

## APPENDIX 3 COMMUNICATION

### I. AGENCIES

Primary Agency	Supporting Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Johnson County Health Department (JCHD)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Johnson County Emergency Communications Center (JCECC)</li><li>Johnson County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (JCEMHS)</li><li>Johnson County Environmental Department (JCED)</li><li>Johnson County Information Technology Services (JCITS)</li><li>Johnson County Manager's Office (JCMO)</li><li>Johnson County Medical Action (Med-Act)</li><li>Johnson County Mental Health (JCMH)</li><li>Johnson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO)</li><li>Regional/Local Public Health Public Information Officers (PHPIO)</li><li>City Law Enforcement</li></ul>

### II. INTRODUCTION

Emergency and non-emergency communication is the attempt by communication professionals to provide information that allows an individual, stakeholders, or an entire community to make the best possible decisions about their well-being. This appendix will be used for all public health emergencies including, but not limited to, mass dispensing operations, disease outbreaks, or acts of bioterrorism (BT).

### III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this appendix is to put into effect policies and procedures for coordinating internal and external communications during a public health emergency, and provide an outline of roles and responsibilities for immediate information dissemination during a public health emergency or incident. This document contains all information necessary to manage communications.

This document is to serve as a frame of reference and guide:

- For strategically planning for a potential public health emergency or incident and offering preventive information;
- For effectively building relationships within Johnson County Health Department (JCHD) and with other organizations that will become essential in a time of emergency or crisis;

- For chain of command communication;
- For developing public messages, establishing representation, and outlining standards for dissemination of information;
- To address the public's questions and concerns and provide potential plans of action determined by JCHD;
- To increase public confidence by providing timely, accurate, credible, and pertinent information;
- To meet the needs of the news media;
- To meet the needs of partners and stakeholders; and
- To coordinate with other federal, state, and local agencies involved in responding and providing both information and care to the public.

This appendix has been developed by JCHD in conjunction with, and in support of, the Biological Incident Annex (BIA) of the Johnson County Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). JCHD will maintain and update this appendix at least annually, or as needed. Change to this appendix will be documented on the "Record of Review and Update," found at the front of the BIA.

This appendix and its attachments provide guidance for disseminating information to the public through any outlet available. It covers the operational responsibilities and concepts in dealing with communications on a day-to-day basis, as well as in a public health emergency or disaster.

#### **IV. SCOPE**

#### **V. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **A. Information Coordination:**

- A public health emergency or incident could be a multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional occurrence requiring broad interagency planning and response approaches, and cooperative partnerships between the federal, state, and local governments.
- Since multiple agencies will be involved, JCHD will establish a communication team, consisting of the lead PIO, two Risk Communicators, and other staff as needed, in order to accomplish the mission of consistent information dissemination/monitoring.
- All information will be coordinated by the communication team and released to the media by the lead PIO.
- Joint Information System (JIS) procedures can and may supersede communication processes outlined in this document.
- Coordination with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is essential.

## **B. Information Dissemination:**

- Communication staff is available to respond in a public health emergency or incident.
- If power is out, a generator will be available to provide electricity at the Olathe and Mission offices.
- Special populations shall have access to alternate forms of information communication.
- Appropriate staff of JCHD must be trained on media and communication topics, on a regular basis, to be properly prepared to respond in a public health emergency or incident.

## **VI. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

### **A. Command and Control**

In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements, JCHD uses the Incident Command System (ICS) (*Attachment 1 - ICS Command and General Staff*).

JCHD has a designated Public Information Officer (PIO) with the back-up being Risk Communicator I and the second back-up being Risk Communicator II (*Attachment A – Johnson County Public Information ICS & Contact Info*).

### **B. Communication**

#### Communication personnel:

- Develop a communication plan to make the most effective use of communication equipment and facilities assigned to the incident;
- Install and test all communication equipment;
- Distribute and recover communication equipment assigned to incident personnel; and
- Maintain communication equipment.

#### Available Communication Systems:

#### **Health Alert Network (HAN)**

The Health Alert Network (HAN) is a system of informing local public health agencies when there is an event of significance in Johnson County. JCHD will activate a phone tree that alerts all local public health agencies in the region of the event. Those jurisdictions can then step up surveillance in their area or offer assistance to the originating jurisdiction (*Attachment E – Health Alert Network Flowchart* and *Attachment \_\_\_\_ - Regional Health Alert Network Flowchart*). The HAN is tested quarterly.

**Public Health Information eXchange (PHIX)**

The Public Health Information eXchange (PHIX) is the system that fulfills the partner communications and alerting function of the Kansas Health Alert Network (HAN). PHIX provides a secure web-based communication system designed to facilitate the rapid exchange of information between KDHE and public health partners throughout the state. The lead PIO would use the system to post press releases and other information of interest statewide. Key JCHD staff are registered users of PHIX. Authorized users can access PHIX at <https://phix.kdhe.state.ks.us>.

