



Article Title

Straining the System: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Preparedness for Concomitant Disasters.

Citation

By: Smith, Nathaniel; Fraser, Michael. American Journal of Public Health.

Abstract

An editorial on the COVID-19 pandemic is presented. It mentions the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in dealing with this epidemic as well as future events, the international collaboration on research regarding previous epidemics, and what people can learn from the COVID-19 outbreak.

Summary

Responding to these diseases at their source, rather than awaiting their arrival on our shores, is the best and most prudent public health approach. CDC teams and state and territorial health officials work closely with world health experts in various countries overseas. The CDC embeds staff in, or partners with, ministries of health in more than 60 countries as well as in most state and territorial health departments and many tribal, county, and city public health agencies. Increasing the number of CDC public health advisors and technical specialists who can work side-by-side with staff in ministries of health and other governmental public health agencies means a higher likelihood of detecting threats and preventing a disease's spread.

Imagine a scenario that involves having to effectively respond to a severe influenza season, control multiple domestic outbreaks of hepatitis, respond to the health impacts of an earthquake, prepare for severe weather emergencies, and prevent the spread of a novel coronavirus, simultaneously. Indeed, that is not a scenario: it is where we are today. As public health leaders, health officials take the responsibilities of preventing disease and protecting the health of the nation extremely seriously. Governmental public health agencies share a unique and important mission: they work to keep America healthy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Outbreaks like the COVID-19 are critical reminders of the significance of public health readiness and the need for continued strengthening of public health agencies' core response capabilities. COVID-19 also reminds us of the importance of realizing the CDC's bold promise to all Americans with adequate investments in the governmental public health system.