

# Emergency Preparedness Ambassadors: Opportunities to Build Community Resilience by Engaging Health Department Employees in National Preparedness Month Activities

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## OBJECTIVES

- Familiarize state employees with public health emergency operations
- Increase state employee personal preparedness knowledge and their role during an emergency
- Identify gaps in emergency preparedness readiness and training among employees

## BACKGROUND

Health department employees are often recognized as a resource for health information among family and friends, and therefore are uniquely positioned to act as Emergency Preparedness Ambassadors. Health department resources tend to be directed towards educating the public and not health department staff. This can result in a lack of intra-departmental preparedness capacity and support to respond to emergencies. For this reason, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Office of Preparedness and Response (OPR) recognizes National Preparedness Month (NPM) by engaging and educating the department's own employees.

## METHODS

DHMH implemented a series of preparedness activities to engage staff, including but not limited to the following:

Activity	2015	2016
Preparedness Month Kick-Off Farmer's Market Table	✓	✓
Preparedness Tips via email and displayed on DHMH lobby monitors.	✓	✓
Weekly Preparedness Challenge	✓	✓
Social Media Campaign	✓	✓
DHMH-Wide Preparedness Day	✓	✓
Preparedness Stations (display tables)	✓	✓
Preparedness Themed Photo Booth	✓	✓
"Pledge to Prepare" Poster Signing	✓	✓
Point of Dispensing (POD) Exercise	✓	
Emergency Preparedness Forum		✓
Employee Survey	Paper	Electronic

While the overall NPM plan for 2015 and 2016 remained similar, main differences included:

- 2015 Point of Dispensing exercise vs. 2016 Preparedness Forum
- 2015 Employee paper-based survey vs. 2016 electronic survey
- 2016 Weekly Preparedness Challenge included a virtual scavenger hunt

### 2015 National Preparedness Month

**DHMH PREPAREDNESS CHALLENGE**

Are you ready for a challenge? Compete with your co-workers during Preparedness Month 2015 to complete weekly challenges and be entered to win a Free Emergency Supply Kit!!

See DHMH employee email or contact [amanda.driesse@maryland.gov](mailto:amanda.driesse@maryland.gov) for more details!

Brought to you by the DHMH Office of Preparedness & Response

**What can't DHMH Employees live without?**



**THE DHMH OFFICE OF PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PRESENTS PREPAREDNESS DAY**

**So you think you're prepared? Come to Preparedness Day and find out!**

- Compete with other DHMH offices by getting your co-workers to go through our emergency preparedness line!
- Get a FREE backpack or water bottle!!
- Learn how to be ready for any emergency!
- Sign the pledge to prepare!
- Get a photo taken at the preparedness themed photo booth!



### 2016 National Preparedness Month

**PREPAREDNESS CHALLENGE**

DHMH EMPLOYEES PROVE PREPAREDNESS WHEN CHALLENGED TO LOCATE AN AED, FIRST AID KIT, OR FIRE EXTINGUISHER AT THE WORK PLACE.

In-house Support Assisted System (ISAS) Tests

Division of Reimbursements

Office of Preparedness and Response


Minority Health and Health Disparities

**PREPAREDNESS TIPS**

- Create an emergency kit for your home and vehicle.
- Have enough food, water and medical supplies to last 3 to 5 days without aid from others.
- Keep a current list of the medications you are taking.
- Make a communication plan with family and friends in case you are separated.
- Fuel your car and review your evacuation plan and routes with your family.
- Be familiar with alerts, warnings and local emergency services.
- Keep important documents, both personal and financial, in a waterproof portable container.
- Keep food, water and medicine on hand for pets and make plans to ensure their safe shelter and care.

**SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**


ARE YOU READY?



**NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

During Emergencies:

- Keep phone lines open.
- Use social media to update family.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows how to text.



