

**PANDEMIC INFLUENZA:
What Every Community Should
Know
Community Education Forum**

Portsmouth All Hazards Planning
Region/Portsmouth Area Emergency
Planning Team
June 5, 2007

PRESENTERS

- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Robert Gougelet, MD
- Portsmouth Fire Chief, Christopher LeClaire
- Portsmouth Health Officer, Kim McNamara
- Portsmouth Regional Hospital, Infection Control Practitioner, Martha Wassell
- Portsmouth Regional Hospital, Nursing Director Emergency Services, Georgette Shapiro
- United Way of the Greater Seacoast, Helen Long
- Regional Public Health Coordinator, Mary Cook

SEASONAL FLU

- Usually fall or winter
- Not a new virus
- Strikes fewer people since immunity has been built up over time from exposure
- May be prevented by getting a flu shot
 - Each year minor changes in the virus occur, triggering the next year's flu season

WHAT IS A FLU PANDEMIC?

- It is a global outbreak of influenza
- Spreads quickly from person to person
- Spreads in a short period of time
- May cause serious illness or death
- Has the potential to spread easily and thus cause a pandemic where everyone is at risk

HISTORY OF PANDEMICS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

- The most severe was the 1918 “Spanish Flu”, killed an estimated 40 million worldwide
- In 1957, the “Asian flu” killed about 2 million worldwide
- In 1968, the “Hong Kong flu” up to 1 million died around the world

AVIAN FLU

- Also known as the H5N1 virus, this highly pathogenic strain is deadly to domestic fowl (chickens and ducks)
- Incidents started in Asia, now spread to 12 countries, with 185 deaths, all were infected by direct contact with domestic birds
- To date, human infections w/Avian Influenza Type A viruses have not resulted in human to human to human transmission
- Experts are tracking the progress of the disease in animals and humans around the world as well as other flu viruses

HOW LIKELY IS ANOTHER PANDEMIC TO OCCUR?

- Experts believe another pandemic is very likely, may start without warning, may spread quickly, may come in multiple waves lasting over several months
- Experts estimate that 20-40% of the population could become sick during a pandemic
- Services could be disrupted and community resources overburdened

PORTSMOUTH ALL HAZARDS HEALTH REGION

- 19 All Hazard Regions for pandemic planning in NH
- Region 19: Greenland, New Castle, Newington, North Hampton, Portsmouth, Rye
- City of Portsmouth is the fiscal agent and point of contact
- \$21,416.00 for region Phase I, receiving additional monies in Phase II
- 6 months to complete plan for support of community, continuity of operations, and vaccination of residents

PURPOSE OF PLAN

- Purpose: To Plan and Prepare the Portsmouth Region for an All Health Hazards Emergency:
 - Pandemic Influenza
 - Smallpox Outbreak
 - Natural Disasters with a Public Health Impact
 - Massive Food borne Outbreak
 - Biological Terrorism Attack
 - A Release of Chemicals that Affects a Sizeable Population
 - Train Derailment, plane crash

PURPOSE OF PLANNING CONTINUED

- Address regional event verses one town
 - 1 town can not handle a large public health event alone: not enough resources
- Bigger response than just fire or police and includes a variety of partners
 - hospital, mental health, VNAs, United Way, American Red Cross etc.

Time Line

- June 2006-created regional planning committee from Portsmouth Area Emergency Planning Team membership
- August 2006 to Present-subcommittee meetings held to work on plan
- January 2007-draft of All Health Hazards Plan and Point of Distribution Plan
- March 2007- regional planning partners conduct table top exercise to test plan
- June 2007-community forum and plan submission to DHHS for approval.

