

Disaster Epidemiology Special Interest Group Safe States Alliance*

Safe States has recommended that each state and territory establish and maintain expertise in disaster epidemiology and disaster injury prevention and mitigation.¹ In keeping with this recommendation, the Disaster Epidemiology Special Interest Group (SIG) has been developed within Safe States to focus on injury epidemiology issues related to disasters. The scope of interest is the use of injury epidemiology tools and approaches in disaster settings to gain improved epidemiologic insights for public health action.

The Disaster Epidemiology SIG (presently composed of 17 members in 9 states) is self-directed with projects and activities decided by the members. This SIG provides a forum for Safe States members with an interest in disaster epidemiology to:

- Express ideas;
- Learn best practices;
- Contribute to expert discussions with peers and colleagues;
- Stay informed about current developments; and
- Build a network of professional contacts in the field.

Planned activities for October 2009 through September 2010 include:

- a) Distributing to members a web-based survey to learn more about their disaster epidemiology background, experience, and needs
- b) Posting disaster epidemiology tools and resources on the Safe States Exchange
- c) Determining how state injury programs are working with their public health preparedness programs
- d) Developing a strategy to learn what our partners in federal agencies (e.g., CDC –HSB, NCIPC) and associations (e.g., APHA, CSTE, NACCHO, SAVIR) are doing related to disaster epidemiology
- e) Exploring the possibility of sponsoring a presentation at the Annual Meeting or a webinar on disaster epidemiology for Safe States
- f) Developing a document that provides definitions of disaster and clarifies the roles of injury in disaster
- g) Developing a tool that obtains situational awareness and lessons learned on injury issues from states responding to disasters
- h) Hosting regular conference calls (with prepared agendas)

For more information, contact SIG chair, David Zane (Texas) at david.zane@dshs.state.tx.us or co-chair, Lisa VanderWerf-Hourigan (Florida) at Lisa_VanderWerf-Hourigan@doh.state.fl.us.

***Safe States Alliance (formerly STIPDA)** is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of professionals committed to strengthening the ability of state, territorial, and local health departments to reduce death and disability associated with injury and violence. Formed in 1993, it is the only national nonprofit organization comprised of public health injury professionals representing all U.S. states and territories.

¹ Safe States Alliance (formerly STIPDA) Resolution on Disaster Epidemiology and Injury Mitigation, October 2006, http://www.stipda.org/associations/5805/files/disaster_epi%202006.doc.pdf.