

# *fast* FACTS...

*about Sedgwick County Government*



## *Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Update*

May 24, 2007

Sedgwick County  
Health Department

1900 E. 9th Street

Wichita, Kansas

67214

316-660-7300

[www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org)

### Local News:

The members of the Pandemic Influenza Work Group (PIWG) met on May 15<sup>th</sup> at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita. The topic of the month was the role of law enforcement during a pandemic influenza. Lt. Jeff Weible with the Wichita Police Department addressed various issues including national strategies, the role of local law enforcement and their priorities, challenges for law enforcement, and community impact.

After sub-committee reports, a few minutes were taken to reflect on the Greensburg tornado. Lessons learned, and their potential relevance to pandemic flu planning, were discussed.

### PIWG Sub-committee Updates:

Chairs for each of the subcommittees are in the process of updating their portion of the PLAN. Once this is completed, the members of the PIWG will be trained on the PLAN, followed by a tabletop exercise.

### Animal Surveillance:

Working with Emergency Management on options for sheltering animals during a pandemic. They have also received and reviewed the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks bird surveillance report and the surveillance plan for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Wild Migratory Birds in the U.S.

### Special Populations (Elderly and Disabled):

Met with Rick Shellenbarger (Sedgwick County Emergency Management) to discuss mapping as a way to identify and locate these special populations. The subcommittee is also looking at conducting surveys to gain additional information.

### Continuity of Operations:

Aaron Davis (Sedgwick County Health Department) will give a presentation to Westar Energy in June. Also noted was the completion of the Sedgwick County Health Department's continuity of operations plans. These plans will be exercised over the next year.

### Faith-Based:

Started meeting and in the process of recruiting additional members. They are developing a survey for churches regarding preparedness issues.

### Surveillance, Monitoring and Investigation:

Evaluating a surveillance reporting system for clinicians called Syndrome Reporting Information System (SYRIS). A decision will be made on whether or not to recommend the system for implementation.

### Upcoming meetings:

- The next PIWG Steering Committee meeting is June 19, 2007.
- The next PIWG all member meeting is September 18, 2007.



*Sedgwick County...*  
*working for you*

# *fast* FACTS...

*about Sedgwick County Government*



## *Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Update - page 2*

May 24, 2007

Sedgwick County  
Health Department

1900 E. 9th Street

Wichita, Kansas

67214

316-660-7300

[www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org)

### Federal News:

Researchers at the University of Maryland's A. James Clark School of Engineering have created a "virus sponge." This sponge could filter a patient's blood in a process similar to dialysis, removing the virus from the patient's body. The virus sponge is based on technology called molecular imprinting. In molecular imprinting, researchers stamp a molecule's shape into a substance, which in this case is a hydrogel (a sponge-like material). When the specific molecule filters through the hydrogel, it fits in the imprint hole and is trapped. While a new vaccine must be developed each year for the strain of influenza that is expected to be the most potent, a hydrogel can be imprinted as a universal filter for all flu strains. In order to achieve better performance, a hydrogel filter can also be produced to catch a particular strain of the virus. Researchers have used this technique on plant viruses and Human Parvovirus B19 and have recently begun work on the H5N1 influenza virus.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved for marketing the first respirators that can help reduce the user's exposure to airborne germs during a public health medical emergency, including an influenza pandemic. These two filtering face piece respirators will be available to the general public without a prescription.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released interim guidance for the use of facemasks and respirators by the general public in public settings during an influenza pandemic. Because little is yet known about how masks and respirators will perform in a flu pandemic, the guidance is based on public health judgment and on the historical use of facemasks and respirators in other settings. The document does not address the use of facemasks and respirators in the workplace or in healthcare settings. To view the interim recommendations, visit <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/commaskguidance.pdf>.

### International News:

As of May 16, 2007 there have been 306 confirmed human cases and 185 confirmed deaths due to H5N1 avian influenza. None of these have occurred in the United States.

The European Union (EU) recently approved a "mock-up" influenza vaccine, called Focetria, made by Novartis. This will allow a faster start on vaccine production in the event of a flu pandemic. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declares a flu pandemic, the vaccine will be adapted to contain the pandemic virus. The vaccine will not be manufactured until a pandemic is declared.



*Sedgwick County...*  
*working for you*