



# Pandemic Influenza

## Get Informed...Be Prepared

*A newsletter for Minnesota organizations preparing for a possible influenza pandemic.*

**January 2007**  
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Pandemic Flu Planning Team

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January 2007

DNR avian flu monitoring gives state's wild flocks a clean bill of health  
In this first 2007 issue of *Pandemic Influenza*, we're celebrating Minnesota's wildlife, going through (Minnesota Response) Phases, and building a profile of the citizen most likely to plan for a pandemic influenza. On January 16, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that after testing more than 2,000 wild ducks, there were no cases of the high pathology H5N1 virus found. To date, only six cases of a low path form of H5N1 have been found in North America, none of them in Minnesota.

Also in this issue:

- The Department of Public Safety Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) issues Minnesota Response Phases for avian and pandemic flu in a new publication, page 2.
- Minnesota Center for Survey Research reports hard data on how prepared citizens are for a pandemic or other serious statewide emergency, page 3.

**The state of antiviral purchasing: Minnesota wants full federal allowance, offers discount purchase to hospital and healthcare partners**

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) conducted a survey in October 2006 of states and territories to determine antiviral purchasing and stockpiling plans. Only 12 of the 45 responding states (including Minnesota) have antivirals in their stockpiles. Only two of those had supplies of 100,000 courses (a full 10 days of treatment) or more.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Pandemic Influenza Plan calls for stockpiling sufficient antiviral medication to treat 25 percent of the U.S. population during a pandemic, or 81 million courses of treatment. So far, the federal government is purchasing 50 million doses and states may buy up to 31 million doses at a subsidized price negotiated with two drug manufacturers.

Minnesota plans to purchase the entire amount allocated to the state, if sufficient funding is available. The state has established regional caches of medical supplies to make sure that help can reach Minnesotans quickly no matter where they live.

In addition, the MDH recently invited partners in hospitals, health care organizations and local public health to purchase antivirals through the discounted federal program. Antivirals can only be used during a pandemic and will have a shelf life of five years. Partners have indicated interest, and some are already building a supply.

For more information about purchase of antivirals for your facility, contact Tina Firkus, MDH Office of Emergency Preparedness, (651) 201-5701, [tina.firkus@health.state.mn.us](mailto:tina.firkus@health.state.mn.us).

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**CDC awards \$11.4 million to develop rapid diagnostic tests for avian flu**

A suspected case of avian flu arrives in your clinic or emergency room. Wouldn't it be great to have a test that could detect flu viruses and differentiate seasonal from an H5N1 virus within 30 minutes?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded \$11.4 million to four companies developing rapid diagnostic tests for avian flu. These point-of-care flu tests would speed identification of potential H5N1 viruses, since time would be critical in eliminating the avian reservoir of the virus and finding other potential human cases. The CDC also will provide funds for a repository for influenza reagents and materials needed to develop these new diagnostic tests. For more information about the tests, see <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r061204.htm>

**HSEM introduces Minnesota Response Phases in new *Pandemic Planner***

What are the decision points that escalate the pace of avian and pandemic flu planning, prevention and response efforts? The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined response **phases**, and the U.S. later defined **stages**, at which preparation and response efforts change. In January 2007, HSEM introduced the state's version, the Minnesota Response Phases, in a new publication, *The Pandemic Planner*. The Minnesota Response Phases establish avian flu outbreak phases and human pandemic phases. The three systems are shown in the table below.

If you are tracking the progress of avian or pandemic influenza in these systems, we are in WHO Phase 3 (no or very limited human-to-human transmission); U.S. Stage 0; and Minnesota Response Phase A0. Only low pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been detected in North American birds, none of which have been found in Minnesota.

