



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PUBLIC HEALTH BLOOMINGTON

PANDEMIC FLU

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Pandemic Flu Summit

Karen Zeleznak, Administrator, Bloomington Public Health

A "Pandemic Flu Summit," hosted by Governor Pawlenty was held in St. Paul on December 14th. The Summit was attended by local and federal officials, including U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt and CDC Director, Dr. Julie Gerberding. Minnesota was the first state to host federal officials traveling around the country to highlight the issue of pandemic flu.

Secretary Leavitt delivered three key messages:

- Pandemics happen; this one is overdue and we are under-prepared.
- Any planning for a pandemic seems alarmist; but if it happens, any level of planning will be insufficient.
- This is NOT the federal government coming in to impose a plan. Anyone assuming the federal government will take care of them is tragically WRONG. The impact and response needs to be at the local level.

Secretary Leavitt also stressed the importance of businesses planning for a pandemic situation (*see back insert*).

In a pandemic flu situation, the federal government assumes the following:

- 30% of the population will become ill
- 50% of those ill will seek medical attention
- 40% of the population will be absent from work (from illness or needing to care for someone)
- 2% will die

Planning is taking place at all levels. The federal plan, *The National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza*, focuses on three areas: 1) stopping, slowing, or otherwise limiting the spread of a pandemic to the United States; 2) limiting the domestic spread of a pandemic and mitigating disease, suffering, and death; and 3) sustaining infrastructure and mitigating impact to the economy and the functioning of society. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is leading the federal pandemic preparedness activities.

The Minnesota Department of Health is updating the statewide pandemic flu plan. The draft is being reviewed and will be released late this spring.

GET INFORMED. BE PREPARED.

Planning and response information for businesses, churches, and schools.

Plus, the latest news on pandemic and avian flu.

www.pandemicflu.gov



Faith-Based Organizations: Partners in Preparedness & Response

Rosalind Johnson

Faith-based organizations have a history of helping in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, televised reports were often held at churches, showing the ways local groups were helping Hurricane survivors: offering home-cooked meals, shelter, and spiritual support.

This winter, Bloomington Public Health staff met with several Richfield church leaders to talk about emergency preparedness and the role of churches. Based on the discussion, there was a willingness to help in many ways, including:

- Disseminating emergency information to church members, families, and others. Many churches have the ability to get information out quickly to their parishioners through emails and phone trees.
- Providing information about what resources the church might be willing to provide during an emergency, such as volunteer help and facilities.

Many faith-based organizations are members of V.O.A.D. (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) such as Lutheran Social Service, United Methodist Church, MN-WI Baptist Convention, and Catholic Charities. In Minnesota, V.O.A.D. members are designated to provide certain types of assistance during an emergency (e.g., day care) and are essential partners in the state's emergency response team.

The federal government recognizes the important role of faith-based organizations in a public health emergency. A checklist was recently developed that provides guidance for religious organizations in developing a pandemic preparedness and response plan.

For more information go to www.pandemicflu.gov and click on **Community Planning**.

Clinics: Partners in Preparedness

Karen Stanley



A February meeting focused on clinics' Respiratory Protection Plan. Future topics include assisting clinics in establishing their individual Emergency Operations Plans.

For the past two years, Bloomington Public Health has organized Clinic Partnership meetings. Meeting quarterly, the Clinic Partnership group is comprised of public health staff, local health care providers, and representatives of Fairview Southdale Hospital. All clinics in Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield are invited to participate.

The Clinic Partnership meetings provide an opportunity to get to know one another and work on emergency preparedness issues. In the case of a biological event, hospitals, clinics, and local public health will all respond to the incident. Due to our prior discussions and planning, we are in a position to work together and respond more efficiently to an emergency.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BUSINESS PLAN

Businesses Planning for Pandemic Influenza: A National Summit was held in Minneapolis, February 14 & 15th. Speakers included Michael Leavitt, Michael Osterholm, and Ted Koppel.

Discussions focused on how businesses can effectively prepare for and continue operations during a pandemic. Over 300 participants from more than 200 companies attended the 2-day planning conference (40% represented Fortune 500 companies).

RESULTS:

Of primary importance are employees and continuity. For many businesses, continuity will require an adequate workforce that can work from home or other remote sites. Other planning strategies are cross-training employees, replacement training, and recalling and training retirees.

Other businesses need to plan and prepare for a pandemic by:

- Stockpiling materials and supplies
- Deciding on acceptable levels of services
- Having plans in place as to when to shut down and restart operations

A checklist for businesses is available at www.pandemicflu.gov; click on **Business Planning**.

Schools: Essential Community Planning Partners

Denise Dunn

The collaboration between schools and local health in planning for a pandemic is critical. Health departments have information schools can use in their planning efforts. Public health will also respond to and monitor actual outbreaks of illness and help determine if (or when) a school should close due to an outbreak. As a partner in disease control, schools play a vital role in helping prevent the spread of infectious disease.

We have identified five areas that schools can begin work on now - before the threat is imminent - that will serve them well if, and when, we face a pandemic flu scenario:

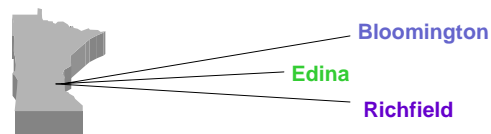
1. Public education: schools are a main source of educating the population before and during an emergency. *Pandemic Influenza Planning: A Guide for Individuals and Families*, available at www.pandemicflu.gov, is an excellent resource.
2. Internal communication and notification policies that can be used in an event but are planned and drilled ahead of time.
3. External communication pathways to reach key stakeholders with timely information in an emergency.
4. Working with Human Resources to plan for the possibility of significant absences of both staff and students; consider sick leave and absence policies.
5. Consider distance-learning options if long-term closures become necessary.

Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield schools are in various stages of planning. Some are forming pandemic flu planning committees; others are busy reviewing plans; and many are attending training sessions to better prepare themselves for this potential threat.

A helpful checklist for schools has just been released by the Department of Health and Human Services and is available at www.pandemicflu.gov; click on **School Planning**.

Information provided by Bloomington Public Health and funded through the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

Bloomington Public Health serves the communities of



BLOOMINGTON CONTACTS:

Karen Zeleznak, Community Health Services Administrator:
952-563-8905 or email: kzeleznak@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Denise Dunn, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator:
952-563-4962 or email: ddunn@ci.bloomington.mn.us