

STATE OF COLORADO

Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor
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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee

BACKGROUND

- House Bill 00-1077 created the Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee, effective March 2000.
- The 22-member committee was established to serve in an advisory capacity to the Governor in the event of an emergency epidemic caused by bioterrorism, pandemic influenza or novel and highly fatal infectious agents or biological toxins.
- The committee's first responsibility, as outlined in 24-32-2104(8)(a) C.R.S., was to develop by July 1, 2001, a supplement to the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan, which was approved and distributed in June 2001.
- The supplement details the public health actions that would be taken in response to emergency epidemics, defined as cases of illness or adverse health conditions, communicable or non-communicable, caused by bioterrorism, pandemic influenza or novel and highly fatal infectious agents or biological toxins.
- The committee's role in an emergency epidemic is to assess all available information and to make recommendations to the Governor.

FACTS

- The Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee is one component of the department's five-part approach to public health preparedness. The five components are:
 1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public health preparedness and Health Resources and Services Administration grants
 2. Bioterrorism legislation
 3. Experience gained in exercises and drills
 4. Colorado Board of Health regulations
 5. Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee
- **Committee Activation and Functions**
 - **Activation.** In the event of an emergency epidemic that has been declared a disaster emergency by the Governor, the committee will convene as rapidly as possible and as often as necessary. The GEEERC will advise the Governor, who shall act by executive order, regarding reasonable and appropriate measures to reduce or prevent spread of the disease, agent or toxin and to protect the public health.

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- **Functions.** The committee’s three primary functions are:
 1. To develop a supplement to the State Disaster Plan for responding to a bioterrorist incident.
 2. To review available data in an event, and if it finds there is an emergency epidemic, to advise the Governor to declare a disaster emergency.
 3. To advise the Governor on measures to reduce or prevent the spread of disease in the event of a public health emergency. Such measures may include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Procuring or taking supplies of medicines and vaccines;
 - ✓ Ordering physicians and hospitals to transfer or cease admission of patients or perform medical examinations of persons;
 - ✓ Isolating or quarantining persons or property;
 - ✓ Determining whether to seize, destroy or decontaminate property or objects that may threaten the public health;
 - ✓ Determining how to safely dispose of corpses and infectious waste;
 - ✓ Assessing the adequacy and potential contamination of food and water supplies;
 - ✓ Providing mental health support to affected persons; and
 - ✓ Informing the citizens of the state how to protect themselves, what actions are being taken to control the epidemic and when the epidemic is over.

- **Priorities**

- Protecting human life (highest priority).
- Controlling the further spread of disease.
- Meeting the immediate emergency needs of people, specifically medical services, shelter, food, water and sanitation.
- Restoring and continuing operations of facilities and services essential to the health, safety and welfare of people and the environment.
- Preserving evidence for law enforcement investigations and prosecutions.

- **Committee Membership**

- The executive director of the Department of Public Health and Environment serves as chair.
- The committee includes 19 voting members and three ex officio, non-voting members. They are:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive director, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 2. Chief medical officer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 3. Chief public information officer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 4. Emergency response coordinator, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 5. State epidemiologist, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 6. Colorado attorney general or designee 7. President, Colorado Board of Health or designee 8. President, Colorado Medical Society or designee 9. President, Colorado Health and Hospital Association 10. Colorado state veterinarian 11. Director, Colorado Office of Emergency Management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. A physician who specializes in infectious diseases 13. A physician who specializes in emergency medicine 14. A medical examiner 15. A specialist in post-traumatic stress management 16. A director of a local public health department 17. A hospital infection control practitioner 18. A wildlife disease specialist from the Colorado Division of Wildlife 19. A pharmacist member of the Colorado Board of Pharmacy 20. State adjutant general (ex officio) 21. Executive director, Colorado Department of Public Safety (ex officio) 22. American Red Cross representative (ex officio)
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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