**DHMH Emergency Management Team Spotlight**

**Onyeka Anaeozie**

Deputy Director - Infectious Disease Prevention and Health Services Bureau

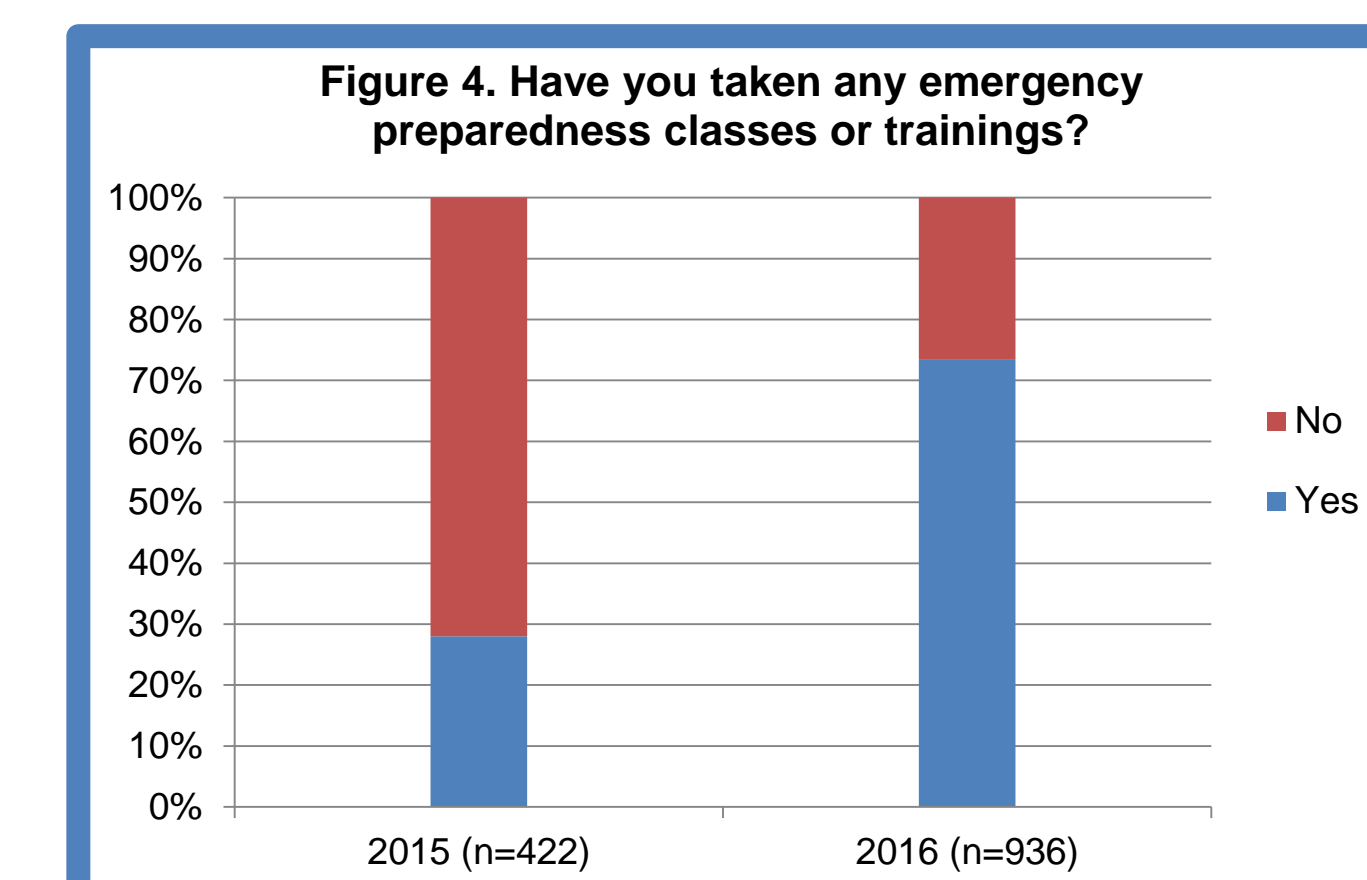
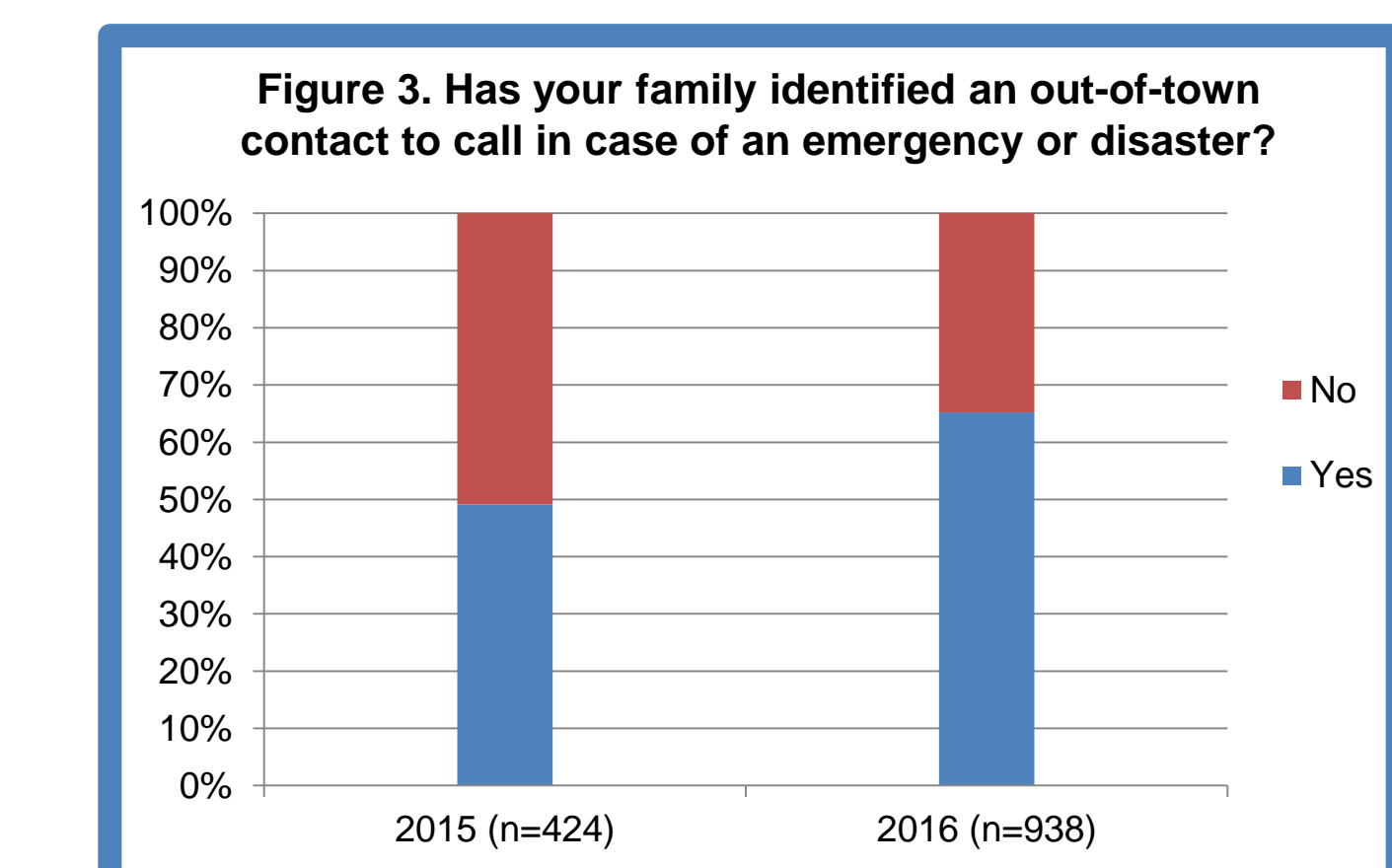
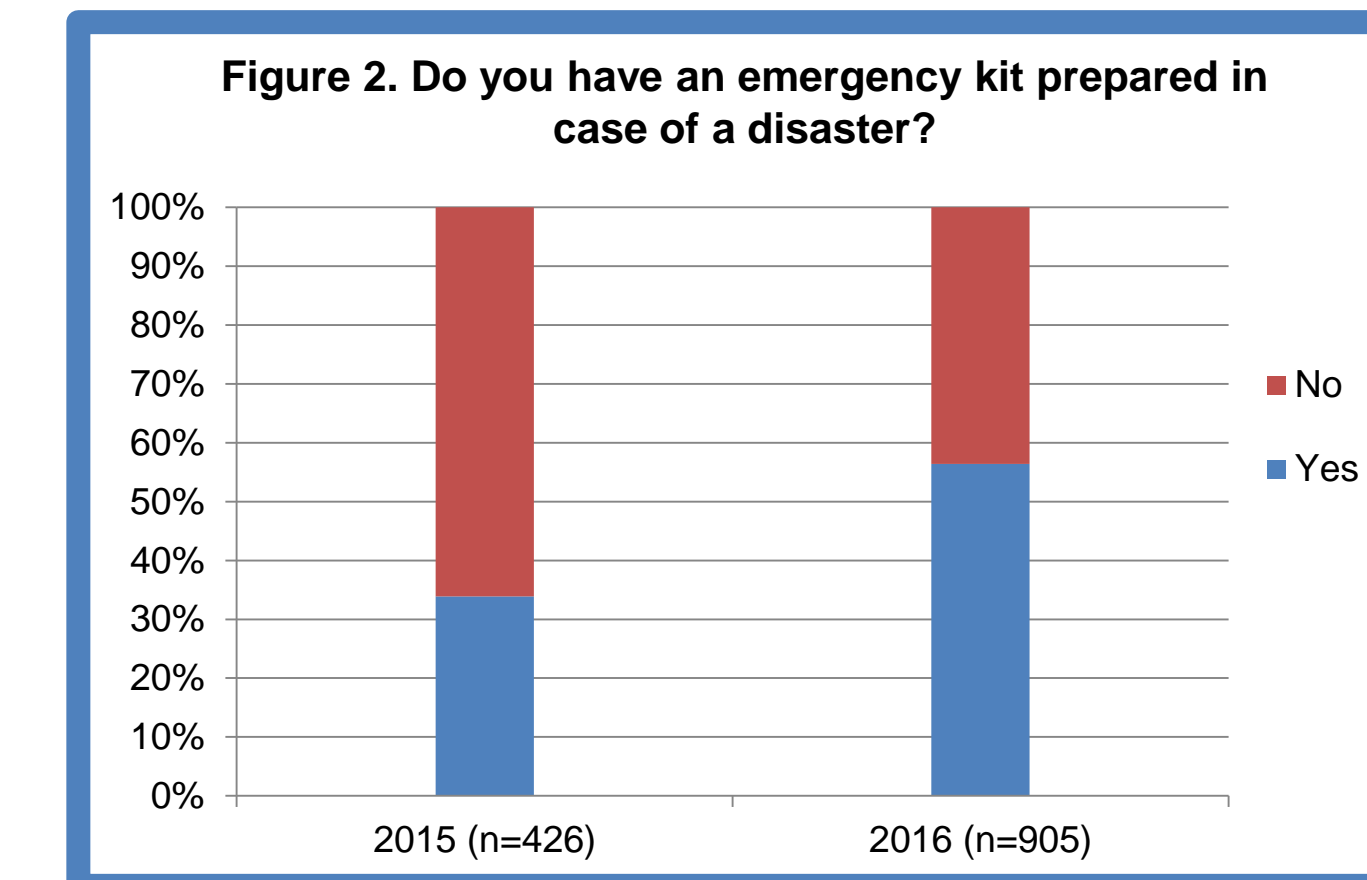
