



Play to Win: Healthcare and Public Health Preparedness for Mass Gatherings

January 27, 2026 ~ 2:30 - 3:45 PM ET

Thousands of pre-planned mass gatherings and special events (e.g., sporting events, festivals, conventions, visits by dignitaries) occur each year across the nation. Unfortunately, in today's environment, special events attended by large numbers of people may be considered as terrorist targets due to large concentrations of crowds, the symbolic nature of the event, high-profile attendees, and increased media attention. Severe weather events such as heat and storms can also quickly turn a mass gathering into a mass casualty event. Mass gatherings also pose a risk for infectious disease outbreaks or may be held during an outbreak requiring adaptations or restrictions. Large concentrations of people may overwhelm the healthcare capacity in a given area, particularly when alcohol or drugs are present. Finally, surging crowds (which may be induced by panic) can cause trampling or suffocation events. It is for these reasons that local, state, and federal authorities should anticipate the public health and medical issues presented by mass gatherings and prepare adequately for a range of response operations. Using incident management systems for planning and operating these events as "planned emergencies" allows a rapid transition to emergency response should an incident occur.

Registration for this webinar has reached capacity. The recording will be posted on ASPR TRACIE within 24 hours of the event.

attention. Severe weather events quickly turn a mass gathering into a gathering also pose a risk for infectious disease outbreaks or may be held during an outbreak requiring concentrations of people may overwhelm the healthcare capacity in a given area, particularly when surging crowds (which may be trampling or suffocation events. It is and federal authorities should anticipate the public health and medical issues presented by mass gatherings and prepare adequately for a range of response operations. Using incident management systems for planning and operating these events as "planned emergencies" allows a rapid transition to

The speakers in this webinar will highlight their experiences preparing for the 2026 World Cup games and related events being planned across the U.S. Topics will include preparing for infectious disease incidents; how health care coalitions and Medical Reserve Corps units can support regional planning and healthcare in a variety of settings; and how ASPR is preparing to provide support from a federal perspective.

SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Administrative Remarks: Rachel Lehman, Director (Acting), ASPR TRACIE and **CAPT Samantha Spindel, Ph.D**, Director (Acting), Office of Medical Reserve Corps

ASPR Opening Remarks: CDR Shelsy Cannon, MS, BSN, RN, US Public Health Service, ASPR Regional Emergency Coordinator, Region 3

Moderator: John Hick, MD, Hennepin Healthcare and ASPR TRACIE Senior Editor

Speakers:

- **Steven Hoeger**, Director, Corporate Emergency Management, University Health (Kansas)
- **Alexander Isakov, MD, MPH**, Executive Director, Health Security, Emory University, NETEC EMS Workgroup Co-Lead
- **Brooke Lawrence**, Executive Director, Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps

REGISTRATION

REGISTER HERE for this free webinar; it will also be recorded and archived on the ASPR TRACIE website. Each registrant will receive a unique link needed to access the webinar. **Please note:** The link can only be used on one computer; registrants should not forward their registration confirmation emails to others. Registration is limited to the first 1,000 participants. Where possible, register once per office/organization and view the webinar as a group to allow the maximum number of participants.



Audio: You can use your computer microphone and speakers (VoIP) or telephone. A phone number and PIN will be provided after logging into the webinar.

QUESTIONS?



[ASPRtracie.hhs.gov](https://asprtracie.hhs.gov)



844-5-TRACIE (844-587-2243)



askasprtracie@hhs.gov