

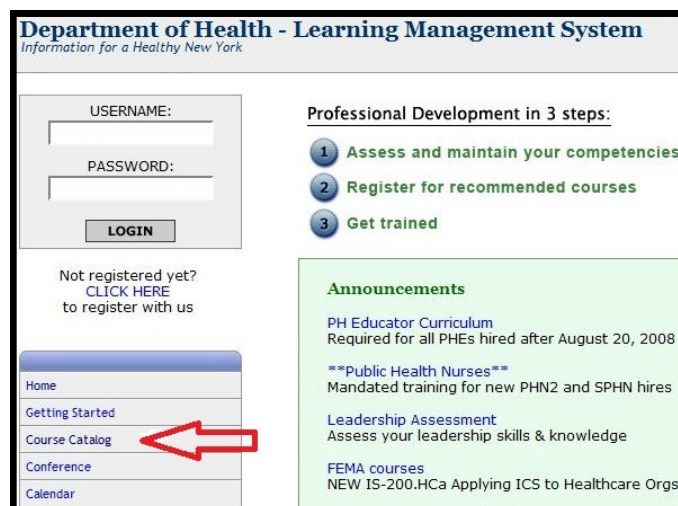


HCS Coordinator Training Module Available from NYS

The New York State Health Department (DOH) Health Commerce Training Unit has developed a new training module for Health Commerce System (HCS) Coordinators, across the long-term care provider spectrum, to educate about the management of accounts for their agencies. This free module is especially helpful for new coordinators and serves as a review to those who need to refresh their skills.

To access this e-learning tool, visit the DOH's Learning Management System, accessible outside the Health Commerce System (HCS), at www.nylearnsph.com. Simply have your staff create their own free account to gain access to the Learning Management System and then search the course catalog (see red arrow in image at right) for "HCS Coordinator." Your search will yield the course entitled, "CTI 210 -HCS Coordinator Training & Certification."

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NYS Department of Health Surveys and Emergency Preparedness

There are numerous emergency preparedness and planning requirements placed on certified, licensed and long-term home health agencies through state law, rules and regulation. All agencies must meet these conditions, subject to survey by DOH. HCA has heard from DOH and the industry that many agency plans contain deficiencies in their emergency plans including:

emergency plans that do not cover a variety of potential hazards and a lack of staff knowledge of those plans; exclusion of emergency preparedness information in new employee orientation; incomplete staff call-down lists; out-of-date patient rosters; missing documentation on emergency planning exercises; and lack of staff with working knowledge of the Health Commerce System (HCS).



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Virtual Emergency Preparedness Annual Meeting June 1 and 2, 2011

HCA Education and Research is hosting a "Virtual Annual Meeting" on emergency preparedness to be held over two afternoons — June 1 and June 2, from 1 to 3:30 p.m. This free annual meeting will be done via webinar and will include opportunities for questions and interactive exercises within your agency.

While there will be **no charge for this program**, we do ask that each agency bring people together at a common site, since much of the program encourages discussion among involved personnel.

The tentative agenda is as follows:

- *June 1 at 1:00pm Emergency Preparedness 101
- *June 1 at 1:45pm Tabletop Exercise (office building fire to test internal procedures and business continuity plan)
- *June 2 at 1:00pm Sheltering and Evacuation
- *June 2 at 1:45pm Tabletop Vignettes—four different scenarios to test specific parts of your plan

To sign up your staff for the webinar, please visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/EmergencyPreparednessVirtualMeeting>

Funding for the Virtual Emergency Preparedness Annual Meeting was made available through a grant from the New York State Department of Health.

Radiation Emergency Planning

The recent tragedy in Japan has brought a renewed focus on safety in the communities that surround nuclear power plants. As you may be aware, New York State is home to four nuclear power plants, one of which is within 40 miles of New York City. A review of emergency preparedness, evacuation and sheltering in place may be important to staff, as well as patients and their families so that their concerns can be allayed should the unthinkable happen here in New York State.

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which provides oversight and licensure to all U.S. based nuclear facilities, requires the development and testing of emergency preparedness plans as a condition of licensure. For residents who live within 10 miles of a nuclear power plant, emergency information is provided to them annually via any number of means such as in phonebooks, calendars, brochures or utility bills. The materials are required to contain information on radiation, instructions for evacuation and sheltering, special arrangements for individuals with handicapping conditions, as well as contact numbers for additional information.

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After the Flood — Clean up to Avoid Mold Damage

It is important that staff, patients and their caregivers know what to do after a flood. Depending on the severity of the flood and impact on the home, it is important to educate individuals about how to prevent illness, how to prevent mold growth and the importance of household clean up after a flood.

In terms of sanitation and hygiene, you should assume that floodwater may be contaminated by sewage, agricultural or industrial waste, as well as septic contents, depending on your location. It is important to wash thoroughly, especially any open cuts that may have been exposed to floodwater.

Mold growth is also a concern after a home is flooded. Molds can cause disease and allergic reactions; therefore, it is important to **remove standing water** as soon as possible and **ventilate the space to dry it out**.

