

Practicing what we teach with pandemic influenza



WakeMed chief executive officer Bill Atkinson (right) and emergency responders demonstrate the medical center's preparedness van to Bill Gentry (in blue shirt), health policy and management faculty member and director of the Community Preparedness and Disaster Management program at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

PREPAREDNESS IS A CRITICAL AREA OF OUR School's interdisciplinary expertise. The global public health crisis sparked by the H1N1 flu pandemic tested the depth and breadth of the School's many programs and its training and response capabilities.

"The results of our response have confirmed for us the durability and effectiveness of our planning," says Bill Gentry, director of the School's Community Preparedness and Disaster Management program and health policy and management lecturer.

"We were able to put more than three years of planning into practice," adds Pia MacDonald, PhD, director of the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness (NCCPHP) and research assistant professor of epidemiology.

Our School worked closely with the UNC School of Medicine, UNC Hospitals, local health departments and, especially, the N.C. Division of Health and Human Services to ensure that health care providers, public officials and the general public were aware of H1N1 symptoms, how to avoid spreading the virus, how to contain and treat suspected or confirmed cases and how to plan for treatment in case of exposure. Our experts were quoted in print, broadcast and Web news stories across the state and nation. ■

For more information, see www.sph.unc.edu.