**WebEOC**

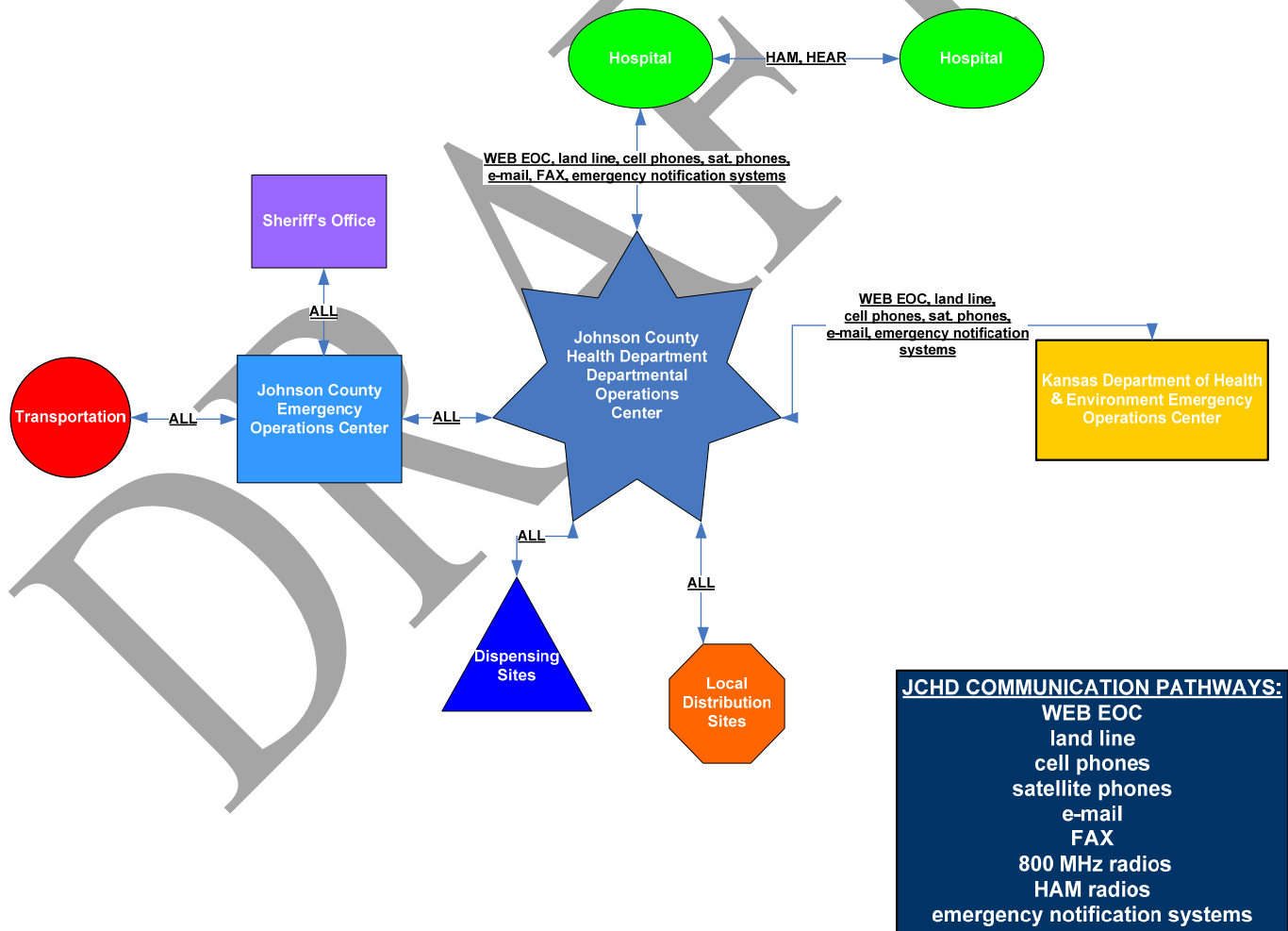
WebEOC is a statewide emergency management communication system used to manage information and resource requests during Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations (actual or exercises). It can be used for reporting and tracking health data during a public health emergency or incident. Johnson County utilizes a local server with redundant back-ups and has posting access to regional and state message boards (*Attachment \_\_\_\_ - WebEOC Redundant Server Access*). WebEOC is used to post press releases, fact sheets and any other information given to the public. It is also a way to communicate with other departments and agencies.

