

## FACT SHEET: PILOT PROJECT HEALTH SYSTEMS & SERVICES RESEARCH

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite advocacy on a grassroots level, there is a paucity of research on preparedness and emergency communications in, for and by the deaf community. The goal of this research project is to improve the ability of first responders to work effectively with this population, with the aim of improving the capacity of deaf and hard-of-hearing (Deaf/HH) people and their ability to prepare for and respond to not only large-scale public health disasters but smaller-scale emergencies on an individual level. This research is situated in light of HRA's current research on CBO capacity to deal with emergencies as well as the content analysis of state EOPs (Emergency Operations Plan) along with KI interviews of state officials for all fifty states and the territories to determine capacity on an institutional and governmental level to respond to the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing people during emergencies.

### SPECIFIC AIMS

The project will evaluate a training program for law enforcement personnel working with Deaf/HH domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, which will include collecting survey data and conducting a focus group after the trainings are completed. CART technology (Computer-Aided Real Time Transcription) as well as American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation will be used to facilitate communication and to ensure the reliability and validity of data collection. Transcripts from interviews and focus groups will be either imported into Atlas TI and analyzed or coded thematically.

Through a literature review, this project will also assess health literacy and emergency preparedness needs of the Deaf/HH as well as gaps in the emergency preparedness literature to determine the magnitude and scope of the problem.

#### **Primary Question:**

- How can we enhance communication access and maximize emergency preparedness and response capability for first responders working with the Deaf/HH community?
- How can first responders be trained to work more effectively with Deaf/HH people during emergencies?

#### **Secondary Questions:**

- What are the best practices for evaluating first-responder training workshops tailored to the needs of Deaf/HH?
- How can we leverage the communication creativity of people who are Deaf/HH so that it can improve preparedness communication for all populations, such as linguistic minorities and people with disabilities?

### RESEARCH TRANSLATION

This project will advance health systems research because understanding and responding to the needs of this population has enormous potential to improve emergency preparedness education and response for all populations, particularly the needs of linguistic minorities and people with disabilities. Given the complexity of emergency preparedness and response, first-responders can benefit from a greater understanding of barriers to access and the best ways to target preparedness messages for deaf individuals before emergency situations. Additionally, on a systemic level, governmental agencies, first responders and NGOs can benefit from the evaluation of a training program for first responders, which can lead to the development of best practices for first-responders to handle any communication barriers that may emerge after a disaster.

### INVESTIGATOR

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### PARTNERS

- Deaf Hope
- Alameda County Family Justice Center
- Oakland Police Department

### PROGRESS TO DATE

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained on December 17th, 2010 and pre-post survey and focus group instruments have been developed and pilot tested. Data will be collected at two training workshops which will take place this Spring or early Summer 2011.