

fast FACTS...

about Sedgwick County Government



Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Update

July 23, 2007

Sedgwick County
Health Department

1900 E. 9th Street

Wichita, Kansas

67214

316-660-7300

www.sedgwickcounty.org

PIWG Sub-committee Updates:

The Pandemic Influenza Work Group (PIWG) Steering Committee met on July 17th.

Roderick (Rod) Harris was introduced as the new Director of the Center for Health Equity at the Sedgwick County Health Department. His office is at the East 9th Street Health Department location. During the meeting, the Chairs of each subcommittee reported out on the progress they have made since the last meeting:

- **First Responder and Medical First Receiver:** EMS is considering doing nose swabs later in the year on employees who have a fever of 101-degrees or higher as a means of checking for influenza. This has been done in the past and was successful in keeping those who were sick from coming to work. They are also looking at giving flu vaccinations. This was done last year for EMS personnel and the hopes are to expand it to other first responders.
- **Behavioral Health:** Plans to meet the first part of August to revisit past materials and review new resources obtained from the committee members over the past several months. Of interest is an easy-to-use card to help non-professionals screen for signs of stress.
- **Faith-based:** Recently mailed out surveys to various churches. Many responses have been received and await analysis.
- **Surveillance, Monitoring, and Investigation:** Met with developers of First Watch to see if the system is going to be able to meet their needs. Contact has been made with the Lubbock, Texas Health Department regarding their use of the SYRIS surveillance system. A few of the Wichita Clinic branches are being added as sentinel sites and a one month free trial of the Real-Time Outbreak Disease Surveillance System (RODS) is underway.

- **Communications:** Meeting with Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) at the end of the month to further discuss strategies for promoting seasonal influenza prevention during the back-to-school season.
- **Mass Pharmaceutical Distribution:** Initially were considering a mass vaccination exercise for the fall. Information gathered showed that 4,000 doses of vaccine would be needed in order to exercise the plan. Because there are not enough funds to support this, other options will be considered.
- **Special Populations (schools):** Work continues on a symptom reporting process with USD 259. Protocols will need to be developed for the Health Department's response to information received.
- **Animal Surveillance:** Developed a flyer for bird owners in conjunction with the communications subcommittee. This flyer will be distributed if and when the bird flu makes its way to the United States.

Upcoming meetings:

- The next PIWG Steering Committee meeting is August 21, 2007.
- The next PIWG all member meeting is September 18, 2007.



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National Update:

The Associated Press reports that more than 50,000 turkeys on an unidentified farm west of Mount Jackson, Virginia have tested positive for antibodies of low pathogenic avian flu. The H5 viral strain is not the severe, highly pathogenic one that has infected flocks and humans overseas. More testing and surveillance will be conducted within a six-mile radius of the farm to prevent the virus from spreading.

Stanford University students have proposed a model for a local pandemic influenza information hotline staffed by home-based volunteers. People calling in would be greeted by an automated message asking for their language preference and the reason for the call. Emergency calls could be routed directly to experts, bypassing the volunteer. Non-emergency calls would be handled by volunteers who would use a computer program to obtain local pandemic information on the Internet by typing in the caller's zip code. Callers could receive information on such topics as hygiene, local school closures, and how to stay healthy during a pandemic. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department is helping the students develop the hotline for potential use by government agencies, businesses, and other organizations. Currently, there is no national hotline established to provide information in the event of a pandemic. The students working on the project are developing a hotline model for their local area and a general model that could be used by anyone in the country.

International News:

Recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) assembled 100 influential leaders from the employer, faith-based, civic and healthcare communities to participate in a forum to help Americans

become more prepared for an influenza pandemic. The messages and materials developed by HHS will provide leaders with tools they can use when working with the public on personal pandemic flu preparedness. At the forum, HHS recommended the following specific actions to help community members prepare.

- Communicate to your community that it is critical for everyone to prepare for a possible pandemic flu.
- Use tools and ideas provided by HHS to help reach your audience.
- Encourage people now to do the following:
 - Store extra food and other daily supplies to make it easier to stay home for a prolonged period of time.
 - Learn and practice proper hand washing.
 - Use safe cough and sneeze techniques to limit the spread of illness.
 - Stay home and avoid others if you are sick.

As of July 11, 2007 there have been 318 confirmed human cases and 192 confirmed deaths due to H5N1 avian influenza reported for this year. None of these have occurred in the United States.

A six-year-old boy from Cilegon in Banten, Indonesia recently died of bird flu. According to an agriculture ministry official, the boy had no apparent contact with poultry. Officials have not found any infected poultry within a radius of up to 300 yards from where the boy lived. The director of the agriculture ministry's bird flu unit has stated it is premature to tell if the boy had contracted the virus from another person; investigations involving personnel from the United Nation's health and agriculture agencies are ongoing. The national committee overseeing Indonesia's bird flu fight will begin distributing 7,000 protective kits (i.e., gloves, masks, soap, banner, a booklet) to villages in Banten province. This is an area where 10 bird flu deaths have occurred.



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