

# INTRODUCTION

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## DISCLAIMERS

1. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Department of Defense or the United States Government.
2. Health care providers should consider the specific circumstances of each patient encountered during an emergency and the resources available at that time and use their best judgment when providing care.
3. The information in this curriculum is meant to supplement principles of good clinical management and health care management.
4. Reference to external resources in this curriculum does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by the National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health of the services or views described in that resource.
5. Every effort was made to include the most current information at the time of publication, but knowledge advances and educators should use the most current information available.
6. All authors of this curriculum have declared no conflicts of interest.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this curriculum is to enable educators to teach health professionals about caring for older adults in disasters. A wide range of health professions can use this curriculum.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The curriculum was designed to be used by educators and trainers working with health professionals who may work with older adults before, during, and after disasters.

The intended learners are health professionals from a variety of work settings.

## BACKGROUND

The [National Center for Disaster Medicine and Public Health](#) (NCDMPH), a center of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and subject matter experts, created this competency-based, disaster health curriculum focused on the care of older adults.

The NCDMPH is the nation's academic center of excellence in disaster health education and training for health professionals and associated volunteers. Authorized by Homeland Security Presidential Directive 21, the NCDMPH leads "...Federal efforts to develop and propagate core curricula, training, and research related to medicine and public health in disasters." <sup>1</sup>

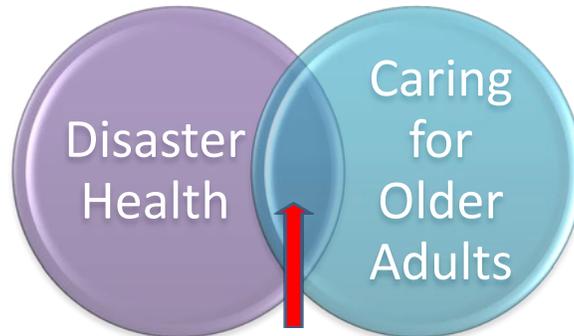
The work of many subject matter experts contributed to this curriculum. The NCDMPH *Curriculum Recommendations for Disaster Health Professionals: The Geriatric Population*, informed the selection of included topics.<sup>2</sup> Subject matter experts provided feedback on the list of topics, which ultimately became the modules and lessons.

### References

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## HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

The graphic below places this curriculum at the intersection of disaster health and caring for older adults. Lessons have been developed to focus on issues related specifically to care of older adults in disasters. Accordingly, this curriculum does not focus on general disaster health issues or routine care of older adults. It is assumed the learners are already trained health care professionals in their professional role or roles.



### Caring for Older Adults in Disasters: A Curriculum for Health Professionals

For those who wish to learn more about general disaster health topics, please see *Module 1, Lesson 1-1 Overview* for a list of resources.

In designing this curriculum, an effort was made to strike a balance between comprehensiveness of content and flexibility of use by educators and trainers in a variety of settings with diverse learners. The curriculum can be taught to groups of learners of one health profession or of multiple health professions. The educator or trainer may come from a number of educational or professional backgrounds that would have a role in caring for older adults in disasters.

Some educators and trainers may wish to use the curriculum in its entirety, teaching all lessons in the order provided. Others may select individual lessons or portions of lessons that would be most relevant to their learners and teach only those. In either case, educators and trainers can feel free to adapt the material in the curriculum for their setting and learner needs, for example, by substituting resources, modifying activities, or augmenting content. Educators and trainers also have flexibility in how they choose to teach the content portions of the lessons (i.e., drawing on lecture, discussion, or group project modalities).

Educators and trainers may wish to teach elements of this curriculum in classroom settings for health professions education, within organizational training environments, or for continuing professional education purposes. Elements of the curriculum may be developed

into just-in-time training for particular types of disasters or as part of general preparedness training.

## CURRICULUM MODULE FRAMEWORK

The modules are ordered to provide a logical progression through the lesson topics as follows:

**Module 1** gives an overview of the curriculum and a demographic background on older adults.

**Module 2** reviews conditions already present in older adults before a disaster that may impact their preparedness, response, and recovery.

**Module 3** outlines special considerations for older adults in particular types of disasters.

**Module 4** gives an overview of caring for older adults during the disaster cycle.

**Module 5** reviews special considerations for older adults in various settings in which they reside and receive care.

**Module 6** reviews ethical and legal considerations for the care of the older adult population during a disaster.

**Module 7** completes the curriculum with an interactive capstone activity, which allows learners to apply new knowledge to their specific role and work setting.

## LIST OF MODULES AND LESSONS

### **Module 1: Curriculum overview and background on the older adult population**

- 1-1 Curriculum overview
- 1-2 Background on the older adult population

### **Module 2: Conditions present in the older adult population that impact their disaster preparedness, response, and recovery**

- 2-1 Chronic and acute conditions
- 2-2 Disaster psychiatry
- 2-3 Medication
- 2-4 Assistive technology

### **Module 3: Disaster types: Special considerations for the older adult population in disasters**

- 3-1 Disaster types

### **Module 4: Caring for older adult populations during the disaster cycle: Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation**

- 4-1 Working with caregivers
- 4-2 Access and functional needs
- 4-3 Public health considerations
- 4-4 Clinical considerations
- 4-5 Psychosocial
- 4-6 Disaster human services
- 4-7 Preparedness issues
- 4-8 Response issues
- 4-9 Recovery issues

### **Module 5: Setting: Special considerations for older adults**

- 5-1 Hospital
- 5-2 Ambulatory care
- 5-3 Hospice
- 5-4 Skilled nursing facilities and assisted-living facilities
- 5-5 Older adults in the community or at home
- 5-6 Pharmacy

### **Module 6: Ethical legal: Special considerations for older adults**

- 6-1 Ethical legal

### **Module 7: Capstone activity**

- 7-1 Capstone activity

## LESSON STRUCTURE

Each lesson contains the following elements:

- Learning objectives  
*Learning objectives describe knowledge, skills, or attitudes one can gain as a result of the lesson.*
- Estimated time to complete  
*Lessons range from 30 to 120 minutes in length. This time may vary based on the particular learning context.*
- Detailed content outline  
*Provides the teaching content for the instructor in an easy to read outline format.*
- Learner activities  
*Suggested learning activities for educators to engage their learners.*
- Readings and resources  
*Required and supplemental readings and resources for both learners and educators.*
- Learner assessment strategies  
*Methods for educators to assess learning in each lesson.*

## WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback regarding this curriculum.

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