The Jefferson County Health Action Partnership (HAP) responded to an identified threat to repeal, or allow exemption status for, business policy regulations that are affecting an existing smoke free ordinance in Fairfield, Alabama established in 2006. The smoke free policy in Fairfield is among the most stringent in Alabama, banning smoking in all public places, restaurants, and private clubs. The HAP response included representatives of several organizations affiliated with the HAP, including Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH), United Way of Central Alabama (UWCA), American Lung Association (ALA), American Heart Association (AHA), American Cancer Society (ACS) and Gateway. The aim of this response was to stop the repeal and or granting of exemption status for certain businesses.

Our purpose here is to analyze the event results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this response are as follows:

- The partners and collaborators were diverse, providing various skills, expertise, and perspectives toward the overall effort.
- The efforts of faith-based organizations in mobilizing the community contributed greatly to the success of the response.
- The Partnership provided clear, unified health messages to the public, media, and Fairfield City Council which helped make their case and win the battle.

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the response, several opportunities for improvement in HAP's ability to respond to the incident were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- As with nearly every response effort, despite the overall success, internal communication was identified as an area for improvement to help streamline future responses of this nature.
- In line with internal communication, the need for clearly defining the roles and responsibilities for each of the partners was identified as an area for improvement to ensure all tasks are assigned and completed effectively.
- The absence of a defined command structure led to confusion and ineffective use of time during the course of the response. It is recommended that for future responses, a command structure, such as that used in Incident Command System (ICS), be adopted to ensure proper delegation of tasks and a clear chain of command. It is further recommended that this command structure be made up of a core group of representatives from each of the HAP partner agencies.
- A list detailing tasks to be completed and the agency representatives through which each task should be completed and disseminated so that each agency can then assign tasks to the appropriate individuals in their agency.
- It is recommended the HAP continue to explore ways to improve communication within the partnership.
- It is recommended a core group of representatives from each of the major agencies convene to discuss the response and provide direction and decision-making.

Activity 1.4: Role Clarity

Observation 1.4: Area for Improvement

Recommendations:

- Establishment of an organizational structure, such as that used in the Incident Command System (ICS) for responses to emergencies may be helpful to delineate clear roles and responsibilities.
- Designation of a "point person" on-site (ex. at the Council Meeting that is in charge and maintains a checklist would be helpful in ensuring all tasks are completed).
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Activity 1.5: System of Accountability

Observation 1.5: Area for Improvement

Recommendations:

- A system such as Google Group is accessible to all partners and can be used in assigning tasks and tracking completion. The task list should include deadlines.
- It is recommended that a management structure such as the Incident Command System be developed and utilized.

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