

25 March 2024

European Parliament, Brussels

## Abstract

Global population growth, human migration, urbanization, climate change, conflict, and novel disease emergence present unprecedented challenges to public health worldwide. Enhanced curriculum development can assist practitioners of public health – both direct and in supportive roles – to better address dynamic and wicked problems threatening the public's health and welfare. The lessons of recent pandemics, warfare returning to the European continent, and population dislocation demand a fresh look at public health education and training. Subject matter experts, academics, and leaders from across Europe will convene in a one-day, high level meeting to launch development of enhanced curriculum to better address current and future challenges.

## The Conference

### ***A HIGH-TOUCH, HIGHLY INTERACTIVE, LIMITED SEATING EVENT***

We invite you to participate in one day of exclusive dialogue and invention, as we address critical questions that will shape the future of our society. This conference will serve as a pivotal platform to address the complex challenges posed by current conflicts and future threats and offer the opportunity to conduct individual and organizational learning needs analyses. By synthesizing knowledge and expertise, the outcomes will pave the way for transformative public health courses that prepare professionals to navigate the intricate landscape and unique challenges of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, ultimately contributing to more resilient societies in Europe and beyond. The working group methodology will require several meetings with SME leaders to help direct and maximize time. This conference will be a one day event of presentations, discussions, and working groups with subject matter experts to form with an established a framework for novel curriculum.

The Workshop will include:

- Hands-on roundtables
- Cross-industry collaborations
- Facilitated hot-topic panels and discussions
- Engaging, informative dialogue with your peers

## Introduction

Global geopolitics and human security have experienced significant shifts, posing unprecedented public health challenges with conflicts escalating in Ukraine, the Middle East, and elsewhere, tensions rising in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, continuing non-state actor violence, and increasing impact of population dislocation, disease emergence and spread, and increasingly fragile health systems. These events underscore the critical importance of preparedness in public health, pre-hospital services, and disaster medicine, a need dramatically illuminated by the response to the global pandemic and other crises increasingly shown to overwhelm historic interventions and suggested

25 March 2024

European Parliament, Brussels

solutions. To address these pressing concerns, we propose an international conference, to be conducted in Europe and delivered via didactics, participative workshops, and roundtable discussions facilitated by a working group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and practitioners, that will not only dissect current threats but also lay the foundation for a comprehensive curriculum to enhance public health medicine. We will explore how best to address those affected by disaster and mass violence who exhibit a wide variety of psychological, behavioral, physical, and emotional reactions. This curriculum will equip healthcare professionals – both public health and direct care – with practical clinical, disaster response and legally sound skills, promoting interoperability, and garnering high-level decision-maker support. These questions and needs are more than ever relevant.

## Conference Focus and Objectives

### 1. Comprehensive Analysis of Current Conflicts:

- In-depth examination of the wars in Ukraine and Palestine, understanding their impact on public health, healthcare infrastructure, and emergency response systems.
- Anticipating and addressing the potential escalation of conflicts, reflecting the Taiwan-China dynamic and its implications for Europe.

### 2. Disaster and Pre-Hospital Medicine Concepts:

- Exploration of cutting-edge concepts and best practices in public health, pre-hospital services, and disaster medicine.
- Identification of gaps in current approaches and the development of innovative solutions to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

### 3. Public Health Threats, Legal Threats, and Health Security:

- Analysis of additional public health threats, including pandemics, bioterrorism, and emerging infectious diseases.
- Understanding the intersection of conflict and public health, with a focus on morbidity, mortality, and the resilience of populations.
- Developing responses and countermeasures to the unique health implications of mass violence and disasters.

### 4. Interdisciplinary Approaches (NATO - Civilian -Military engagement and collaboration):

- Key area of capability development and collaboration between healthcare professionals, emergency responders, military personnel, and policymakers to foster a holistic and integrated approach.
- Emphasis on the interoperability of healthcare systems – comparing different national approaches across the continuum of care and with non-health entities – to ensure a seamless response in times of crisis.
- “Good Samaritan” protection and Malpractice Insurance coverage for healthcare professionals regarding liability.

5. Appraise the state of research, prevention, and practice regarding public health implications of Mass Violence, Wars, and Disaster.
6. Medical ethics in peacetime, disaster, and wartime.

## Outcomes and Conclusions

### A. Curriculum Development:

- Formulation of a comprehensive curriculum for a public health medicine course.
- Creation of content modules for inclusion on other health related curricula.
- Integration of practical clinical and disaster response skills to empower healthcare professionals with hands-on expertise during peacetime and in times of armed conflict.

