



# MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Public health staff going door to door for training exercise

*Knoxville, Tenn.* – The Knox County Health Department (KCHD), in conjunction with the East Tennessee Regional Health Office of the Tennessee Department of Health, will conduct door-to-door interviews as part of a training exercise on **Wednesday, April 13 and Thursday, April 14**. Staff members from both health departments will interview select residents in Knox, Blount and Sevier Counties using a rapid assessment tool called CASPER, which stands for Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response.

“In an emergency, the CASPER methodology allows officials to rapidly assess the status of a community by visiting pre-selected census blocks and surveying residents,” said KCHD Director Dr. Martha Buchanan. “Answers to questions such as the extent of injuries and illness, whether residents have adequate supplies of water and food, and if utilities are operating help improve an emergency response.”

Data collected from this month’s exercise will help officials gain knowledge about residents’ preparedness for emergencies. Residents will be asked about family emergency plans, including any stockpiles they have prepared and where they might evacuate in the event of a disaster. Teams of two people will conduct the interviews between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on April 13 and 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. on April 14. Staff will be clearly identified with yellow vests and name badges. They will not enter homes nor will they ask for personal information. Residents with questions are encouraged to call 865-215-5093 in Knox County and 865-549-5271 in Blount and Sevier Counties.

After 9/11, health departments across the U.S. took on the role of emergency planning to protect public health in the event of a large-scale medical disaster. Health departments’ emergency preparedness programs encourage and support readiness planning efforts among all community members. In addition to coordinating exercises, the programs foster relationships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, hospitals and others to prepare for and respond to potential hazards.

### About Knox County Health Department:

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is a governmental agency dedicated to making every person a healthy person. As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, KCHD’s mission is to encourage, promote and assure the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices. The organization conducts disease surveillance, prevention and control; emergency preparedness; nutrition and physical activity promotion; tobacco use prevention; health equity promotion; immunizations; and much more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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