this week to prepare for unthinkable disasters.

The Mass Fatality Planning 101 conference drew 135 participants to Worthington on Tuesday. They spent the day discussing what a community would need to do if hundreds of people were to die suddenly in a pandemic, a natural disaster, or a terrorist attack.

The first-of-its-kind conference in Ohio was sponsored by the Ohio Public Health Association (OPHA). Delaware General Health District Registrar Pam Shears organized the conference in her role as OPHA's Vital Statistics section chair.

The day was spent discussing numerous aspects of preparations for mass fatality incidents. Topics included identifying, storing, and disposing of large numbers of bodies, registering deaths, determining causes of death, and contacting surviving family members. Speakers included specialists from the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Hospital Association, the Ohio Funeral Directors Association, and the Ohio Coroners Association.

Conference participants included Emergency Medical Service workers, Red Cross representatives, Vital Statistics registrars, local health commissioners, hospital representatives, funeral directors, and county coroners.