	WHO Phase	U.S. Stage	Minnesota Response Phase
<b>Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Outbreak</b>	Phase 1: Low risk of human cases	Stage 0: New domestic animal outbreak in at-risk country	Phase A0: HPAI outbreak nonexistent or overseas
	Phase 2: Higher risk of human cases		Phase A1: HPAI outbreak in wild animal in North America
	Phase 3: No or very limited human-to-human transmission		Phase A2: HPAI outbreak in wild animal in Minnesota
<b>Pandemic Influenza Outbreak</b>	Phase 3: No or very limited human-to-human transmission	Stage 1: Suspected human outbreak overseas	Phase P0: Suspected human outbreak overseas
	Phase 4: Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission	Stage 2: Confirmed human outbreak overseas	Phase P1: Confirmed, sustained human-to-human transmission overseas
	Phase 5: Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission		
	Phase 6: Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission	Stage 3: Widespread human outbreaks in multiple locations overseas	Phase P2: Suspected or confirmed human case in North America
		Stage 4: First human case in North America	Phase P3: Outbreak in the U.S.
		Stage 5: Spread throughout the U.S.	Phase P4: Suspected or confirmed human case in Minnesota
		Stage 6: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves	Phase P5: Limited outbreak in Minnesota
			Phase P6: Widespread throughout Minnesota
		Phase P7: Recovery and preparation for subsequent waves	

## Public Information Campaign

### Are Minnesotans ready for a pandemic?

#### Public opinion survey shows state of personal, family emergency preparedness

The Minnesota Center for Survey Research issued a report on its 2006 statewide omnibus survey, and five of the questions were designed to give the MDH and HSEM a baseline for evaluating the public information campaign. A summary of the basic data from the Pandemic Flu Planning Team's five questions will be available on the MDH's Web site at the end of January. (See the summary and, eventually, further analysis at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/pandemic/index.html>). Meanwhile, a few observations:

- We won't stay home when we're sick: 58 percent of the 803 adults interviewed "rarely" or "never" stay home from work, school or other activities when we have a respiratory illness.
- Many of us take care of people in our homes: 18 percent "almost always" and 14 percent "sometimes" care for someone at home who has a medical or mental health condition.
- We need to keep promoting flu shots for adults: 41 percent of those surveyed had not gotten a flu shot in the last five years.
- Rural Minnesotans are more prepared for emergencies than urban Minnesotans. However, urban Minnesotans are more likely to be taking care of someone with a medical or mental health condition in their homes.
- Men are slightly more prepared for emergencies than women on all indicators. Women are slightly more likely to get a flu shot than men.
- The older a Minnesotan becomes, the more sensible a flu shot looks – 66 percent of those 65 and over report getting a flu shot every year.

## Exercises

The MDH, in conjunction with many state and local partners, will hold the Non-pharmaceutical Interventions-Community Disease Containment Tabletop Exercise on School Closings on January 29, 2007, 9:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. at Snelling Office Park. This tabletop exercise is intended to:

- Provide key local decision makers and community leaders with a forum for exchanging information about policy issues pertaining to the closure of K-12

level schools as a possible pandemic influenza containment measure;

- Facilitate planning at the local level and assess the impact of school closures as a potential means to counter a pandemic influenza outbreak; and
- Provide valuable feedback for policy formulation at all levels of government.

The exercise will last approximately six hours. Four tabletop exercises will be conducted simultaneously to represent four designated target areas:

- Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) (Dakota County)
- Urban (Olmsted County)
- Suburban (Carver County)
- Rural (Carlton and Douglas Counties)

Every attempt has been made to represent a variety of local perspectives, but MDH was unable to have each local health department represented because of space and deadline constraints. The MDH recognizes that many local health departments have been working closely with schools and community partners on school closings and continue to do valuable work in this area of pandemic flu planning. Exercise participants invited to represent the target areas will be seated at tables with a discussion facilitator and recorder. The moderator will lead the exercise and script presentation. There will be three scripts based on three fictional video broadcasts with approximately 60 minutes for discussion. The evaluators will focus on whether the objectives of the exercise were achieved during the course of the discussions. At the end of the three videos and discussions, a large group summary and hotwash will be held. The scenario, results and lessons learned will be available after the exercise.

