

WELCOME NOTES

by

STEPHEN WILLIAMS

- On behalf of the City of Houston Health and Human Services Department, I welcome you to our Whole Community, Pandemic, All-Hazards Preparedness Summit. We have a very extensive and interesting program for you today, which will not only be thought-provoking but also informative and useful.
- The mission of the Health and Human Services Department is to work in partnership with the community to promote and protect the health and social well-being of Houstonians. As such, the focus of our conference today is to build community resilience, and we hope this conference will be a critical step in maximizing community participation, so all Houstonians are prepared.
- We are interested in sharing with you our strategies and plans for public health emergencies in the community. For example, during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, our strategy to vaccinate certain at risk populations first changed based on the fact different populations were shown to be more susceptible than the groups previously identified. Our response included coordinated school closures to limit the spread of the H1N1 as well as administering the vaccine to at-risk populations once it was available and encouraging and promoting good hygiene such as covering your cough and frequent hand washing.
- The purpose of this Summit is to inform, update and promote understanding about various aspects of all hazards preparedness and response among community based stakeholders. The summit will include updates on pandemic influenza, revised emergency response plans and how national, state, county and local entities work together during a public health emergency.
- I trust you will enjoy the day. This is an interactive process and you will have an opportunity to dialogue with the presenters. However, if you don't get to ask your questions, please write them down, as we still want to address them. We will make every effort to answer your questions and concerns after the Summit is over.
- Finally, remember September is National Preparedness Month. We hope all of you have taken our recommendations seriously and that you "Have a plan, build a kit, stay informed and know your neighbors."

Thank you.