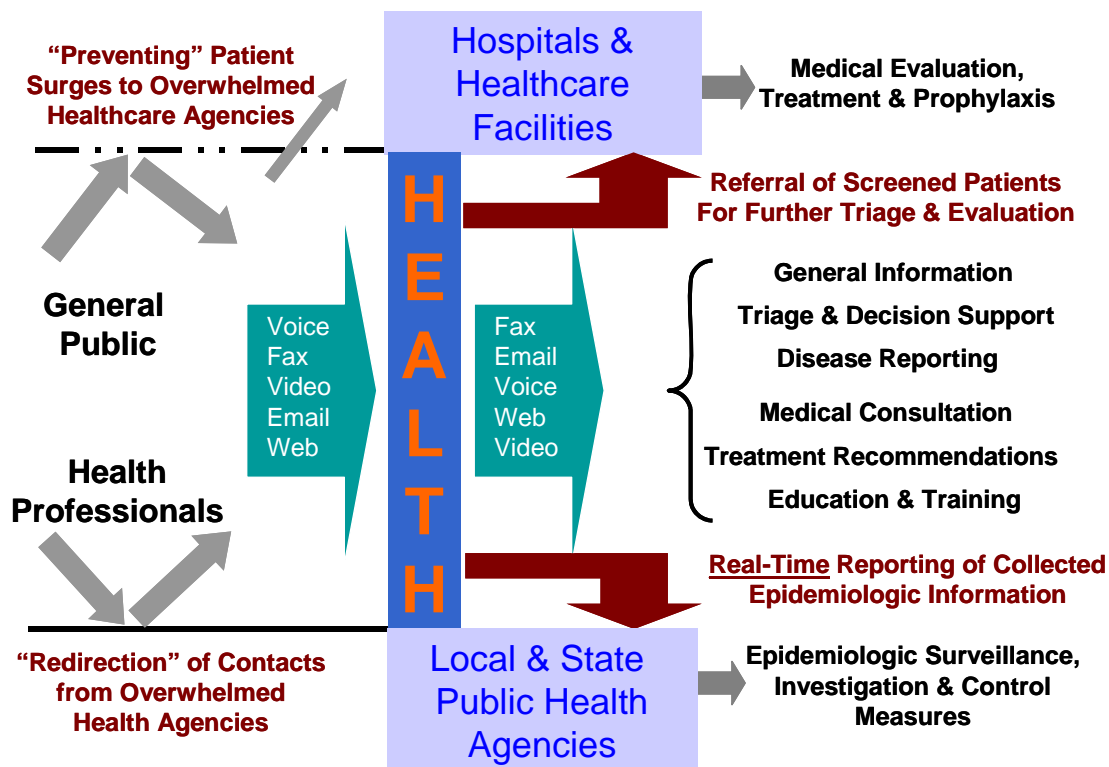


## Rocky Mountain Regional Health Emergency Assistance Line and Triage Hub (HEALTH)

During bioterrorism or public health emergencies the surge of individuals turning to their public health agencies and medical providers for information will overwhelm hospitals and healthcare delivery systems. A better way of handling these public information needs and health concerns must be developed. Poison centers and nurse lines perform similar health information and decision support duties daily, and are capable of taking on a larger role when community health emergencies dictate the need.

Toward this end, we have developed a model for the Rocky Mountain Regional Health Emergency Assistance Line and Triage Hub (HEALTH) under an Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ) task order. This 21<sup>st</sup> century contact center would provide medical and public health information through an array of communication modalities, and be highly integrated with other public health and healthcare agencies. Its goal would be to reduce the patient surge demands on the traditional “brick and mortar” healthcare delivery system facilities while allowing public health agencies to focus on epidemiology and control measures during a public health emergency. The model concept is shown below:

### HEALTH EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE & TRIAGE HUB (HEALTH)



We plan to create such a contact center over time and as funding allows to better serve our communities. All health call centers can evaluate their capabilities to respond to a health emergency with a tool we developed to determine potential call volume based on levels of concern and community population (<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/health/>). The Colorado Health Emergency Line for the Public (CO HELP) was developed in partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment to implement portions of the HEALTH model and has been in daily operation since July 2003, including several seasons of West Nile Virus and influenza outbreaks. For additional information about the CO HELP program or the AHRQ task orders, please contact Gregory M. Bogdan, PhD at 303-739-1239 ([greg.bogdan@rmpdc.org](mailto:greg.bogdan@rmpdc.org)) or Anna Seroka, RN, MEd at 303-739-1252 ([anna.seroka@rmpdc.org](mailto:anna.seroka@rmpdc.org)).