

# Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Oil Spill Response Efforts



# Major Areas of Response

- Public Health/Environmental Epidemiology
  - Public Education
  - Surveillance and Monitoring
    - Health Exposure Risks
    - Water and Air Quality
    - Seafood Safety
  - Coordination of Health Care Capacity
  - Research Dispersants' Impact on Louisiana's Environment, Health and Wildlife and Fisheries
- Seafood Safety
  - Oyster Harvesting Area Actions
  - Hydrocarbon and Other Chemical Testing
  - Key participant in 20-year, \$457 million Seafood Safety Program

# Major Areas of Response

- **Mental Health**
  - Immediate Response for Victims/Families
  - Long-Range Care for Affected Communities
- **Regional/Parish Offices**
  - Plaquemines Parish
  - Orleans Parish
  - St. Bernard Parish
  - Jefferson Parish
  - Lafourche Parish
- **Communications**
  - Public Education
  - Media Relations
  - GOHSEP Liaison

# Air Quality Monitoring

- DEQ has air monitoring sites in Kenner and Chalmette Vista now collecting daily samples for hydrogen sulfide, sulfur dioxide, total non-methane hydrocarbons, and particulate matter levels. Normally, samples are collected once every six days. The daily samples are being analyzed at EPA's cost. When the total hydrocarbon levels reach a specified threshold, a strike canister sample is collected and is analyzed for individual compounds.
- The EPA has 8 air monitoring and sampling locations:
  - 3 in Plaquemines Parish monitoring for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulates and hydrogen sulfide (Venice Operations);
  - 3 in St. Bernard Parish monitoring for VOCs and particulates (Chalmette Operations); and
  - 2 in Grand Isle/Port Fourchon monitoring for VOCs (Grand Isle Operations).
- EPA also has used its mobile air monitoring van and a monitoring plane for additional air monitoring.

# Air Quality/Results

**“EPA has observed odor-causing pollutants associated with petroleum products along the coastline at low levels. Some of these chemicals may cause short-lived effects like headache, eye, nose and throat irritation, or nausea. People may be able to smell some of these chemicals at levels well below those that would cause short-term health problems.”**

▫ SOURCE: EPA

\*All EPA sampling data is available at <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>

# Dispersants

- On May 8, Secretaries Levine, Hatch and Barham wrote to BP's CEO, Tony Hayward, asking the company to provide detailed data, analysis and studies related to the effects on residents' health, the environment, and wildlife and fisheries of the oil dispersants being used. The secretaries requested BP cease dispersant use until the research was reviewed.
- BP's vice president for the Gulf of Mexico exploration, Dr. David Rainey, responded with a letter saying that the dispersant was approved by the EPA, and that they were conducting rigorous testing without revealing details about the dispersants' chemical makeup.
- The EPA allowed use of subsea dispersant over the state's objection.
- One week later, the EPA ordered BP to stop using the dispersant, then ordered them to find a "less toxic" dispersant. Now, the order is to just use less dispersant. The state was not consulted on any of those actions.
- To date, more than 1 million gallons of dispersants have been used in the Gulf:
  - Subsea: 331,660 gallons
  - Surface: 790,036 gallons
- DHH and DWF is working with the dispersant manufacturer to secure proprietary details of specific chemicals used in the dispersant so our toxicologists can review to determine what needs to be tested for.

# Seafood Safety Response Plan Proposal

- DHH, DWF, DEQ, DAF and DED worked together to develop a \$457 million, 20-year plan to test, certify and promote the safety of Louisiana seafood. Its goals are three-fold:
  - To establish and implement long-range testing protocol for Louisiana seafood;
  - To develop a first of its kind seafood certification program for Louisiana seafood akin to certification done for beef; and
  - Conduct a long-range consumer research study and public awareness and education campaign on the safety of Louisiana seafood.
- On May 29, the proposed plan and a letter was sent to the CEO of BP asking that they fund the long-range program.
- As of today, we've had no response from BP.

