



Pandemic Influenza

Get Informed...Be Prepared

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

June 2007
Vol. 2, No. 6

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June 2007

Minnesota Pandemic Ethics Project

May 29th marked the first meeting of the Resource Allocation Panel of the Minnesota Pandemic Ethics Project. The panel's charge is to recommend ethical framework(s) to MDH for rationing scarce health-related resources during a severe influenza pandemic.

The panel is a diverse group of more than 40 Minnesotans (representing health, business, government, non-profit, and community organizations), including members of the project team from the Minnesota Center for Health Care Ethics and the University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics. The panel plans to meet a half-day monthly for six months.

Between panel meetings, several small work groups will be convened to explore in greater depth resource allocation issues and then advise the panel. The first of these groups to be formed, the ventilator work group, held their initial meeting on June 20th. Look for continuing updates on this project in upcoming issues.

Also in this issue:

- FAQs on community strategies (NPIs), page 2

codeReady Continues its Success!

The codeReady campaign has been underway for the last month and a half. It has been tremendously successful across the entire state. Thanks to all of you who have helped to ensure this success!

The week of June 18th, codeReady received local and national recognition. The Star Tribune featured codeReady in a front page article (<http://www.startribune.com/462/story/1251718.html>). Additionally, Dr. Greg Dworkin, MD, Founding Editor of Flu Wiki and Flu Wiki Forum and Chief of Pediatric Pulmonary and Medical Director of the Pediatric Inpatient Unit at Danbury Hospital in Connecticut, featured codeReady as a "best practice" in the Health and Human Services Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog (<http://blog.pandemicflu.gov/?p=101>).

codeReady has also heard reports from local citizens and professionals from across the state and country. Some of these comments include:

"Great job on codeReady - excellent resource well beyond your state's boundaries."

--Jeff Rubin, PhD, CEM(r), Emergency Manager, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue, Washington, OR

"I was very pleased when I saw a codeReady billboard on Shepherd Road on the way to my house!!! Great location--it definitely gets lots of traffic heading out to the S, SW, & SE suburbs. Not to mention the bikers and walkers along that path."

--Nila J. Gouldin, MPH, African American/African Health Coordinator, Office of Minority and Multicultural Health

"Just think this is a fantastic website. Well done. Easy to understand and organized too. Appreciate all the work and care that went into creating the 'Code Ready' campaign and website. This information is so important! Thank you, thank you!"

--The Jasper family of Edina

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**codeReady Continues its Success!
(cont.)**

The codeReady site itself has received visits from Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa in addition to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Sixty-nine percent of visitors to the codeReady site go beyond the home page into various sections of the website.

Total number of contacts made by the codeReady Tour between May 5 th - June 10 th	10,988
Total number of single visits to www.codeReady.org between May 2 nd – June 19 th	29,564
Total number of codeReady plans created between May 2 nd – June 19 th	1,801
Total number of codeReady kits created between May 2 nd – June 19 th	3,744

With codeReady’s success comes the opportunity for growth and expansion. Development of the campaign (phase I) was funded by dollars allocated to MDH last year by the state legislature. This initial funding expires June 30, 2007. Discussions regarding the implementation of phase II of the campaign, beginning July 1 and beyond, have begun.

On Tuesday, June 12, 2007, leadership from the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), the Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM) and the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Association (MEMA) met to discuss codeReady’s future. A plan to continue the campaign has been developed and will be sustained by state agencies and our multiple partners.

However, there will be some changes to the campaign’s structure. The MDH role of coordinator/co-lead on the campaign will now shift to that of a content expert and partner. As of July 1, 2007, DPS will be the lead and responsible coordinating agency for codeReady, assuming the responsibilities for managing the campaign and the codeReady website. This transition will take some time to complete, so please be patient as these changes occur over the coming months.

As part of the codeReady transition, an Executive Team has been formed by DPS, MDH, AMEM, MEMA, and HSEM leadership. The Executive Team is comprised of representatives from MDH, American Red Cross, HSEM, AMEM, DPS, Hennepin County, local public health, and local business. More information on the campaign’s configuration will be released by DPS.

For questions about phase II of the codeReady campaign, please feel free to contact Chris Krueger (DPS) at 651-201-7171 or Craig Acomb (MDH) at 651-201-5661.

**FAQs about community strategies—
non-pharmaceutical interventions**

As we continue to raise awareness of non-pharmaceutical interventions and the role they may play in communities during a pandemic, we have received many thought-provoking inquiries from across the state. Here is Part 1 of a two-part series addressing some of your questions.

Q: Can the Governor close businesses or sporting events?

A: Under Minn. Stat., § 12.21, subds. 3(1) and (7), if specific emergency conditions warrant, the Governor has the authority to direct closure or institute limitations relating to public and private post-secondary educational facilities, and private elementary and secondary school facilities.

The Governor has the authority to limit public gatherings and movement of the public.

The Governor also has the authority to order control or prohibit gatherings that increase disease transmission during a pandemic. This would include possible orders that place limits on, require protective measures, or prohibit public gatherings. Although any order would be viewpoint neutral, the order could impact religious gatherings and gatherings in other places where large groups of people congregate in close quarters. Discussions continue with religious organization leaders across the state.

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Q: What responsibility/authority do local jurisdictions have regarding enforcement in the event that the Governor decides to limit public gatherings? Are local governments responsible for enforcing that a business close (or stay closed) if the Governor has decided they should close, but they refuse to comply?

