

Testimony for the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on
Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications

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"Assessing Central Indiana's Preparedness for a Mass Casualty Incident"

Good morning Congresswoman Brooks, I appreciate this opportunity to work with you again. Senator, Congressman, and Congresswoman, thank you also for the opportunity to share with you a university perspective.

I represent the Office of Emergency Management and Continuity with Indiana University. IU has eight campuses within Indiana, across a distance of 300 miles, and with approximately 150,000 students, faculty, and staff. We also have centers in Wisconsin and Montana, and 6,000 worldwide travelers each year. We abide by national voluntary emergency management standards, and comply with federal regulations, most notably the Higher Education Opportunity Act and the Clery Act. The Clery Act, while noble in its intent, is focused on after-the-fact data accounting, and while IU abides by such regulations, our priority is on prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, to reduce the need for responses and recovery.

In my office, our Emergency Management Directors have somewhat different roles than local emergency managers. We are not just coordinators, but rather, we are expected to be in command of our largest incidents. We expand our own knowledge base through integration with other teams such as the FEMA Search and Rescue Indiana Task Force One, and the State Incident Management Assistance Team. We have responded in command and general staff positions to the Henryville, Indiana EF-4 tornado, which covered 71 square miles, and to Hurricane Sandy on Long Beach Island, New York. We brought those lessons learned back to IU and applied them.

The university environment offers unique challenges in addition to the age-old question of how to get teenagers to pay attention to ANYTHING. We conduct camps for access and functional needs children and sport camps for children of all ages during the summers. We face increasing active shooter threats, have thousands of laboratories, including 900 in Indianapolis alone, have experienced devastation due to flooding, and most campuses of all Indiana universities host major events. For IU, in addition to our 60,000-person football venue, we host international swimming, diving, and track events, concerts, the Nation's largest half-marathon at IUPUI in Indianapolis, and the Little 500 at IU in Bloomington. This year, the Komen Race for the Cure and Little 5 happened on the same day, and both occurred less than a week after the Boston Marathon bombings.

With so many events of significant size, preparations for mass fatality and mass casualty incidents is forefront. Two weeks ago, I presented on Mass Fatality/Mass Casualty incidents at the National Sport Safety and Security Conference. My focus in these efforts is to expand the traditional mindset of game-day operations into the “what-if” scenarios. We need to instill a sense of advance planning and complete synchronization of public safety and event management in advance of a major incident. We need to have a standardized common operating picture for ALL responders and event management, and ensure adequate plans, training, and exercises in advance. We have integrated this approach into IU football and are expanding to other events and campuses as well.

In early June of this year, IU provided the Incident Management Team and served in unified command with the Bloomington Fire Department for a three-site search and rescue exercise that was spearheaded by the Indiana National Guard and the Israeli Defense Forces.

The lessons learned from this exercise cannot be replicated in a classroom or with any amount of equipment. For prevention of a mass casualty incident, equipment becomes key. But for the response to a mass casualty incident, the true ability to manage the situation lies not with the equipment, but with the ability of the responders to mentally grasp the situation, adapt and be flexible, and work within a larger organizational structure than most have ever faced. The incident management perspective of command of the whole incident, which consists primarily of COORDINATION of all resources and the setting of JOINT priorities rather than maintaining control of individual department resources is paramount. These organizational and individual capabilities are honed through rigorous training and exercises that build on all-hazards plans.

In advance of disasters, IU coordinates extensively with local, state and national organizations. IU has excellent cooperation with law enforcement for active shooter exercises, and we depend on local fire departments for day-to-day responses. We continue to work with these departments surrounding all IU campuses on the integration with IU’s response team and command capabilities.

IU has built incident management teams on each campus, and a system-wide IMT. As a wholly encompassed institution, rather than individually managed departments, IU has uniquely sustainable team capabilities, and we focus existing knowledge areas into incident command system roles. For example, Purchasing becomes Logistics. All faculty, staff, and students have a role in a disaster.

In terms of funding for preparedness, IU is confronted with a funding quandary that exists for homeland security grants. IU is a quasi-state entity, which means that we are eligible for the state portion of homeland security funding. However, very little state funding is available, and local funding is not available directly for universities. We have been fortunate in our achievement of two Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) grants over five years, but that funding stream is no

longer available. Such funding, with refocused guidelines, would be helpful for universities, especially in regard to preparedness for CBRNE and other major incidents.

In summary, universities are progressing in their planning for mass casualty/mass fatality incidents, and increased local coordination and federal funding would assist progress. The Incident Command System works well for all jurisdictions – federal, state, local, tribal, AND universities - not just for incidents but also for major events, and all-hazards advance planning - including the “what-if”, visionary components - will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of any response.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony, and will answer any questions at the appropriate time. Thank you.