



# County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **HEALTH OFFICIALS TRAIN AT CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS**

A delegation of 17 health care and administrative officials from across Santa Cruz County have graduated from a weeklong healthcare crisis training offered by the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Ala., one of the nation's preeminent law enforcement and public health training facilities.

Operating out of Noble Training Facility, a former working hospital now dedicated to training healthcare professionals in disaster preparedness and response, representatives from the County of Santa Cruz, Dignity Health Dominican Hospital, Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, Santa Cruz Community Health Centers and the Santa Cruz County Medical Society conducted real-time exercises using more than 100 live actors to learn how to better respond to a local health care crisis, be it a viral outbreak or terrorist attack.

“The opportunity to learn together, as a group, was crucial,” said Rosemary Anderson, Emergency Services Manager for the County of Santa Cruz. “It was a luxury to be able to train side-by-side with the same people with whom you will be working if and when an actual crisis hits the County. This helps ensure a better coordinated response and recovery in the future.”

Santa Cruz County students joined with students from across the country to staff a hospital emergency operations center, public health emergency operations center, and emergency room as trainers directed exercises with more than 200 “injects,” or situations for emergency, public health, medical, public information and other personnel to identify, assess and address during an unfolding crisis. In addition to extensive classroom time, the delegation trained with scenarios that included an explosion at a chemical plant and a smallpox outbreak.



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“The information provided, and the opportunity to participate in exercises which included multiple crises occurring simultaneously, allowed us to work as a team, strategize and use critical thinking skills,” said Anita Alvarez, Santa Cruz County’s Director of Nursing. “These exercises also illustrated the importance of coordination and collaboration with multiple agencies to effectively respond and manage crisis events. I learned a lot and have benefitted from this experience.”

Under direction of the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency, the CDP develops and delivers advanced training for emergency response providers, emergency managers, and other government officials from state, local and tribal governments. The CDP offers more than 40 training courses focusing on incident management, mass casualty response, and emergency response to a catastrophic natural disaster or terrorist act. Training at the CDP campus is federally funded at no cost to state, local, and tribal emergency response professionals or their agency.

Healthcare officials and first responders participating in CDP training gain critical skills and confidence to respond effectively to local incidents or potential crises.

Information about CDP training programs can be found at <http://cdp.dhs.gov>. The Santa Cruz County Office of Emergency Service can be found at <http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/default.aspx?tabid=3251>.

Photos available upon request.