

# Building Community Resilience by Engaging Health Department Employees in Emergency Preparedness Activities

Amanda Driesse<sup>2</sup>, B.A., Artensie Flowers<sup>2</sup>, PhD, MPH, Sara Luell<sup>1</sup>, B.A., Mallory Wright<sup>1</sup>, M.A.

<sup>1</sup>Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Preparedness and Response, Baltimore, MD

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, Atlanta, GA

## OBJECTIVES

- Assess Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) employees perception of personal preparedness for emergencies.
- Familiarize employees with public health emergency operations.
- Increase knowledge on personal preparedness and the role DHMH employees play during an emergency
- Identify gaps in emergency preparedness training among employees.

## BACKGROUND

With the focus on providing resources to partner agencies and the public, engaging health department employees in emergency preparedness can be challenging. Lack of preparedness increases vulnerability of employees and decreases the resiliency of the health department to emergencies. The DHMH Office of Preparedness and Response (OPR) chose to celebrate National Preparedness Month by engaging the department's employees.

### National Preparedness Month



Check your first aid kit. Replace any items that are depleted or expired.

### National Preparedness Month

Preparedness on a budget: Pick up canned items on sale 2 or 3 at a time for your emergency supply kit.



## METHODS

Over a four week period, OPR conducted a Preparedness Challenge for employees. Weekly challenge emails asked employees to show their preparedness by completing activities ranging from social media use to identifying emergency kit items. Participants were entered in a raffle for an emergency supply kit.

On September 30, 2015, OPR hosted a DHMH-wide event where employees were engaged through: "Pledge to Prepare" poster signing, photo booth and informational display tables. To familiarize employees with public health emergency operations, a functional Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise was held. Employees completed a "screening form" which captured their level of personal preparedness and training needs. POD participants were "dispensed" either a backpack or water bottle.

