

Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC)

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The PHEOC's main objective is to coordinate the preparation for and response to events of potential risk to public health - epidemic or pandemic. The center must be properly equipped, with adequate human resources, and plans and procedures established to enable a coordinated, rapid response in times of public health emergency, minimizing the negative impact on people's lives.

Background

The PHEOC was created to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health (MOH) to coordinate preparedness and response to public health emergencies (PEM), as well as to ensure oversight whenever necessary. It is a public entity in the National Directorate of Public Health (DNSP) of the MOH. Its functions include, but are not limited to:


- Ensure strategic monitoring and conduct investigations for all public health incidents.
- Prepare operational modalities for response, including at the regional and district levels.
- Command and coordinate ESP response activities and the different actors involved.
- Provide reliable real-time information and analysis supporting decision making.
- Coordinate and ensure more active surveillance for early detection.
- Strengthen multi-sectoral coordination and define multi-sectoral strategies for mitigation, preparedness and response.



Effective management of emergencies

Activities for the effective management of public health emergencies include:

- **Risk assessment:** hazard identification, vulnerability or threat assessment, risk estimation and surveillance, monitoring of potential or evolving threats.
- **Prevention and mitigation:** addressing identified risks in order to prevent them or reduce their impact. For example, disease detection, outbreak prevention and control, vaccination, food and water safety, community education, and social mobilization.
- **Preparation:** capacity assessment, development of plans and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), infrastructure development and maintenance, stock maintenance, procedure design and implementation, capacity building through training and exercises.
- **Detection and response:** surveillance and early detection by rapid response teams, reaction to events according to SOPs, proactive management of an event: e.g. situation assessment, mobilization of treatment and prevention resources, contact tracing, case management and public health social measures.
- **Recovery:** response assessment, restoration of damaged infrastructure and resources, assessment of resource consumption and planning for replacement, restoration of routine surveillance, assessment of response results, implementation of action plans to mitigate risks and improve future responses.



Since 2020, VillageReach has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health in implementing the COVID-19 National Pandemic Response Plan, with emphasis on strengthening the sector's capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

For more information contact:

Arsenio Manhice
Communications and Advocacy Manager
arsenio.manhice@villagereach.org

1.426 Avenida para o Palmar nº 84, Somerschild II,
Maputo, Mozambique
MOBILE +258 8431 80980/8721 80980 TEL +258 214.866.54 FAX +258 214.866.54

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www.villagereach.org