

## *CHAIN Membership*

As a CHAIN member you would receive public health information that is timely, as well as pertinent to you and the needs of your agency or organization. You may receive an alert which may require the immediate attention of your agency or an advisory, update, general information or press release where you and your organization are kept informed about the latest public health events that are happening at the global, national, state or local level.

A public health emergency can arise ANYWHERE, at ANYTIME.

The most immediate and often greatest impact of a public health emergency would be experienced at the LOCAL level.

The Mercer County CHAIN has grown tremendously over a year and there are currently 1000 contacts and the numbers have been rising rapidly and these contacts belong to one or more of the 40 Han Alert Network categories and over 100 subcategories.

### *Mercer LINCS Mission*

To prevent and protect the health and safety of the Mercer County residents during a natural or man made emergency through comprehensive planning, surveillance, developed partnerships as well as by promptly disseminating vital information by modern communication means.

## *Mission Statement of the Mercer County Division of Public Health*

The Mercer County Division of Public Health is dedicated to a safe environment through the leadership in public health, comprehensive planning, development of proactive community partnerships and responding to disasters, acts of bioterrorism as well as to prevent and control the spread of disease.

## *The Mercer County Division of Public Health*

The Mercer County Division of Public Health is a designated Local Information and Communications Network System (LINCS) agency of New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

The Division also provides environmental health services specifically, education and outreach, compliance and enforcement of state health laws pertaining to air, noise, solid waste, water, Haz-Mat and school laboratory management and is recognized as the lead agency for the Mercer County by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) under the County Environmental Health Act (CEHA). The Division is, also, recognized as the lead agency for the Right to Know (RTK) program by the NJDEP and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS).

Mercer County  
Division of Public Health

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## MERCER COUNTY DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Brian M. Hughes, County Executive

### Mercer LINCS Agency

Local  
Information  
Network  
Communications  
System

Community  
Health  
Alert  
Information  
Network



**LINCS  
INFORMS THE  
CHAIN**

# MERCER COUNTY DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## New Jersey Local Information Network and Communications System (NJLINCS) and the Health Alert Network (HAN)

NJLINCS was established at the statewide level as an expansion of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiative known as HAN. The HAN is a nationwide communication, information and training system designed to support the linkages between federal, state, county and local partner's public health in response to public health events and environmental health issues. Since its inception in 1999, NJLINCS/HAN has developed into a centralized coordinated computer system for responding to acts of bioterrorism, infectious disease outbreaks, and other public health threats.

The NJLINCS/HAN utilizes the latest technologies such as on-line information exchange, electronic conferencing, broadcast fax, communicator NXT, and other telecommunication mechanisms to provide 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and 365 days per year public health surveillance and communication capability. By using the latest communication systems available, the goal of the NJLINCS is to be able to significantly decrease information dissemination time, increase the number of key recipients of important public health information, and reduce the response time to prevent and protect public health.

Mercer LINCS Agency is one of the 22 designated lead agencies for the New Jersey Local Information Network Communications System (NJLINCS) for bioterrorism, public health emergency preparedness, response planning, education and outreach and training. The other vital aspects of the agency includes the countywide disease surveillance and efficiently disseminating information to community partners through the Community Health Alert and Information Network (CHAIN).

## *Mercer County LINCS and CHAIN*

Mercer County Local Information Network and Communications System (LINCS) creates Community Health Alert Information Network (CHAIN) which serves as the primary means of disseminating public health information (alerts, advisories, updates, information and press releases) by sharing on a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year with the community partners throughout the county thus, protecting the health and safety of county's estimated 365,271 residents.

Mercer County LINCS and CHAIN provide the following public health services
Preparedness planning and assessment with the government agencies and other CHAIN partners
Conduct surveillance activities to quickly identify potential health threats of the disease
Effective protocol for reporting incidents and sharing information
Health education and training opportunities for health professionals
Participate in the New Jersey's Immunization Information System
Volunteer opportunities under the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program

## *What are LINCS and CHAIN?*

An early warning system using broadcast, fax and e-mail communications to alert local, county, state and federal authorities and the media about urgent health threats and the necessary prevention and response actions

Enables local health officials statewide to instantaneously access and share disease reports, response plans, and the CDC diagnostic and treatment guidelines

Strengthens 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

Enables local, county, state, and federal health authorities to communicate and coordinate rapidly and securely with each other and also, with the law enforcement agencies

Distance-learning capability, via satellite and web-based technologies, for continuous upgrading of skills in preparedness pertaining to bioterrorism and other public health threats

Access to electronic public health information with secure internet connections

**Mercer County  
Division of Public Health**

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