## 30-Day Preparedness Challenge



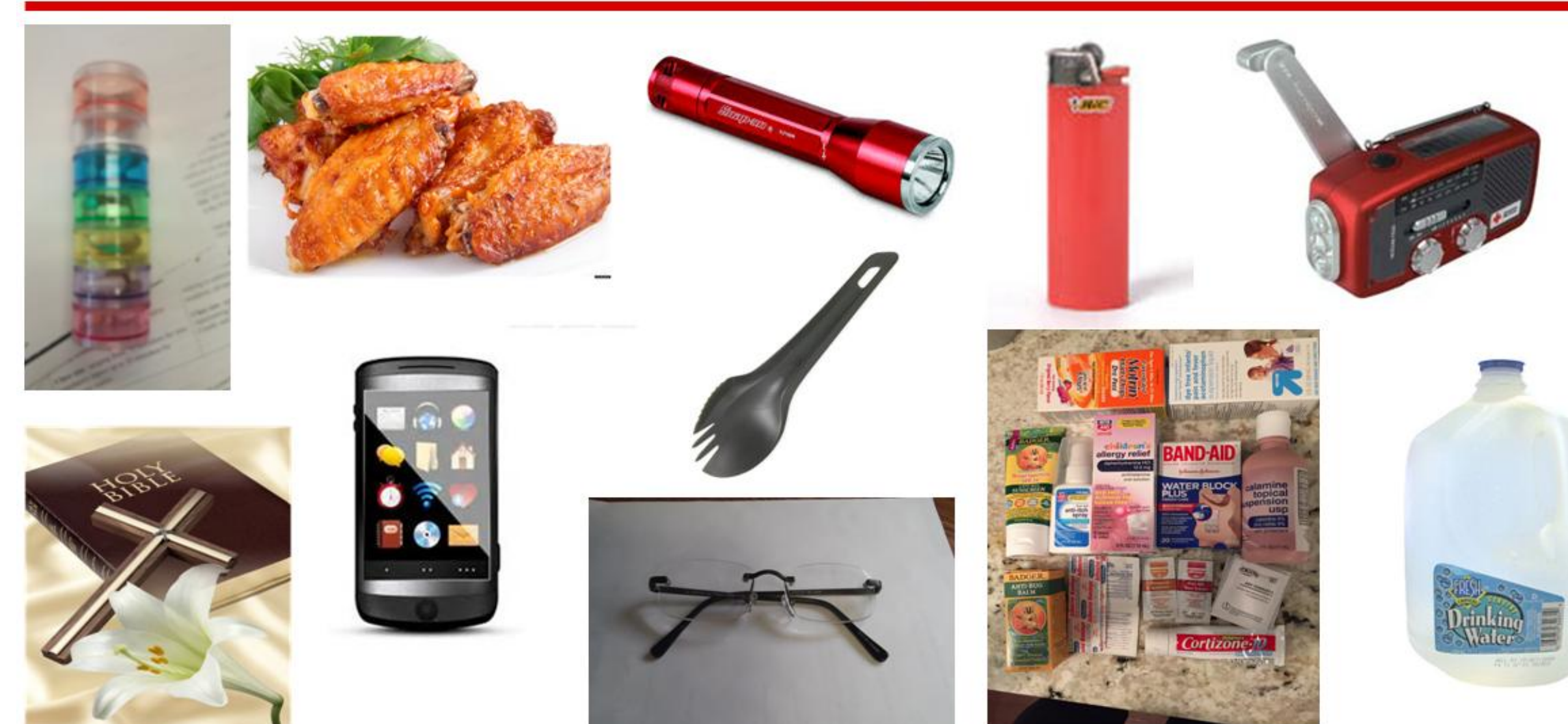
**DHMH PREPAREDNESS CHALLENGE**

Are you ready for a challenge?  
Compete with your co-workers during Preparedness Month 2015 to complete weekly challenges and be entered to win a Free Emergency Supply Kit!!

See DHMH employee email or contact amanda.driesse@maryland.gov for more details!

