



## **Three Checklists for Self-Assessment of Legal Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies**

### **Threat and Response**

Immediately following the airliner and anthrax terrorist attacks of the autumn of 2001, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local public health leaders launched an unprecedented initiative to strengthen the public health system's preparedness for future terrorist acts, natural disasters, and other public health emergencies.

### **Legal Preparedness for Public Health Emergencies**

Legal preparedness is vital because many responses to disease epidemics and other potentially catastrophic events hinge on specific legal authority, for example, to administer vaccinations, implement quarantine measures, and dispatch health professionals across local, state and even international borders. At CDC's request, the *Center for Law and the Public's Health* published draft model legislation in December 2001 as a tool interested states could use in assessing their legal preparedness for public health emergencies.

### **Three New Checklists**

Recently, CDC, joined by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the National Association of County and City Health Officials, asked the *Center* to prepare additional tools public health agencies could use in assessing their legal preparedness. The *Center* published three checklists in response, focused on:

- Local public health emergency legal preparedness and response
- Interjurisdictional legal coordination, and
- Civil legal liability related to public health emergency response.

The *Center* developed the checklists through a deliberative process of legal research and consultation with public health officials. The checklists are organized according to the four phases of incident management in the National Response Plan and may be used by any public health agency in city, county, state, or tribal settings. All three checklists are in the public domain and may be accessed at [www.publichealthlaw.net/Resources/BTlaw.htm](http://www.publichealthlaw.net/Resources/BTlaw.htm)

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