It is also imperative to **remove wet materials from your home** as some materials tend to absorb and hold water. If mold is already present, you should contact professionals to clean the home.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has many resources available to educate staff, patients and their caregivers about the hazards of mold after a flood.

Please visit the EPA website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/index.html>



NY-Alert

<https://users.nyalert.gov/>

Encourage your staff, patients and their caregivers to sign up for this free service. Sign up at the link provided above and get local and regional updates on weather, traffic or any other hazardous conditions immediately. New Yorkers can receive the Alerts in multiple ways, such as via email, pager, phone, SMS or fax.

Travel With Care —Tips for Staff

- Leave early to avoid being stranded on flooded roads. Follow recommended routes.
- As you travel, monitor local radiocasts. Subscribe to NY-Alert to receive hazard alerts on your smartphone!
- Watch for washed-out roads, earth slides, broken water or sewer mains, loose or downed electrical wires and falling or fallen objects.
- Watch for areas where rivers or streams may suddenly rise and flood, such as highway dips, bridges and low areas.
- Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road. Turn around and go another way.
- If you are in your car and water begins to rise rapidly around you, abandon the vehicle immediately.



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The course is designed as "a year in the life of a coordinator," and it organizes necessary tasks by month to make the course content a bit more concrete. Each section or "month" walks users through the specified task, showing menu choices and key strokes necessary to complete the task. Then, a short quiz helps to review the information learned.

The course begins with January being devoted as a time for explaining the basics of coordinator responsibilities. The module progresses to more complicated tasks as the "year in the life" continues. While the module is geared toward a facility-based provider, all of the tasks are transferrable to home health agencies. Please note that the organization of the tasks in the learning module does not represent when the actions should be carried out. Many of the tasks will be completed by coordinators right away, such as adding a new user account and then, after the account is created, assigning a role to that user account.

Navigating the Coordinator Learning Module

January	Roles & Responsibilities of Coordinators
February	Account Request Process
March	Follow up with Account Requests
April	Make Role Assignments
May	Check the Status of Account Request
June	Edit Role Assignments
July	Manage and Edit Roles
August	Verify User Contact Information
September	Update Facility Emergency Contacts
October	Verify User Log In
November	Delete Inactive Accounts
December	Review

HCS Roles A Survey Item For Home Care

The state Department of Health (DOH) is including several HCS items in their surveys of home health agencies.

Logging on to the HCS

We have heard from numerous providers, as well as DOH, that agencies should be prepared for surveyors to ask agency staff to log on to the HCS. Encouraging your coordinators to complete the free HCS Coordinator Training can prevent a deficiency.

"N/A" Not Applicable

First, any roles within the communications directory on the HCS should be assigned a user or should be identified as "N/A." Failure to do so by leaving the role blank will have it appear as "unassigned" in the communications directory on the HCS and look as though your agency ignored the role.

We have heard from some providers that roles that appear as "unassigned" in the communications directory, even though they may not be pertinent to the agency, have given cause for a negative review during a DOH Survey.

To assign **N/A** to a role: go to **Coordinator's Update Tools** > Select your organization > Select **Manage Role Assignments** tab > Find the role description and click **Modify** > choose **Make N/A**





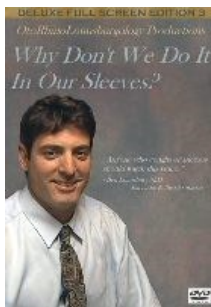
Radiation Planning Continued from Page 2

Staff should be encouraged to review this information with patients and their caregivers to be sure that they are prepared in the event of a radiological disaster.

HCA Education and Research's website, www.homecareprepare.org, includes a number of resources to aid in the preparation and planning for evacuation. Materials, including the *Home Caregiver Guide to Nuclear, Biological & Chemical Emergencies*; *What You Need to Know About Emergency Sheltering*; and *What's Your Plan?*— a planning document for patients and their families. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers extensive information about Radiation Emergencies. Please visit <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/emergencyfaq.asp> for information that can answer staff, patient and caregivers' questions and concerns.

HCS Drill Coming Soon from HCA Education & Research

Beginning after May 15, HCA will begin our own random drills, open to all CHHAs, LTHHCPs and LHCSAs in New York State. Contact will be



made through e-mail and those lucky first few who return the requested information will receive an educational DVD on flu prevention techniques. All contact roles are open to be drilled so get them filled in right away!

Need HCS Log on Assistance? Call the CAMU Hotline at 1-866-529-1890

The Commerce Accounts Management Unit (CAMU) is able to assist all HCS users with any account problems, including everything from log-on problems, to new account assistance. The hotline is available between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., normal business days. Questions can also be emailed to the CAMU Unit at hinweb@health.state.ny.us.

In support of the deliverables of a state Department of Health grant, HCA Education & Research makes this e-newsletter available, free of charge, to all New York State home care providers.

Questions or comments concerning the grant deliverables may be directed to Lexi Silver, HCA's Vice President of Policy and Clinical Affairs, at (518) 810-0658 or asilver@hcanys.org; or Mandy Fallon, HCA's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, at (518) 424-1358 or mfallon@hcanys.org.