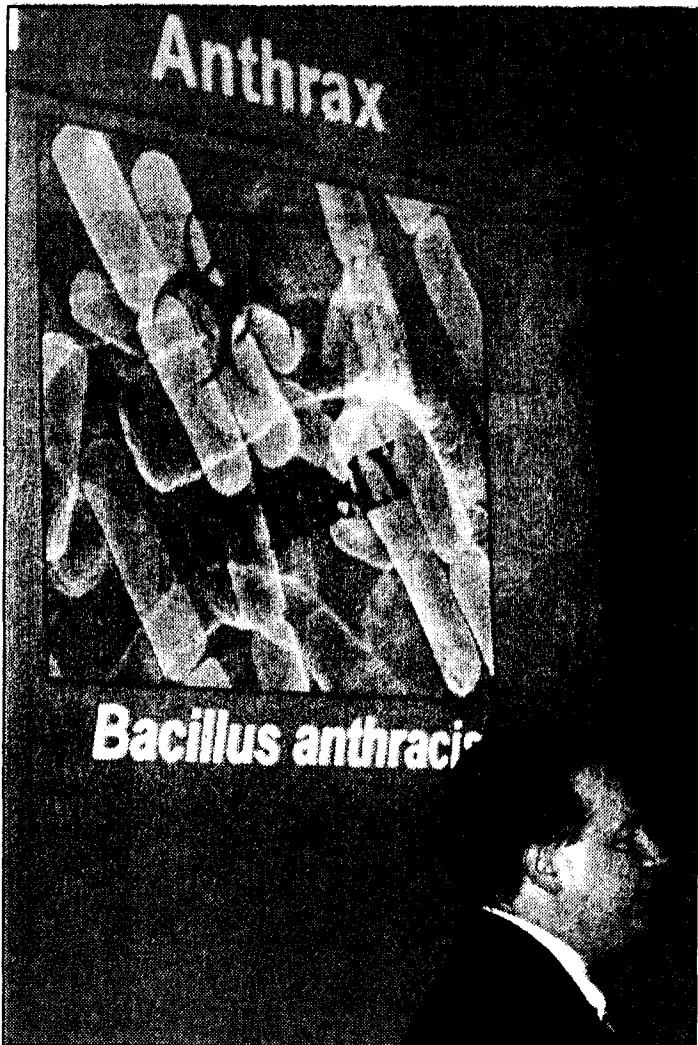


Being prepared for the worst



CHRISTIAN GIGGENBACH/THE REGISTER-HERALD

Dr. Raymond Swinton of the University of Texas speaks on the treatment and hazards of anthrax during the basic disaster life support training seminar held at The Greenbrier on Tuesday. The one-day course offered health care providers and EMS officials practical approaches to mass casualty scenarios.

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Training seminar teaches some basics for dealing with disaster

By Christian Giggenbach
REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS — "In order to be fully prepared for any type of disaster, it takes a coordinated response from everyone involved; from the first responders at the scene to the doctors and nurses in the hospitals," Dr. Cathy Slempp, director of threat preparedness for the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health, said during the first basic disaster life support training seminar held Tuesday at The Greenbrier.

"The BDLS is a core course in how to have standing operational procedures in effect so that everyone will use common methods of how to respond in a crisis," She said.

The one-day course taught health care providers, emergency medical technicians, firefighters and other responders disaster preparedness training. Instruction ran the gamut of all types of hazards, including natural and accidental events. During the comprehensive mass casualty management program, instructors taught practical approaches to handling chemical, biological and nuclear disasters.

Dr. Ronald Scobbo, clinical professor of medicine at the West Virginia University School of Medicine and chair of the event, said the response from this training seminar has been profound.

"One of the goals is professional education, and we are happy to be able to offer the first BDLS course in the state of West Virginia," Scobbo said. "We have nearly 200 participants from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky."

Scobbo said those who complete the training will receive continuing education credits, a four-year national certificate of training, and will be eligible for the advanced disaster life support course. The BDLS and ADLS courses are developed and sponsored by the American Medical Association.

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The Southeastern Area Health Education Center at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and Greenbrier Valley Medical Center supported the effort through donations and by providing staff at the training.

Scobbo said these health care institutions normally compete with each other in the marketplace, but have come together for the good of the community.

"This demonstrates what we can do when we work together to better protect and respond to the needs of the public in times of crisis," He said. "Hopefully, we will not need to mobilize all of our resources, but it is good to know that we are prepared if the need arises."

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Dr. Raymond Swinton of the University of Texas, an instructor who developed the seminar, said he has taught the course the last two years in over 20 states.

"We are trying to simplify and unify the approach to possible mass casualties from any type of hazard," Swinton said after teaching the biological section of the course. "If people on the scene of a disaster already have set procedures to follow, then we believe it is possible to save lives."

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