

fast FACTS...

about Sedgwick County Government



Pandemic Influenza (Flu) Update

November 30, 2007

Sedgwick County
Health Department

1900 E. 9th Street

Wichita, Kansas

67214

316-660-7300

www.sedgwickcounty.org



Local News:

The Pandemic Influenza Work Group (PIWG) Steering Committee met on November 20th. During the meeting it was announced that Deborah Fromer (Health Department) will be taking over the Surveillance, Monitoring, and Investigation subcommittee. Also announced was the cut in influenza pandemic funding. This is the last year that funds will be allocated specifically for pan flu. The amount of funding received this cycle was low, so the Chairs need to decide what is needed so requests can be prioritized. The grant cycle ends August 8, 2008.

Rick Shellenbarger from Emergency Management spoke about the special needs grant. He is creating a database and collecting point of contact information on special needs facilities. The goal is to see what is out there and what needs to be done, followed by an assessment. School districts are also being asked for their plans so information on what resources they have, what they expect, and how we can help can be obtained.

Lastly, there was discussion regarding the future of the pan flu plan. Janice McCoy indicated that it needs to be revamped towards a tiered response.

PIWG Sub-committee Updates

Sub-committee chairs who were present gave the following updates on their groups' status.

Communications: Purchased 600 bottles of hand sanitizer for classrooms within USD 259. One bottle will be placed in each kindergarten through 2nd grade classroom. They have been tagged with hand washing hygiene information and are currently being distributed.

Special Populations (Children): Has acquired a GIS map with all of the large childcare centers in Sedgwick County plotted.

First Responder and Medical First Responder:

Reported a new triage card has been developed by Priority One that will be used during an influenza pandemic. Dr. Young reported the results of an influenza vaccination clinic for the Sedgwick County Fire Departments and EMS. Sixty-nine percent of EMS employees and forty-nine percent of Sedgwick County Fire Department employees were vaccinated. Plans are in place to track employee influenza absenteeism as well.

Mass Pharmaceutical Distribution: Working on their plan. They are looking at the hospitals and how distribution will work. Information has been received indicating that once produced, antivirals are expected to go to sick patients and only those at hospitals, which is not how the subcommittee had intended.

Behavioral Health: Tom Pletcher reported that Jason Deselms, the former Behavioral Health chair, is no longer with COMCARE, having accepted a position at the VA Hospital.

Surveillance, Monitoring and Investigation:

Met last week. They are going to re-evaluate First Watch. The school surveillance system is not active yet due to a technology delay.

Hospitals/Mass Care: Has submitted to the state information from North Carolina regarding the Regional Access Center (RAC).

Continuity of Operations (COOP): Has not met but the Health Department has received requests from healthcare facilities for help with their COOP plans. In addition, the Health Department has exercised their COOP plan.

Upcoming meetings: The December PIWG steering team meeting has been cancelled.

The next Quarterly Meeting for all of the PIWG will be January 15 at 9:00 a.m. at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, 1010 N. Kansas.

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State News:

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) efforts to plan for a flu pandemic were selected to be included in www.PandemicPractices.org, an online database of promising practices. This site was launched on September 24 by the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota and the Pew Center on the States (PCS), a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts. Compiled as a resource to save communities and states time and resources, the database enables public health professionals to learn about KDHE's efforts. The material can be used to enhance state and local plans to prepare for pandemic influenza.

International News:

As of November 12, 2007 there have been 335 confirmed human cases and 206 confirmed deaths due to H5N1 avian influenza reported for this year. None of these have occurred in the United States.

Researchers from Beijing and New York recently conducted pathology studies on tissue samples of a man and a pregnant woman who died of H5N1 avian influenza infection. The individuals were both from China. Results indicated that the virus spread beyond the lungs to other organ systems like the trachea, lymph nodes, neurons of the brain, and even the pregnant woman's fetus. The virus's spread beyond the respiratory system has several public health implications, one being the transmission of the H5N1 virus from a mother to her fetus through the placenta. In addition, evidence of the virus in the patients' intestines could have important implications for infection control.

A newspaper in Vietnam reports that the bird flu virus strain in that country has mutated, making it more dangerous. However, the Vietnamese Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat said that the mutation is not sufficient for the virus to transmit from human to human. The minister has asked local relevant agencies to focus on intensifying disease surveillance, monitoring of poultry raising, transportation and trading, and vaccination among fowls nationwide.

Lastly an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza H7N3 was recently discovered in a poultry farm near Regina, Canada. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has banned all imports of poultry and poultry products from the province. The H7N3 virus has not been known to cause severe illness in humans and this is not the highly pathogenic strain of H5N1 avian influenza that has been found in parts of Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In addition to the ban on imports, 50,000 chickens were killed and the facility was quarantined and emptied.



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