**EMSystem**

EMSystem is a Web-based communications tool that is utilized by all Kansas City metropolitan hospitals, including those in Johnson County. This system allows facilities to share bed availability and diversion status with other users statewide. EMSystem is tied directly into regional mass casualty incident (MCI) patient tracking and has a primary function during an MCI. Detailed information regarding the use of EMSystem has been distributed to participating hospitals. EMSystem is used to post press releases and other information of interest region wide and is tested at least quarterly.

Communication Pathways

Each of these communication pathways are tested and documented at least quarterly. HAM radios are tested by Johnson County Emergency Management every Monday evening. Land-lines, cell phones, email, WebEOC, and fax are used daily in both the Johnson County Health Department and Johnson County Emergency Management offices.



**C. Inventory**

JCHD has developed an inventory control system to record:

- a. Purchased communication devices;
- b. Relevant equipment information;
- c. Equipment service providers;
- d. Accessories;
- e. Location of quick reference guides;
- f. Location of equipment manuals;
- g. Test dates and results;
- h. Trained equipment users; and
- i. Assignment of communication devices to users

#### **D. Alert and Notification**

In the event of a public health emergency or incident, the JCHD PIO will make necessary notifications, coordinate with staff, make media contact, and gather resources necessary to perform their duties within 48 hours of verification of the emergency or incident (*Attachment F – JCHD PIO Checklist – First 48 Hours*). Media contact lists are kept electronically at JCHD (*G:\EXCHANGE\Bioterrorism Program\SECURE FOLDER\Planning and Ops>Contact lists*).

In the event of a public health emergency, the JCHD Health Administrator will contact local and county government officials and state officials according to the call down roster (*Attachment C - Johnson County Emergency Call Down Roster*). The JCHD Health Administrator will notify government leaders within Johnson County with information concerning current response efforts and recommendations from the health department. Whenever possible, the PIO will enlist JCEMHS to assist in notifying affected entities through the appropriate chain of command. Communication is made regionally through the HAN (*Attachments, Attachment E – HAN Flow Chart*).

The community-wide communication systems (i.e. blast fax, email, etc.) and local HAN will serve as the primary notification systems in Johnson County.

#### **E. Duty Officer Phone**

The duty officer phone allows 24/7 availability of JCHD staff to JCEMHS, Med-Act, hospitals and other entities during a disease outbreak or in a public health emergency or incident (*Attachment \_\_\_\_ - Duty Officer Phone Description and Protocol*).

#### **F. Special Populations**

Efforts have been made to ensure that special populations in Johnson County are notified as promptly as the general public. Special needs service providers within Johnson County are offered training in regard to disseminating information to their clientele when a public health emergency or incident occurs. Studies and strategies are currently under development for special populations both at the local and regional level.

Non- English speaking:

The Health Department has a contract in place with a translation service to translate information for non-English speaking individuals. Translation from English to 150 other languages is offered. As these documents are constantly being updated, no translated copies are available for review.

Other populations:

The Johnson County Health Department will work with the translation service, the Kansas State School for the Deaf, local school districts and Johnson County Developmental Services to create/translate and help disseminate information for their populations.

## **G. Dispensing and Vaccination Education**

In the event that dispensing operations are initiated, the Public Health Emergency Program would contact a local printing company to reproduce printed materials for each dispensing site. These materials may include, but are not limited to, medication and/or vaccination information sheets, registration forms, and frequently asked questions (FAQ) handouts. Upon completion of printing, the materials would be delivered to JCHD Olathe office for distribution Site Public Information Officer, as necessary.

All recipients will receive an FAQ or information sheet handout regarding the disease and medications and/or vaccinations (if any). If a recipient is unable to read the handout, a reader or interpreter will be available. If the recipient has further questions a number will also be provided on the handout for the recipient to call for more information (*Attachment under development*).

## **H. Media Relations**

### **a. Procedures**

- Authorized news media representatives shall have reasonable access to the PIO, Risk Communicators, the Health Director, or designee, and operations of JCHD as governed by this appendix.
- JCHD recognizes authorized identification from all local, national, and international news organizations.
- Public information shall be released to the media as promptly as circumstances allow, in an objective and impartial manner.
- Public information may be provided to media representatives by phone if the identity of the representative is known. Media Contact lists are kept electronically at JCHD.
- The JCHD Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for notifying the PIO of newsworthy events or incidents and should be available to the PIO at all times.

### **b. Dispensing**

In a media release, explain the dispensing process and what citizens can do to be prepared before arriving at the dispensing site (*Attachment in development*). Also,

provide the public with questions they will need to be able to answer prior to receiving post-exposure prophylaxis or vaccination (*Attachments in development*).