### B. Interoperability Enhancement:

- Development of strategies to enhance interoperability among different sectors involved in emergency response.
- Establishment of protocols and communication frameworks to facilitate seamless collaboration.
- Creating trans-disciplinary situational awareness and enhanced communications skills.

### C. Decision-Maker Support Models and Ready Information:

- Creation of high-level decision-maker support models, incorporating insights from the conference.
- Tools and resources to aid policymakers in making informed decisions during crises and post-conflict regeneration.

### D. Resilience Building (national, organizational, and individual):

- Empowerment of societies to become more resilient through enhanced healthcare systems, robust emergency response mechanisms, and informed public health strategies.
- Enhancement of public health and medical care systems through increased disaster risk reduction, response effectiveness, and recovery efficacy.

## Proposed Curriculum Additions: Public Health Courses (working group, topics, and focus areas)

### I. Module 1: Understanding Mass Violence, War, and Disaster

- Concepts and Definitions:
  - = Analyze the source and scope of Mass Violence, War, and Disaster on Public Health.
  - = Evaluate the public health and social ramifications of Mass Violence, War, and Disaster.
- Historical Perspectives:

25 March 2024

European Parliament, Brussels

- = Examine historical cases and social ramifications to understand the lasting impacts on public health.

- = Explore lessons learned from past events to inform future strategies.

- = Common ethical decision-making framework.

## II. Module 2: Frameworks for Prevention, Deterrence, and Response

### - Conceptual Framework:

- = Develop a conceptual framework for prevention, deterrence, preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery from Mass Violence, War, and Disaster.

- = Formulate strategies for building community resilience in the face of such events.

### - Role of Stakeholders:

- = Critique the roles of governments, the military, NGOs, and non-state or transnational actors in creating or responding to Mass Violence, War, and Disaster.

- = Explore collaborative approaches to improve coordination among stakeholders.

## III. Module 3: Practical Approaches to Response Planning

### - Planning Factors:

- = Design planning factors for response to Mass Violence and Disaster.

- = Develop practical guidelines for effective response planning and execution.

- = Identify and respond to the antagonist's goals, values, and methods.

### - Interdisciplinary Collaboration:

- = Foster collaboration between healthcare providers, emergency responders, and other relevant sectors.

- = Simulate interdisciplinary response scenarios to enhance practical skills.

- = Role of communication within both clinical care and ethical analysis.

## IV. Module 4: Impact on Vulnerable Populations including Inequalities

### - Healthcare Provision during Conflict:

- = Explore the Impact of War on the Provision of Health Care for the General Populace and Vulnerable Populations.

- = Develop strategies to ensure access to healthcare services for vulnerable groups during and after conflict and catastrophic disaster.

### - Psychosocial Implications of Trauma:

- = Analyze the psychological and social consequences of Mass Violence and War on vulnerable populations.

- = Design and implement interventions to address mental health and social well-being.

## V. Module 5: Research, Prevention, and Practice

### - State of Research:

- = Appraise the state of research, prevention, and practice with regard to public health implications of Mass Violence, War, and Disaster.

- = Identify gaps in knowledge and areas for further research.

# Enhancing European Public Health Preparedness, Pre-Hospital, and Disaster Medicine

25 March 2024

European Parliament, Brussels

- Innovations in Prevention:
  - = Explore innovative approaches and technologies for preventing and mitigating the impact of Mass Violence, War, and Disaster.
  - = Discuss best practices in translating research findings into effective public health interventions.
  - = Identify and maximize the value of adjacent constituencies: clergy, social networks, community-based groups, and service organizations.

## Working Group Summary

Debates and discussions will be conducted under Chatham House Rules.<sup>1</sup>

Participants in this conference will emerge equipped with a nuanced understanding of the intersection between Mass Violence, War, and Disaster and public health. The curriculum draws from graduate programs in global health, and reflects the feedback of a physician researcher in Africa who, upon completing one of the source courses, wrote “This course should be mandatory for any global health program.”

The curriculum emphasizes practical approaches, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovative solutions to empower healthcare professionals to assume a pivotal role in responding to preventing, mitigating, and recovering from the public health consequences of these complex events. The knowledge gained will not only enhance individual skill sets but also contribute to the broader goal of building resilient and responsive healthcare systems globally.

Location: European Parliament, Brussels, 80 participants.

Date: 25 March 2024.

## Supporting Organizations:

Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER)

World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM)

European Council for Disaster Medicine (ECDM).

Organising and Scientific Committee: John Quinn, MD; Donald Donahue, DHed, MBA, MSJ; Jan Cédric Hansen, MD; Frank van Trimont, MD; Sohrab Dahlal, MBBB; Nadav Davidovitch, MD, PhD; Paul Barach, MD, MPH

---

<sup>1</sup> When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.