

Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management (OPEM) Communications

The Health and Homeland Alert Network (HHAN) exists as a browser-based email and telephony alerting system. The MA Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management has integrated devices at Massachusetts hospitals, community health centers, long-term care facilities, ambulance services, public safety organizations, fire services, state police, local emergency planning and response offices, local boards of health and key health and human services agencies into the HHAN in specialized emergency contact groups. The HHAN team facilitates an interactive design process and needs analyses with end-users and developers. This has resulted in a stable, streamlined and intuitive system with high usability and satisfaction rates across many health and public safety disciplines. There are approximately 10,000 active HHAN users and the system continues to grow each year.

HHAN Alerts are tailored to organized, purpose-directed groups (e.g. Longterm Care, Hospitals) that can have thousands of members. In an emergency such as a large winter storm, hurricane, seasonal spring flooding, influenza or tornadoes, DPH and our public safety partners, including the MA Emergency Management Agency, send direction via this alerting system to public health and safety partners.

OPEM Listservs are email distribution lists that provide communications redundancy and are also tailored to organized, purpose-directed groups. The listservs cover a broader audience than the HHAN groups. Information that should be widely disseminated is pushed out via these lists. One of OPEM's largest listservs is the Situational Awareness DPH Incidents and Events List which includes @6,000 users from long term care, home health, hospitals, EMS, local boards of health, and community health centers, statewide. MEMA Situational Awareness Statements regarding inclement weather are sent to this list. In addition, OPEM maintains a physician's list and list for other licensed health professionals, including nurses. The health professionals' lists contain @230,000 users.

HHAN Origin

- Developed by Department of Public Health and Children's Hospital Informatics Program.
- Built to be Massachusetts' Health Alert Network – for Local Health and Hospitals
- Now many organizations in Commonwealth use the HHAN including MEMA and Public Safety.
- HHAN users are key emergency response staff (typically 2-3 per organization)

What is the "HHAN"?

- Internet Browser-based Alerting Application
- The HHAN sends email and telephone notifications to purpose-organized groups of users.
- The HHAN can also send alerts to an uploaded spreadsheet.
- The HHAN will track confirmation of receipt of these notifications.

Listservs

- Email distribution lists maintained by OPEM
- Broad audience and facilities can add all that they believe should receive situational awareness and general information
- Information to be widely distributed
- Ease of sending attachments without having to log into the HHAN
- May be used for communications redundancy during a large scale event
- System tracks successful email transmissions by user.

Levels of OPEM Communications

<p>Communications Severity Level</p>	<p>Communications Guidelines</p>	<p>Communications Examples</p>
<p>Extreme 1. HHAN 2. Backup - Listservs optional for redundant communications</p>	<p>Alerts sent when DPH possesses information pertinent to future, current and/or ongoing situations involving significant risk to life and/or property. Extreme alerts will not be used during any type of drill or exercise.</p> <p><i>*Extreme alerts require immediate action by the recipient during a real-time emergency/event.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Evacuation • Closed ED • Power Outage • Bed Counts for Mass Casualties • State of Emergency Declared for Aerial Spraying • Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) Activation • H₂O Boil Order – affected community • Tornado Touchdown
<p>Severe 1. HHAN 2. Backup - Listservs optional for redundant communications</p>	<p>Alerts sent when DPH possesses information pertinent to future, current, and/or ongoing situations that involve significant risk to life or property. Severe level alerts may be used in announced and unannounced drills and exercises when a response or action is expected.</p> <p><i>*Severe alerts require action by the recipient during a real-time emergency/event.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Facility Evacuation • Evacuation Drills • Closed Services • Bed Counts for real-time emergencies and for larger exercises and drills • EEE or WNV confirmation • Tornado Touchdown or Warning

<p>Moderate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HHAN 2. Backup - Listservs optional for redundant communications 	<p>Alerts germane to the regular duties of the alerted role and its users. Moderate level alerts may be used for announced and unannounced drills and exercises which may require a response from the user.</p> <p>*Moderate alerts do not require immediate action by the recipient, but may require near future action due to an emergent situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Bed Count Drill • Off Hours Conference Call Reminders due to weather or emergent situation • Confirmation of WNV or EEE virus in bird or mosquito in a neighboring town
<p>Minor</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listservs 2. Backup - HHAN (work email only) optional for redundant communications. 	<p>Communications germane to the regular duties of the alerted role and its users. Communication is for situational awareness or dissemination of routine information.</p> <p>*Minor alerts require no action by the user and are for situational awareness only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEMA Weather Situational Awareness • Informing Local Health re: Surveillance Updates • Weather Updates • CDC Health Advisory • Updates to the Arbovirus Website • FYI information • Public Health Fact Sheets • DHCQ Circular Letters • Conference Call Reminders during business hours