Brought to you by the DHMH Office of Preparedness & Response

### What can't DHMH Employees live without?

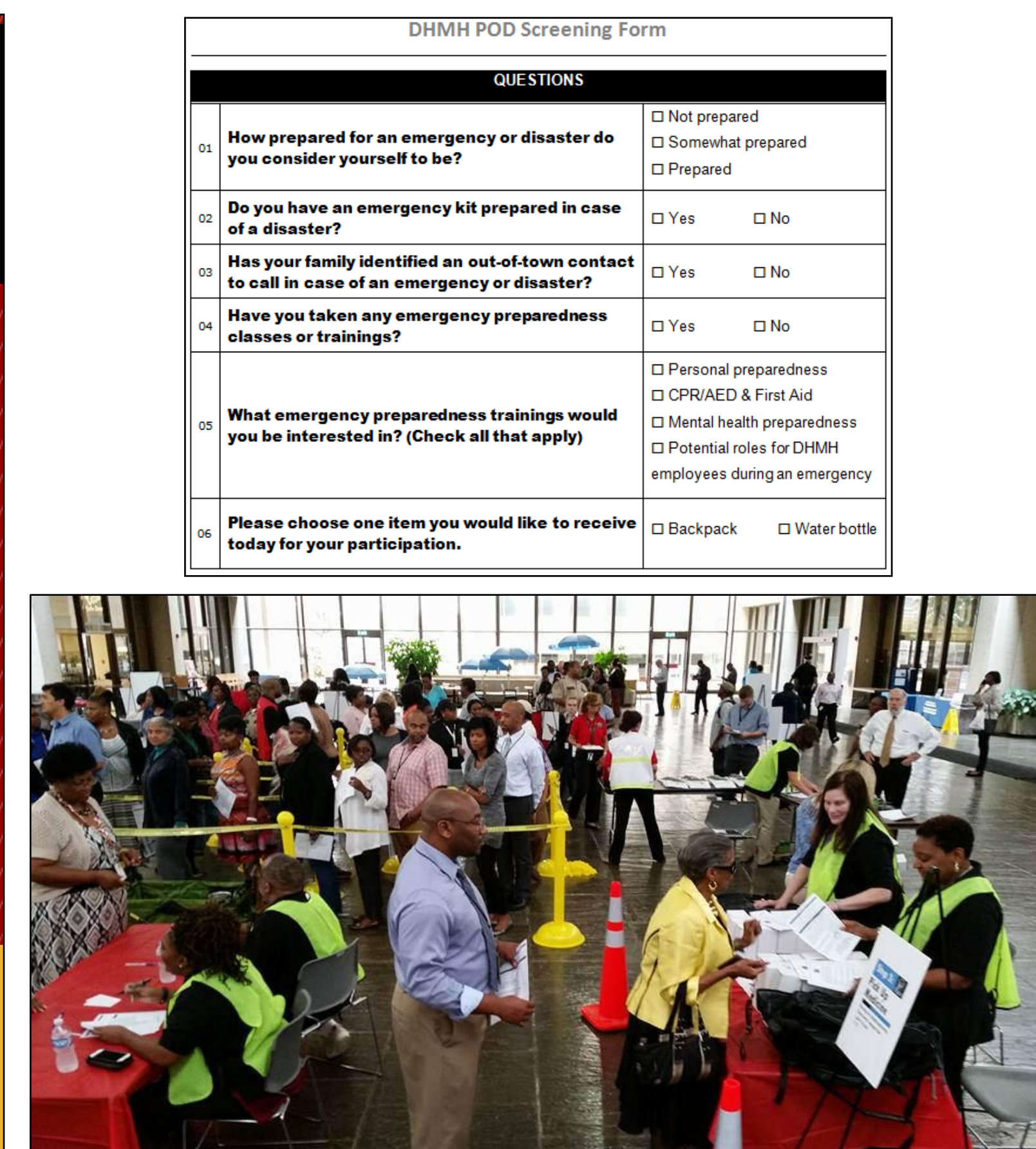


## Point of Dispensing Drill

### THE DHMH OFFICE OF PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE PRESENTS PREPAREDNESS DAY

- So you think you're prepared? Come to Preparedness Day and find out!
- Compete with other DHMH offices by getting your co-workers to go through our emergency preparedness line!
  - Get a FREE backpack or water bottle!
  - Learn how to be ready for any emergency!
  - Sign the pledge to prepare!
  - Get a photo taken at the preparedness themed photo booth!

Date: September 30, 2015  
Time: 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Where: State Center Building 201 Lobby



**DHMH POD Screening Form**

QUESTIONS

01 How prepared for an emergency or disaster do you consider yourself to be?  
 Not prepared  
 Somewhat prepared  
 Prepared

