

The Health Alert Network (HAN)

A bioterrorist attack, like other health threats, would be detected first at the local level. Health departments throughout the nation must be prepared to detect and respond to those threats.

- The Health Alert Network (HAN) is a nationwide program to establish the communications, information, distance-learning, and organizational infrastructure for a new level of defense against health threats, including the possibility of bioterrorism.
- The HAN will link local health departments to one another and to other organizations critical for preparedness and response: community first-responders, hospital and private laboratories, state health departments, CDC, and other federal agencies
- CDC is leading development of the HAN, in partnership with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), and other health organizations.

Facts about the HAN system

- High-speed, continuous, secure connection to the Internet, access to public health information, and front-line staff skilled in the use of electronic information and communications technology;
- Distance-learning capacity, via satellite- and Web-based technologies, for continuous upgrading of skills in preparedness for bioterrorism and other health threats;
- Early warning systems, such as broadcast fax, to alert local, state and federal authorities and the media about urgent health threats and about the necessary prevention and response actions; and
- Enable local health officials nationwide to instantaneously access and share disease reports, response plans, and CDC diagnostic and treatment guidelines;
- Strengthen local health departments and their links to critical community health organizations, such as hospitals, laboratories, Emergency Medical Systems (EMS), and clinicians, that need to form a coordinated public health response to bioterrorism.
- Enable local, state, and federal health authorities to communicate and coordinate rapidly and securely with each other and with law enforcement agencies.