# Seafood Safety/Testing

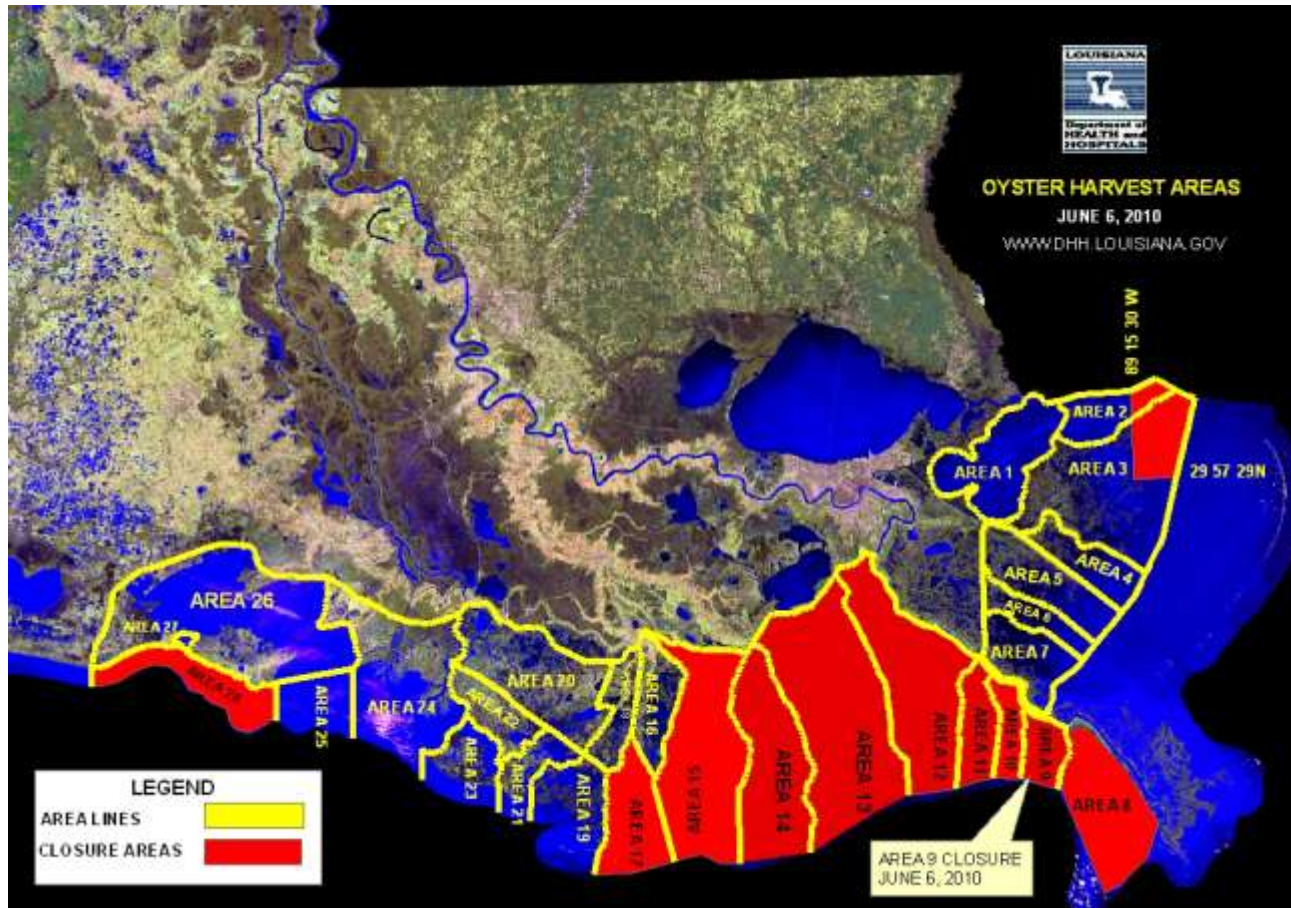
- DHH has partnered with DWF to conduct enhanced testing of seafood meat samples. Samples are collected from a broad range of closed and open fishing areas and oyster beds.
- To date 220 total (DWF and DHH) samples have been collected and processed by the lab between 4/30 and 6/1.
  - 66 finfish
  - 52 oysters
  - 35 shrimp
  - 7 crab
  - 60 water
- Analysis is underway to validate lab results and determine the significance of the data.



# Seafood Safety – Closures

- Beginning April 30, DHH began closing oyster areas as a precaution when oil threatened the area.
- Areas have been reopened as the oil slicks moved to give harvesters as much time as possible to access healthy oysters. Re-opening protocol is based on FDA standards.
- To date, of 30 total areas, 12 are closed. Two more are partially closed.

# Oyster Closure Map



# Mental Health

- Within days of the explosion, the Office of Mental Health was providing services to victims of the explosion and their families.
- OMH has worked with private providers and non-profits on the ground to enhance access to mental health services in the area and deployed state teams to the region.
- OMH is also overseeing a public awareness campaign that includes radio ads and other outreach to help people spot the signs of mental health distress and seek treatment.

**Total Field Staff** 15

<b><u>Parishes/Areas Served</u></b>	<b><u>Numbers Served</u></b>
Lafourche/Terrebonne Parishes	98
Jefferson Parish (Grand Isle/Port Fourchon)	495
Orleans/Plaquemines/St. Bernard Parish	139
Jefferson/St. Charles/St. Tammany Parishes	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>749</b>

\*Detailed information by parish and locations of mobile teams available upon request.