02 Do you have an emergency kit prepared in case of a disaster?  
 Yes  No

03 Has your family identified an out-of-town contact to call in case of an emergency or disaster?  
 Yes  No

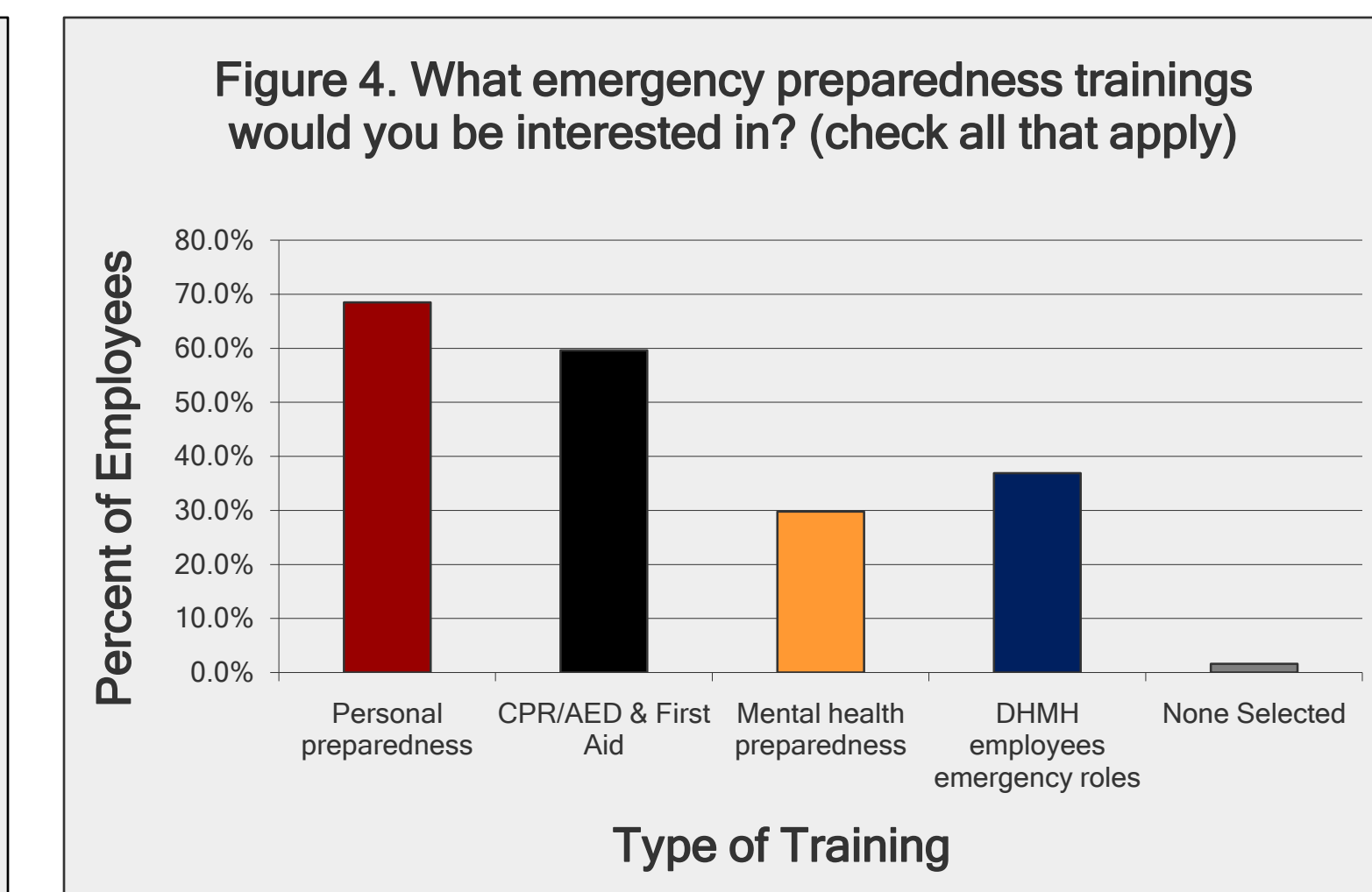
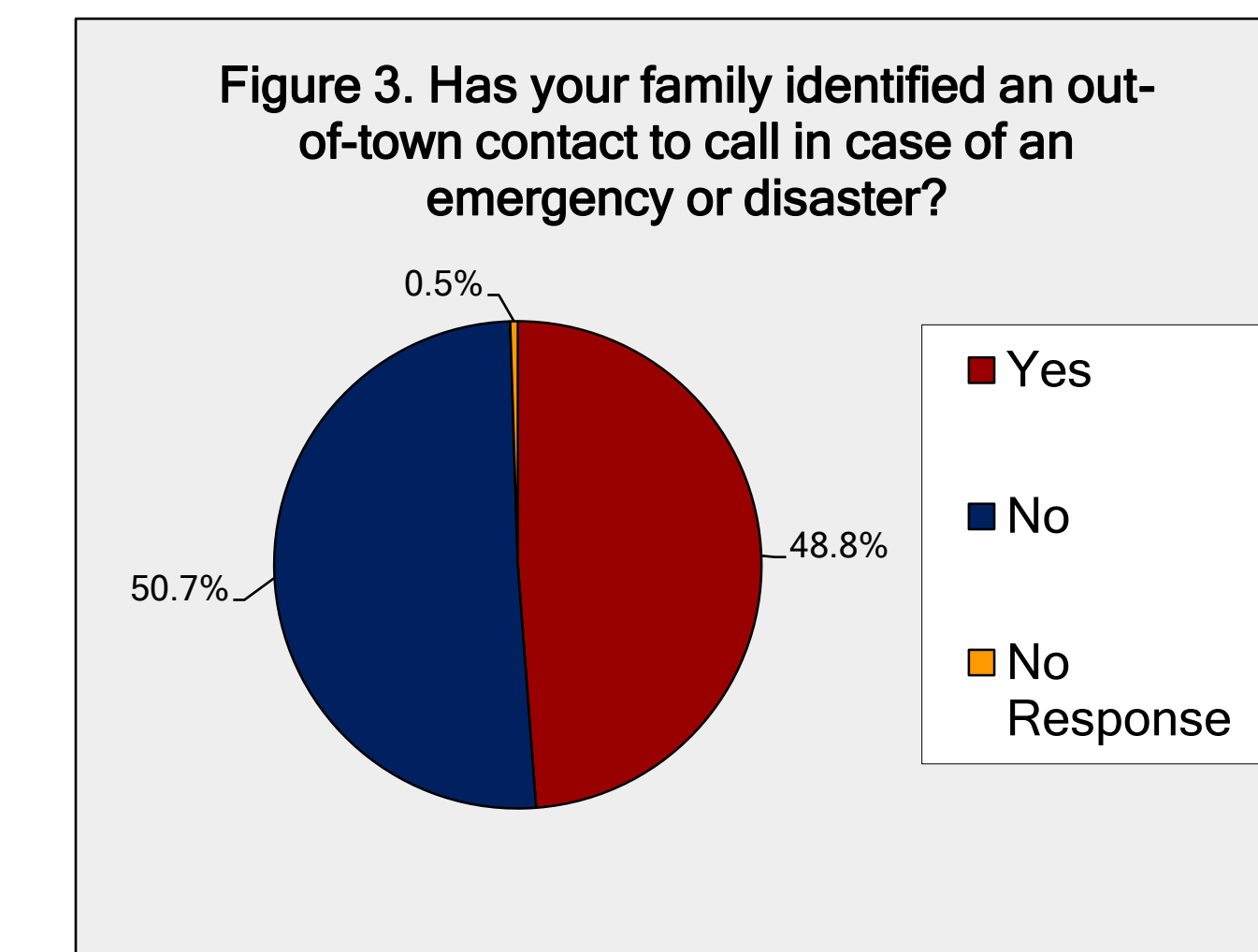
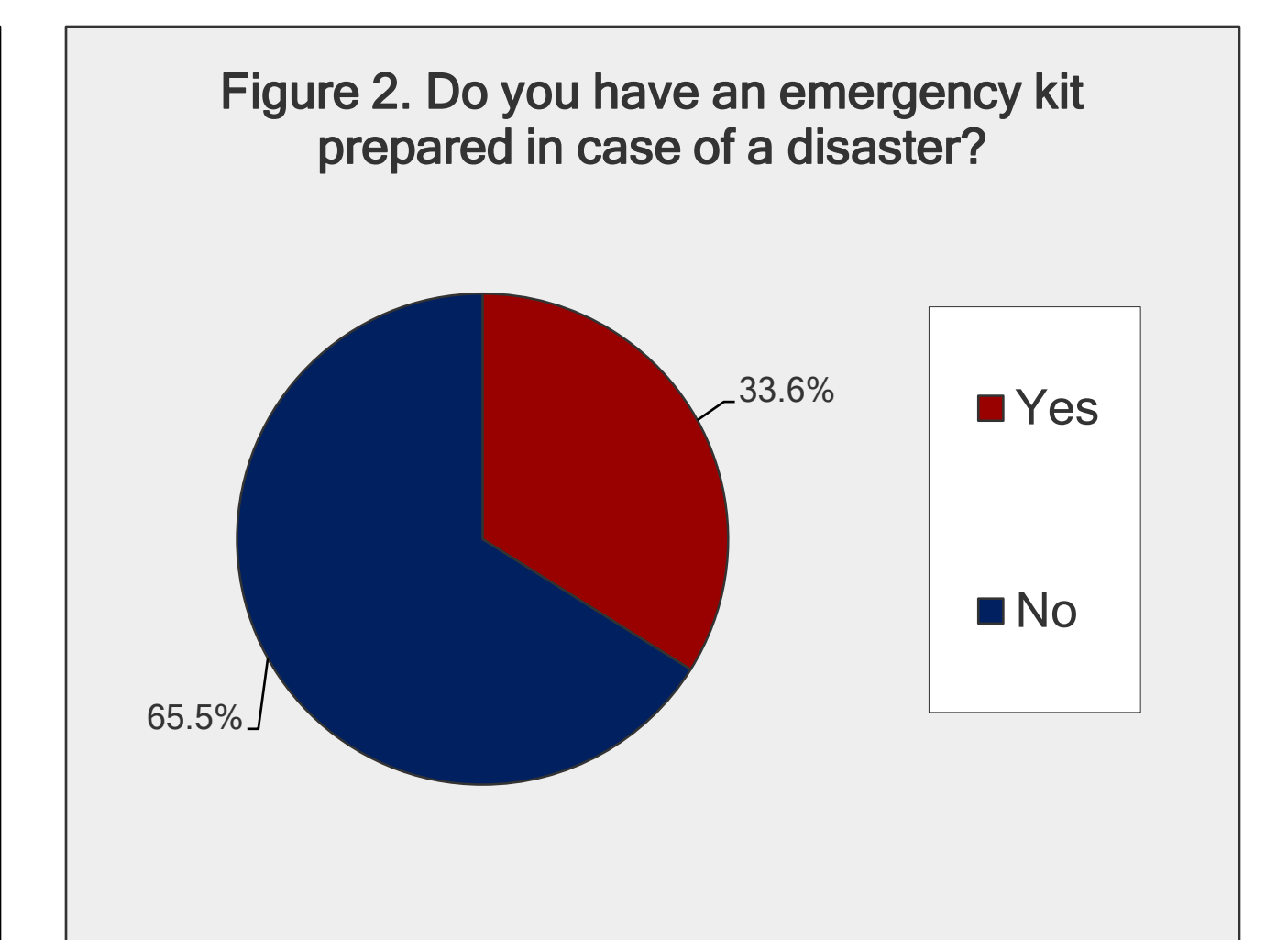
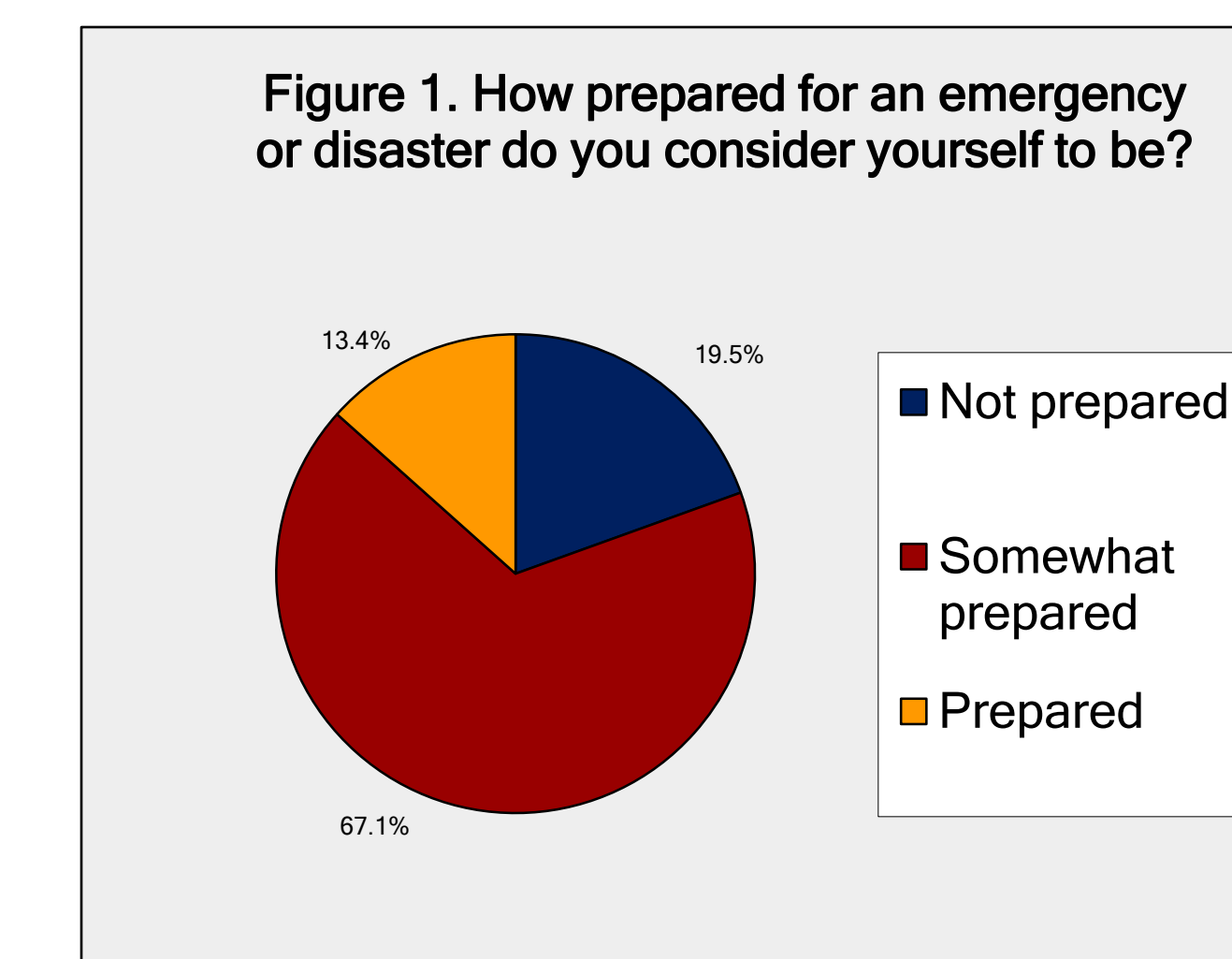
04 Have you taken any emergency preparedness classes or trainings?  
 Yes  No

05 What emergency preparedness trainings would you be interested in? (Check all that apply)  
 Personal preparedness  
 CPR/AED & First Aid  
 Mental health preparedness  
 Potential roles for DHMH employees during an emergency

06 Please choose one item you would like to receive today for your participation.  
 Backpack  Water bottle

## RESULTS

- 257 Preparedness Challenge activities that highlighted the actions they took to prepare.
- 593 state employees went through the POD and completed the screening form. 426 (72%) were DHMH employees.



## CONCLUSION

The National Preparedness Month initiative demonstrated the willingness of health department employees to engage in preparedness activities if they are offered. This presented an opportunity to design better preparedness activities to engage employees further and to improve personal preparedness and therefore resiliency among the staff.



## FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Developing curriculum to train DHMH in employees in Emergency Preparedness
- Providing CPR/AED training to employees
- Regularly sharing email updates on emergency preparedness topics