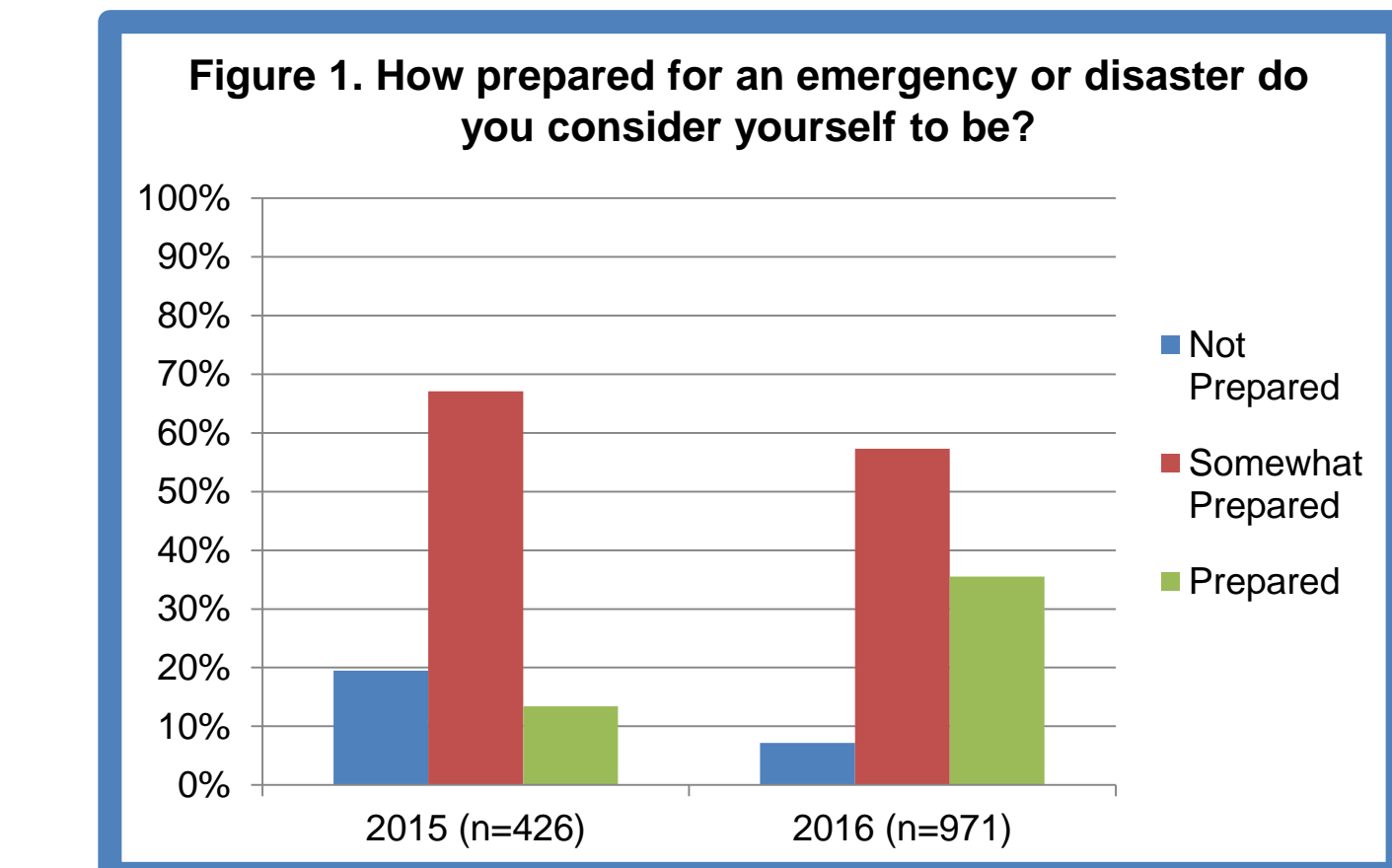
**DEPT. TEAM MEMBERSHIP:** Onyeka joined the DHMH Emergency Management Team in April 2016.

