

fast FACTS...

about Sedgwick County Government



Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Update

March 23, 2007

Sedgwick County
Health Department

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Local News:

The PIWG Steering Committee met March 20th. The Chairs for each of the represented subcommittees reported on their progress.

- Mass Vaccination: Mentioned a regional mass pharmaceutical distribution exercise planned for the end of June, funded by the Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI) for Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, & Sumner counties.
- Animal Surveillance: Updating their appendix of the PLAN. Suggested other sub-committees include information on animals/pets in their plans.
- Mental Health: Expanding their focus to disaster mental health with a subcommittee for pandemic flu mental health.
- Special Populations (elderly and disabled): Meeting April 6th.
- Surveillance, Monitoring and Investigation: Met with infectious control staff at local hospitals regarding trigger sets. A letter to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is being drafted to request more sentinel surveillance sites. Janice McCoy is working with USD 259 on setting up an electronic system for reporting student absences based on symptoms.
- Communications: Working with the Animal Committee on a fact sheet for pet shop and bird owners. Beginning work on messages for United Way 211 operators.
- Miscellaneous: Subcommittee Chairs were asked to begin thinking about the PLAN, how to train participants on it, and what areas need to be exercised.

Upcoming meetings:

- The next PIWG Steering Committee meeting is April 17, 2007.
- The next PIWG meeting is May 15, 2007.

State:

The Kansas Bioterrorism Coordinating Council will meet on April 5 in Topeka. The focus of the meeting will be pandemic flu preparedness. State pan flu plan updates will be discussed. A policy discussion regarding antiviral distribution planning and dispensing priorities will also occur.

Federal:

Scientists and public health officials have been looking at past pandemics for insight into pandemic planning. One of the mysteries of the 1918 pandemic is why it took its greatest toll on healthy adults between the ages of 20 and 40. One possible explanation, supported by recent studies in mice with a reconstructed version of the 1918 virus, is that an over-responsive immune system may release a "cytokine storm," or excessive amount of immune system proteins that trigger inflammation and harm the patient in the process. Most deaths among humans infected with the H5N1 avian influenza virus have occurred in individuals under the age of 40. However, it is not yet known whether there is a higher percentage of young people in the affected populations, whether younger people are more susceptible to infection, or whether young people have more exposure to infected birds.

International News:

As of March 19, 2007 there have been 280 confirmed human cases and 169 confirmed deaths due to H5N1 Avian Influenza. None of these have occurred in the United States.

GlaxoSmithKline PLC recently announced new study results showing that their pre-pandemic vaccine reacts against the Indonesian version of the virus even though the vaccine uses an H5N1 strain from Vietnam.

Saudi Arabia authorities announced Thursday, March 22 that they had found H5N1 bird flu in captive birds. This was the first outbreak of the disease in Saudi Arabia.



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