If necessary, the PIO will set up a media staging area located away from the dispensing location(s) (*Attachment in development*). If a Joint Information Center (JIC) has been established, activities at the staging area will be coordinated with the JIC (*Attachment \_\_\_ - County PIO Protocols*). The PIO will schedule regular news briefings about operations (*Attachment in development*). Media will not be allowed access to dispensing operations without approval of PIO and Incident Commander.

i. Public Inquiries/Phone Banks

Telephone hotlines/phone banks will be utilized in a dispensing event to manage recipient questions and receive adverse medication event reports. Medication information sheets and frequently asked question (FAQs) sheets will have the phone bank number included in the event a member of the public has additional questions or concerns. Voiceover Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology will be used to create a phone bank. Johnson County Information Technology specialists will be utilized to set up a phone bank, if needed.

c. Media Releases and Statements

During a public health emergency, the PIO will coordinate with other affected entities and KDHE to release news statements to the media on a regular basis to ensure that the public is informed of events as they occur, and to coordinate messages to the greatest extent (*Attachment \_\_\_ - Regional Media Release Protocol*). The goal is to get an initial news statement to the media within one hour of the PIO being notified of the public health emergency or incident.

Public health emergency or incident topics should be thoroughly developed and authorized prior to the event. Some releases, especially those that deal with administration policy, will be authorized by the County Manager's Office (CMO). Established county processes will be utilized in developing and implementing emergency policy changes in relation to a public health emergency or incident. This includes pandemic influenza/communicable disease policies that have been developed in coordination with pertinent county agencies and are on file with the Human Resources Department.

d. Media Release Authorization

Media release authorization should follow the media release authorization protocol (*Attachment \_\_\_ - Media Release Authorization Protocol*).

e. JCHD may use the following tools to relay information during a crisis:

- Telephone, with calls made to media, JCHD and partners/stakeholders;
- Telephone bank;
- E-mail, using prepared media, and partner/stakeholder lists and list-serves;
- Fax, with capability of using pre-programmed broadcast fax lists on a fax computer and a separate (redundant) fax machine (lists on electronic file

- including media contact list);
- Partner newsletters and distribution lists;
- JCHD public and media materials, such as fact sheets, health alerts, press releases, pre-approved message maps, and backgrounders;
- Face-to-face contact, including media briefings and community meetings; and
- JCHD websites, partner/stakeholder websites, and media websites.

All technical devices are tested regularly to ensure equipment is operating properly and at full capacity.

## VII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Johnson County Health Department will:

#### PIO and Risk Communicator Functions and Responsibilities

- Provide overall direction and policy.
- Provide public information and education.
- Assist media personnel with media coverage considered routine as well as reports relating to a public health emergencies or incidents.
- Assist the news media on an on-call basis.
- Prepare and distribute news releases.
- Arrange for, and assist at news conferences relating to public health emergencies or incidents.
- Brief subject matter experts (SMEs), IC, and Health Director for media interviews.
- Assist during crisis situations within the agency.
- Review press releases prepared prior to dissemination to the media.
- Provide communications centers (i.e. Joint Information Center (JIC)), and other persons that may be tasked with dissemination of press releases, with up-to-date listing (including fax number or e-mail address) of media outlets in their area of operation.
- Provide updates to community partners as emergencies occur.

### B. Johnson County Emergency Communications Center (JCECC) will:

- Acquire and maintain 800 MHz radios.

### C. Johnson County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (JCEMHS) will:

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Provide technical information during the event.
- Make phone bank available, as needed.

### D. Johnson County Environmental Department (JCED) will:

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Providing technical information during the event.
- Provide other assistance as necessary.

**E. Johnson County Information Technology Services (JCITS) will:**

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Provide technical support for laptop computers and other equipment.

**F. Johnson County Manager's Office (JCMO) will:**

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Approve public information pieces during a public health emergency or incident when appropriate.

**G. Johnson County Medical Action (Med-Act) will:**

- Provide technical information during a public health emergency or incident.

**H. Johnson County Mental Health (JCMH) will:**

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Provide technical information during the event.
- Work with community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations to determine the types of psychological and social support services and training courses available in their jurisdictions.

**I. Johnson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) will:**

- Upon notification, notify their specific staff.
- Coordinate and authorize the release of information about victims, witnesses, and suspects relating to a public health emergency or incident.

**J. Regional Local Public Health Public Information Officers will:**

- Provide support to lead PIO and Risk Communicators.

**K. City Law Enforcement**

- Upon notification by the appropriate agency, notify their specific staff.
- Provide other assistance as necessary to PIO and Risk Communicators.

## VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

Refer to *BIA Section VI Administration and Support*

## IX. AUTHORITIES

Refer to *BIA Section VII Authorities*

## X. ACRONYM/ TERM DEFINITION LIST