Planning Committee Members representing

- Town of Greenland
- Town of New Castle
- Town of Newington
- Town of North Hampton
- Town of Rye
- City of Portsmouth

A merger of Fire, Police, and Health
Officials

- Portsmouth Regional Hospital
- United Way of the Greater Seacoast
- American Red Cross Great Bay Chapter
- Foundation for Seacoast Health
- Community Resource Network
- Community Developmental Services
- Edgewood Centre
- Families First Health and Support Center
- Portsmouth School Department
- DHHS
- Disaster Behavioral Health
- NH Office of Emergency Management

Subcommittees

- Risk Communication and Education
- Point Of Distribution (POD)/Logistics and Security
- Medical Surge and Acute Care Center
- Special Populations

All Health Hazard Regional Plan Includes...

- Communication/Education
- Mass Vaccination
- Surge Capacity
- Isolation & Quarantine
- Volunteers

Communication/Education

- Listening to and following instructions during an emergency is very important to the success of our emergency response
- Public Information Messages will appear in the following:
 - 4 radio stations, WOKQ 97.5 FM, WTSN 1270 AM, WERZ 107.1 FM, WHEB 103 FM
 - 2 daily newspapers: The Portsmouth Herald, Foster's Daily Democrat
 - Television coverage is provided from Manchester NH, Boston MA, and Portland, ME through Comcast Television.
 - Local coverage on Channel 22 provided by New England Cablevision
 - Hotline Number and EOC Information Number 427-1580

Communication/Education

- During an event, a Public Information Officer will tell the public:
 - The fact that an event is occurring
 - An explanation and definition of the public health issue
 - Disease control efforts, including the availability and use of vaccine, antiviral medication and other treatment measures
 - A clear and concise explanation of the establishment of priority groups for vaccine
 - “Do’s and Don’ts” for the general public
 - The maintenance of essential community services
 - Where to go to receive vaccination, antiviral medication and other treatment measures

Additional outreach that may be utilized to educate region

- Neighborhood Associations
- School- notes to parents with school age children
- Health and human service providers
- Public notices located in all town buildings, libraries, shelters, senior centers, public housing with dates and times of notices.
- Special Population Contacts to deliver appropriate messages (Community Developmental Services, Great Bay Services, Visiting Nurse, Rockingham Community Action)
- Websites-Portsmouth Regional Hospital and City of Portsmouth for pre-education about emerging health issues and daily/hourly updates when event occurs

Mass Vaccination

- A Point of Distribution (POD) Plan has been developed by the region to support regional and community officials at any stage of mass medication dispensing, or mass vaccination planning.
- Incidents that may trigger the need for a POD could include:
 - Hepatitis A in a food handler that requires Hepatitis Immune Globulin to be administered to thousands of people within a few days
 - Cases of meningitis in a school where mass dispensing of medication on short notice is needed
 - An influenza pandemic
 - A bio-terrorism event involving thousands of people or even the entire population

Mass Vaccination

- For Vaccination: Residents in the region will access the site to receive vaccine in response to infectious disease outbreaks of any magnitude.
 - A site has been identified in Portsmouth for all residents in the region.
 - Residents will be transported from staging areas in/near their town to maintain safety and manage traffic.
- All towns have designated a POD in response to infectious disease outbreaks for antibiotic dispensing or a local event.

Surge Capacity

- The region is currently drafting its medical surge capacity plan.
- The intent of the plan is to be prepared for emergencies that generate victims requiring medical treatment that surpass the normal resource capacity and/or capabilities of the region.

Three distinct situations are being considered when planning for medical surge:

- A widespread and prolonged emergency, such as a pandemic. Normal medical capacity and/or capability in the region and New Hampshire would be overwhelmed, and the ability to transfer victims within and out of the region would be extremely limited.
- A localized emergency that overwhelms the ability of a local medical community to respond in a timely and appropriate manner. Victims could be evacuated to other locations or additional staff and supplies could be brought into the region to handle the surge.
- An emergency occurring in a nearby metropolitan area. Emergencies occurring in nearby population centers, such as Boston or Worcester, may drive both ill and worried well into the region, taxing medical resources.

Isolation & Quarantine

- What is it?
- Why will you use it?
- How does it affect me?

What is Isolation & Quarantine?

