



Chief Health Security Officer

Duties and Qualifications

In 2021, the [AAHC President's Council on Health Security](#) examined the role of academic health centers in advancing the readiness, response, recovery and resiliency to public health threats that endanger the health status of individuals and populations. As a component of its charge, the Council hosted an AAHC Annual Meeting session during which AAHC members participated in a brainstorming exercise to describe the key duties and qualifications of a Chief Health Security Officer (CHSO). While we recognize that some academic health centers have multiple leads or a team for health security, in this exercise we focused on an individual CHSO. Below are the participants' recommendations for the duties and qualifications of a CHSO.

CHSO's duties could include, but are not limited to:

- Authority and ongoing full-time responsibility for the full spectrum of readiness, response, and recovery efforts across all types of potential threats to health security (i.e., biological, chemical, radiological, cyber, natural disaster)
- Building and mobilizing an effective crisis response team that is empowered to respond to a variety of public health threats
- Educating all those who work and learn at an academic health center about health security, including each individual's responsibilities to maintain and advance health security goals
- Serving as a liaison to local, national and international health and security entities
- Interfacing with and organizing leaders across the academic health center before, during, and after a public health threat
- Coordinating with the C-suite to ensure that the academic health center's health security measures align with its strategic plan and mission

- Designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating an institutional response system, including a communication plan for internal and external deployment
- Identifying and rectifying health security vulnerabilities within the academic health center
- Coordinating the procurement and deployment of emergency resources in a crisis, including surge staffing
- Conducting simulated drills and training opportunities to prepare the academic health center for crisis events
- Securing necessary supply chains to address the public health threat

The CHSO should have the following qualifications:

- Ability to effectively lead, organize and mobilize diverse teams of individuals across the academic health center
- Experience in a leadership position, including in a heavily matrixed organization
- Excellent communication skills across a wide variety of audiences (e.g., internal academic health center community, the local population, and state and federal agencies)
- Respect of highest-level colleagues
- Experience creating and executing complex plans
- Knowledge of population health, infectious diseases and/or other medical skills
- Knowledge of and ability to manage supply chains
- Ability to effectively lead, organize and mobilize diverse teams of individuals across the academic health center
- Well-networked with experts in the field
- Experience as a problem solver

Participants suggested that this individual should report to the academic health center's Chief Executive Officer and be directly integrated into the C-Suite. This reporting structure was recommended as participants felt that it would provide efficiency in securing necessary resources, provide the necessary authority, and facilitate communication efforts.