# Mental Health/Services Provided

- **Outreach**
  - DHH staff is contacting organizations and individuals who have been impacted by the disaster.
- **Engagement**
  - An interaction with an organization or individual to begin establishing a rapport to build a working relationship; this activity includes providing emotional support.
- **Brief Educational or Supportive Contact**
  - Interactions lasting 15 minutes or less, offering educational information and general support. Educational interaction generally includes resources and information available to disaster survivors.
- **Informal screenings**
  - A more in-depth assessment of the community's individual and/or families' needs are and the level of care needed to return to return to their pre-disaster level of functioning.
- **Referrals**
  - Includes linkages to other providers for additional disaster relief services for tangible aid and more intense behavioral support.

# Public Health/Environmental Epidemiology

- Immediately following the rig's explosion, DHH's epidemiology team began meeting daily to monitor possible effects on human health and seafood safety.
- Guidelines, FAQs and fact sheets were created in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, and are still being distributed through local health offices and liaisons.
- A surveillance system was activated to monitor health complaints related to the oil spill. The system captures complaints from Louisiana Poison Center, local hospitals, clinics and first-aid stations.

# Health Complaints to Date

- Total Exposure-Related Illnesses as of 06/05/10: 71
  - Workers: 50
  - General Public: 21
- There are eight reports of people with exposure-related symptoms hospitalized. Hospitalizations were generally for one day.
- Most exposures involved workers on rigs or those who were engaged in clean-up activities.
- DHH continues to monitor illness related to the oil spill; a report will be issued weekly with updated data.

# Health Care Capacity

- DHH is monitoring health care complaints and working closely with local providers to determine if there are additional needs for medical resources. The department has had no difficulty meeting the volume of health care requests.
  - Worked with HHS and local communities to find the appropriate location for a mobile health clinic, which is now located in Venice, La.
    - The clinic sees an average of 6 Louisiana residents each day.
  - Secured an executive order to allow out-of-state paramedics to help meet the emergency medical needs of response workers. Strict rules were put in place to oversee their work.
    - Currently, Acadian Ambulance is contracted by BP to provide emergency medical service. The company has nearly 80 EMTs and 9 ambulances along the coast and on the water.
  - Medicaid enrollment specialists have been deployed with DSS and the Louisiana Workforce Commission to help people who did not previously qualify, but may now as a result of lost income.
    - Medicaid staff have taken 248 applications on-site, of which 54 have been approved; 126 rejected and the remaining are still pending decision.
    - Enrollment in the 13 affected parishes (not including auto-enrollment of food stamp cases) increased by 1,310 during the month of May.

# Drinking Water Quality

- Officials with DHH continue regular monitoring of drinking water quality of public systems near impacted areas, with heightened vigilance given to areas at the mouth of the Mississippi River.
  - Tests have not revealed any levels of contamination concern.
- DHH sanitarians are also monitoring drinking water and sewage around “worker cities” being developed by BP.



# Other Water Quality

- The Molluscan Shellfish Program and the Beach Monitoring Program are conducting testing in impacted areas.
  - **Molluscan Shellfish**
    - Routine collection of oyster growing area water samples continues. These are taken on regularly scheduled runs and are submitted to the DHH state lab for bacterial analysis.
    - Since the spill, water samples have been taken for baseline purposes in the oyster growing areas. Waters are also being taken as necessary when closed areas are re-opened. These water samples are tested for poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and total hydrocarbons through Central Analytical Labs.
  - **Beach Monitoring**
    - Routine water samples continue to be taken. These samples are tested by the DHH state labs for bacterial contamination
    - Since the spill, water samples were taken in 4 beach areas to establish a baseline. These samples were tested for PAHs and total hydrocarbons by Central Analytical Labs.

# Regional/Parish Level Response

- Regional medical directors and administrators and parish health unit staff are working directly with parish EOCs, local officials and BP staff daily. Among their activities:
  - Identifying oil spill-related exposure reports and communicating those incidents to local authorities.
  - Attending community outreach events to provide public health information and answer questions.

# By the Numbers

- Total number of staff involved in response: 132
- Expenditures so far: \$319,583.11
- Expenditures projected through July 21, 2010:  
\$3,255,896.00

# Resources

- <http://www.DHHEmergencyNews.com>
- [www.emergency.louisiana.gov](http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov)
- [www.epa.gov/bpspill](http://www.epa.gov/bpspill)
- **Illnesses/injuries:** 1.888.293.7020 or by e-mail to [oilspill.injuries@la.gov](mailto:oilspill.injuries@la.gov)
- **Mental health:** 1.866.310.7977
- **Odor complaints:** 1.866.448.5816
- **Environmental/community concerns:** 1.866.448.5816
- **Claims:** 1.800.440.0858

# Attachments

- Letter to BP requesting data on the use of dispersants
  - Follow-up letter to BP addressing the use of dispersants
  - Letter to BP regarding the Seafood Safety Response Plan
  - Exposure-related cases weekly surveillance report
  - Guidelines, FAQs, Fact Sheets in three languages
  - Letter to OSHA on worker safety
  - Oyster Closure Maps
  - Request for oil spill-related illness and injury reports
- \* The Seafood Safety and Certification Response Plan is available electronically upon request.