**Favorite Emergency Tip:** • Be sure to have your preparedness kit (supplies, supplies, supplies and more) in multiple locations, and in a safe, water resistant container that you can easily grab and take if you have to leave quickly.

Want to join? Contact [emdm@maryland.gov](mailto:emdm@maryland.gov)

## RESULTS

Activity	2015	2016
DHMH-Wide Preparedness Day	~600 attendees	~200 attendees
Point of Dispensing (POD) Exercise	593 employees	N/A
DHMH Employee Survey	426 surveys completed	985 surveys completed



## CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

OPR's NPM initiatives in both 2015 and 2016 demonstrate the willingness of DHMH employees to engage in preparedness activities. OPR will continue to design and implement preparedness activities to further engage employees and to accomplish our goal of improving personal preparedness and resiliency among staff. Future NPM initiatives will incorporate best practices learned from 2015 and 2016 activities.

- The POD exercise of 2015 was very effective in drawing people to the event. OPR will continue to hold POD exercises every other year.
- Due to the level of interest displayed in preparedness, OPR will develop a program to train DHMH employees as Emergency Preparedness Ambassadors.
- The electronic survey of 2016 was widely distributed and completed by DHMH employees. Therefore, OPR was able to obtain an accurate representation of the gaps in emergency preparedness experienced by DHMH employees. In future years, OPR will continue to distribute an electronic survey during NPM.