### DHS compiles follow-up on regional pandemic flu workshops for LEP populations

Representatives of 64 agencies and organizations working with limited English proficiency (LEP) populations participated in six regional pandemic influenza workshops this fall. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and MDH reached one major conclusion: more effort is needed to reach LEP populations with information about pandemic flu planning. Other barriers to pan flu: no sense of urgency among LEP populations, lack of resources to educate LEP populations, population mobility, and lack of translations or material for people who can't read. Find out more about the meetings at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/topics/panflu.html>.

## Pandemic Flu Digest

This month, we discovered a substantial number of really tasty pandemic flu publications, Web sites and materials. Here's the smorgasbord for January:

### Publications

- The Institute of Medicine has released a report, *Modeling Community Containment for Pandemic Influenza*, which covers influenza pandemic models and how they can be used to predict the effects of various community containment policies on disease transmission. Read it at <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3793/37624/39066.aspx>.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has released a report summarizing progress made to date on the *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan*. Read the report at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/federal/strateryimplementationplan.html>.
- DHHS also has a new checklist, "Pandemic Preparedness Planning for U.S. Businesses with Overseas Operations," that will help multinational businesses continue to function during a pandemic. Find it at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/business/businessoversea.html>.
- The Indian Health Service issued a *Pandemic Influenza Planning Workbook* to assist American Indian and Alaska Natives in pandemic planning. Access this resource online at [http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/epi/pi/documents/Pandemic\\_Influenza\\_Planning\\_Workbook.pdf](http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/epi/pi/documents/Pandemic_Influenza_Planning_Workbook.pdf).
- For a great overview of the emergence of the H5N1 virus, count on the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which recently published "H5N1 Influenza – Continuing Evolution and Spread," by Robert G. Webster, Ph.D., and Elena A. Govorkova, M.D., Ph.D, on November 23, 2006. Download the paper at <http://www.nejm.org>.
- Two new MDH brochures provide suggestions to reduce stress during a pandemic. Find both, "Self-care Tips for Healthcare Responders during a Pandemic Influenza" and "Self-care Tips for Human Services Providers during a Pandemic Influenza," by clicking on the appropriate links at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/oep/planning/mhimpact.html>.

'Ready to Respond' features all-hazards news. Looking for news about health-related emergency preparedness for all hazards? You can subscribe to *Ready to Respond MDH Preparedness Newsletter*, a quarterly online newsletter from the MDH Office of Emergency Preparedness. The January issue covers the MN.TRAIN learning management system, respiratory protection toolkit for healthcare, amateur radio questionnaire and more. Subscribe now to *Ready to Respond* at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/oep/news/newnews.html>.

### Events

It's coming up quickly, so don't miss the **Preparedness Practicum 2007** on January 26, 2007, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Park. The goal of the practicum, sponsored by Hennepin County Medical Center, is to provide an overview of local medical surge capacity and consequence planning, as well as educating attendees about the challenges of planning for national political conventions. Find out more or register at <http://www.hcmc.org/education/cme/documents/disasterpracticum2007.pdf>.

HSEM's **Avian and Pandemic Influenza Regional Business Symposiums** begin at the end of the month, so get these dates on your calendar:

- January 31, Roseau, City Center Meeting Room
- February 2, Duluth, Radisson Hotel Harborview
- February 5, St. Cloud, St. Cloud Civic Center
- February 12, Rochester, Radisson Plaza Hotel
- February 27, Marshall, Southwest Minnesota State University
- March 1, Moorhead, AmericInn Lodge
- March 21, Rosemount, Rosemount Community Ctr.
- March 22, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Tech. College

Symposiums are 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., free, and can be registered for online at <http://www.hsem.state.mn.us>.

### The Last Word...

Indonesian health officials say bogus advertising claims have gone too far. Manufacturers of air conditioners are advertising that their products can kill the bird flu virus using new technologies, including a substance derived from kimchi, a Korean pickle concoction, seen below. These claims, aired in newspaper and TV ads, are disputed by Indonesian scientists, who call them misleading and unproved. As of January 15, Indonesia has had 79 cases of avian influenza among humans and, of those, 61 deaths.