- Isolation is defined as the physical separation and confinement of an individual, group of individuals, or individuals present within a geographic area who are infected with a communicable disease or are contaminated or whom the Commissioner of DHHS reasonably believes to be infected with a communicable disease or to be contaminated, in order to prevent or limit the transmission of the disease to the general public. ***IN OTHER WORDS KEEPING THE SICK PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE HEALTHY***
- Quarantine is defined as the physical separation and confinement of an individual, group of individuals, or individuals present within a geographic area who are exposed to a communicable disease or are contaminated, or whom the commissioner of DHHS reasonably believes have been exposed to a communicable disease or to be contaminated or have been exposed to others who have been exposed to a communicable disease or contamination, to prevent transmission of the disease to the general public. The decision of whether or not to quarantine or isolate individuals will be based primarily on the type of event and the nature of the disease agent. ***IN OTHER WORDS KEEPING THE PEOPLE WHO MAY BE SICK OR WERE EXPOSED AWAY FROM THE HEALTHY***

Why will you use it?

- We want to keep the spread of the disease at a minimum
- Think of the SARS outbreak in Toronto
- The slower the spread, the fewer sick people over time, less strain on resources equals fewer hospitalizations and deaths
- The faster the spread, the greater number of sick people in a short time period placing a large strain on the medical system resulting in excess deaths

How will it affect me?

- The regional emergency planning partners in conjunction with the NH DHHS and CDC will implement Community-Based Containment Measures
- Community-based control measures are:
 - designed to reduce the risk of disease transmission by limiting the potential for social interactions (canceling public events, implementing community “snow days,” etc.)
 - Implement broad measures for the public to prevent inadvertent exposures (fever monitoring in public places, use of masks, frequent hand washing, avoiding crowds, cover your cough/sneeze, stay home when sick)

How will it affect me?

- The decision to institute community containment measures, and the nature and scope of these measures, will be made based upon the extent of the outbreak and the availability of resources.
- The control measures may also be referred to as social distancing.
- Important factors that will need to be considered in determining a threshold for community action include:
 - numbers of cases and close contacts, characteristics of local disease transmission (i.e., speed of spread, number of generations),
 - types of exposure categories (travel-related, close contact, health care worker, unlinked transmission, etc.),
 - morbidity and mortality rates, extent of community influx and efflux,
 - and the availability of local health care and public health resources

Enhanced activities to slow the spread of disease may include:

- Institute “snow days” or “shelter in place”
- Suspend public gatherings
- Close public buildings and spaces
- Cancel public events
- Close non-essential government functions (public library, etc.)
- Request voluntary or mandate closing of businesses and institutions (e.g., schools)
- There may be circumstances of an advanced epidemic for which other more extreme measures may be enacted, such as:
 - Stop mass transit services
 - Restrict geographic re-locations

How can you help?

- Prepare your family
 - Nonperishable food, water (1 gallon pp per day), medications, pets, elderly neighbors and family
- Prepare your business
 - Telecommuting, job cross training, payroll considerations, Continuity of Operations
- Listen to public officials during an emergency
 - Just because we said it tonight does not mean it may not change in an emergency
 - LISTEN TO PUBLIC MESSAGES
 - Do not call 911

Volunteer

- - WWW.UWGS.ORG to pre-register and find information on upcoming training opportunities!
- Examples of volunteering:
 - Help at the Point of Distribution Site
 - Help rebuild homes after a flood
 - Assist w/telephone hotline
 - Become part of the Certified Emergency Response Team

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR AVIAN FLU PLANNING AND EDUCATION

- www.avianflu.nh.gov
NH resource for government and local planning, education and response to avian flu. Direct links to state plans and additional resources.
- www.pandemicflu.gov
One-stop access to U.S. Government avian and pandemic flu information. Managed by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza
WHO is coordinating the global response to human cases of H5N1 avian influenza and monitoring the corresponding threat of an influenza pandemic. Information on this page tracks the evolving situation and provides access to both technical guidelines and information useful for the general public.

Contact Information

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Questions and Discussion