

Tools for Recovery and Communicating Risks After Hurricane Katrina

Objectives of Today's Panel

- Describe the collaborative PEHSU response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (Debra Cherry, MD)
- Experience and feedback from a Gulf Coast pediatrician at Ground Zero (Scott Needle, MD)
- New tool: The NIEHS Hurricane Response Portal (Marie Lynn Miranda, PhD)
- Discussion

Disaster Strikes: Aug 29, 2005

- Over 354,000 Gulf Coast homes destroyed
- Over 200 sewage treatment plants and 140 oil and gas platforms damaged
- Rampant mold growth
- Mountains of debris
- Widespread demolition/reconstruction projects
- Residents in temporary housing

Tyler: The closest PEHSU



Tyler, TX to New Orleans:
424 miles

In Katrina's Wake...

- "This is the mother of all multidisciplinary problems" – John McLachlan, Tulane/Xavier Research Scientist*
- "The public health community must articulate key health issues, keep the message simple and focused, and develop effective strategies to provide targeted timely results" – Kellogg Schwab, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*
- *Lessons Learned, In Katrina's Wake, EHP 114 (1): Jan 2006, pg A39

The Hazards



MOLD, DEBRIS, SLUDGE, MUD



CHILDREN: RETURNING TOO SOON

Joint Documents and Recommendations

- NYC, Atlanta, and Tyler PEHSUs
 - Clinician recommendations for return of children to previously flooded and/or hurricane impacted areas
- EPA: Siobhan McNally (Boston PSR), Martha Berger, Michael Shannon
 - Tip Sheets for Parents – Mold, sludge
 - Environmental Questionnaire for Clinicians
- More Recently - Poor indoor air quality in FEMA trailers
 - Formaldehyde fact sheet

Sample Call: Sludge, Sep 2005

A mother of three children, ages 8, 4, and 3 months, called about moving back to her home that had standing water for 3 weeks and sludge contaminants from an oil refinery spill. The refinery offered to remove the soil from her yard and sludge from her home.



Photo: Clip art from Power Point

Sample Call: Formaldehyde, July 2007

A mother called SWCPEH regarding her 6 y/o daughter with a nasal polyp and nosebleeds several times per month. She and her daughter have been living in a FEMA



"My home"; www.fematrailersong.com

trailer in the New Orleans area since Katrina (almost 2 years as of July). The girl has no known allergies, and the problems started in the last year. Mom wants to know if this could be related to formaldehyde.

Summary: SWCPEH/PEHSU Network Hurricane Response

- Prepared guidelines for returning children to previously flooded areas
- Prepared fact sheets and questionnaires in conjunction with EPA, PSR
- Answered calls from concerned parents