A: *The Governor's orders in a declared emergency have full force and effect of law. Local police and sheriffs would be expected to carry them out. It would be a misdemeanor to violate them.*

Q: Can the Governor close schools across the entire state?

A: *Under Minn. Stat., § 12.21, subd. 3(11) of the Minnesota Emergency Management Act of 1996, the Governor can authorize the Commissioner of Education to alter school schedules, curtail school activities or order schools closed for public elementary and secondary schools including public charter schools, pre-kindergarten programs, and vocational center schools.*

Q: Will the Governor close schools for the entire state at one time?

A: *If appropriate under the specific circumstances, an aggressive and pro-active stance appropriate to closures of schools will be taken in order to mitigate the impact of a pandemic. The timing and duration of school closures will occur with epidemiological input from the Department of Health and logistical input from the Department of Education. Epidemiological evidence will be considered as it is known; however, specific epidemiological evidence may not be available until the end of a pandemic.*

Q: If schools close, will day care centers close as well?

A: *If appropriate under the specific circumstances, the Department of Human Services (which regulates daycare centers) will apply the same recommendations for school closings to daycare facilities. If needed, the Governor may issue appropriate orders or rules under Minn. Stat., § 12.21, subs. 3(1) and (7) in relation to the emergency.*

Q: Can the Governor reopen schools?

A: *The Governor has the authority to request the Commissioner of Education to rescind all or part of a*

school closure order. The decision to re-open schools will be based on scientific and epidemiological information including the progression and severity of a pandemic. The Governor will be advised on re-opening schools by the Commissioners of Health, Education, Public Safety, Human Services and Higher Education. Additionally, adequate numbers of staff, students, and teachers as well as parent support are needed to re-open schools. Premature re-opening of schools could exacerbate transmission and will be carefully considered.

Q: Are there laws/enforcement issues if local citizens decide that they are going to bury the bodies of deceased loved ones in their back yard?

A: *The burial of human remains is regulated by MN Statutes 149A. 94 and 306 & 307. Under normal circumstances, a person could not legally bury a person except for in a designated cemetery (unless it was cremated remains that they were burying). Under emergency circumstances, the Governor could use MN Statutes 12.381, subd. 1 to allow for burial of human remains on private property if he chose to do so.*

Look for Part 2 of this FAQ series (isolation & quarantine) in next month's newsletter.

Education and Training

Community Strategies That May Delay or Reduce the Impact of a Pandemic: Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) *An Orientation for County Commissioners and Other Elected Officials* (Video Available)

The June 11th MDH video conference for local elected officials on NPIs is now available for check out from the MDH library. Call 651-201-5095 or send an email to library@health.state.mn.us to request a video loan.

Additional resources related to pandemic influenza community mitigation strategies (including the agenda and Power Point from this presentation) can be found at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/pandemic/plan/index.html>

If you have any questions, please contact Denise Dunn at denise.dunn@health.state.mn.us

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Education and Training (cont.)

Pandemic Influenza Information for First Responders: The Basics

A satellite conference and live web cast on July 19, 12:00-1:30 p.m. (Central Time), produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health. To register go to:

<http://www.adph.org/alphntn/>

Exercises

National Pandemic Influenza Exercise
Evaluation of an exercise developed by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing to test the capacity and capability of that country's health system to prevent, detect, and respond to a flu pandemic:

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/FA080A821420BB98CA2572F10081078A/\\$File/exercise-cumpston-report.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/FA080A821420BB98CA2572F10081078A/$File/exercise-cumpston-report.pdf)

Communication

The Pandemic Influenza e-newsletter is always looking for good ideas from regional and local partners. To submit your good ideas, contact Denise Dunn, 651-201-5560 or denise.dunn@health.state.mn.us

Pandemic Flu Digest

Resources of interest

- The Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog, a communication experiment to encourage the public to join conversations on pandemic influenza preparedness was launched by HHS on May 22. <http://blog.pandemicflu.gov/>
- New guidance document from OSHA: *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Guidance for Healthcare Workers and Healthcare Employers*, covers clinical information on influenza, infection control, pandemic influenza preparedness, and specific OSHA standards. http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_pandemic_health.pdf

- FDA issues final recommendations to increase the supply of safe and effective influenza vaccines for both seasonal and pandemic use. Read more about it at:

<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01645.html>

- A nationwide survey by Rutgers University indicates that many Americans have misconceptions about food safety issues related to avian influenza. Find the report at:

http://www.foodpolicyinstitute.org/docs/reports/FPI_AI_Report_Final_c_2007.pdf

<http://www.roche.com/home/media/med-cor/med-cor-2007/med-cor-2007-04-26.htm>

The Last Word...

Clothing created to block flu and colds

Wouldn't it be nice if your coat could snatch viruses out of the air before they could make you sick?



Help may be at hand from collaboration between American scientists and designers, whose range of futuristic clothes use nanotechnology to destroy viruses and scrub pollutants from the air.

Juan Hinestroza, a chemical engineer at Cornell University, has even been called in by the U.S. military to brief them on the idea because clothes that protect against all kinds of poisons could be priceless during chemical or biological warfare.

The garments are unique in that they are coated with microscopic nanoparticles designed to capture viruses and bacteria but look just like regular clothing. The garments are unlikely to find a mass market just yet though as the material costs are prohibitive.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=3153026&page=1>