

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PUBLIC HEALTH BLOOMINGTON

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SEPTEMBER IS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) for Pandemic Influenza

- Karen Zeleznak

The Governor's Executive Order 04-04 assigns emergency response duties and tasks to every state agency with the responsibility of developing a continuation of operations plan (COOP). Much of this work has been done; however, it did not take into consideration issues related specifically to pandemic influenza. Current COOP plans contain response duties and tasks that pertain to one-time events that are short in duration and triggers a COOP recovery phase.

In addition to several other key differences, these plans assume a majority of staff will be available during or after an incident. Key differences in pandemic services include:

- Pandemic waves may last 6 - 8 weeks and there could be multiple waves
- Impact may be worldwide as opposed to local or regional impact; state and federal resources may not be available
- There may be up to a 40 percent reduction in the workforce

Cities can prepare for this new disaster by using their all-hazard plan as a starting point and applying these unique pandemic planning assumptions. This process involves:

- identifying essential personnel
- identifying critical responsibilities and services
- developing strategies for reallocation of staff to support priority services
- communications planning and starting to address human resources issues

Although pandemics are unpredictable, it is essential for cities to have plans in place to support the full spectrum of our community's needs in the event that a pandemic becomes a reality. As Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt said, "One of the dilemmas of dealing with a pandemic is that anything that's said before a pandemic happens seems alarmist. Anything we have done after it starts seems inadequate. Therefore, talking about it early, preparing, but keeping perspective is the important objective."

What cities are doing for COOP Planning

MN League of Cities is taking leadership and providing resources for cities, including training on the Human Resources Role in planning for pandemic influenza. In addition, their August publication encouraged cities to

NEIGHBORHOOD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TIPS



- Meet with neighbors and talk about what families can do to prepare for all types of emergencies
- Share names, phone numbers, and email addresses with each other
- Know which families may need extra help during an emergency (e.g., seniors with limited mobility, families with young children; and limited English-speaking families)
- Know where (and how) to get emergency information from your city: Bloomington: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us
Edina: www.ci.edina.mn.us
Richfield: www.cityofrichfield.org

begin thinking about issues related to pandemic influenza and to start planning.

In late August and early September, the City of Richfield held trainings for all city employees on pandemic flu, with support from Bloomington Public Health. The sessions included information regarding prioritization of city services and individual and family preparedness.

Edina and Richfield have started their pandemic influenza planning and are coordinating efforts within their cities.

What schools are doing

Schools have begun to prepare for pandemic influenza. The new Superintendents from Bloomington and Edina have hit the ground running with draft plans to address this issue. Bloomington Public Health has been providing information and support for these efforts.



Meet the new Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

On August 8th, Lisa Brodsky began as the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Lisa will provide leadership and coordination of projects, procedures, and plans related to public health emergency preparedness activities for the cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield. Lisa replaced Denise Dunn, who is now the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Consultant for the Minnesota Department of Health.

Lisa has a Masters of Public Health degree from the University of Minnesota and has many years of experience in public health, both at the state and local level. She lives in Bloomington with her husband David and her four boys: Ryan, Dylan, Sean, and Zach.

Emergency Preparedness for Seniors

– Kay Yngsdahl

Seniors are an important population to reach when planning for emergencies. To address this issue, Bloomington Public Health nurses connected with over 400 seniors living in Bloomington, Richfield, and Edina to discuss emergency preparedness.

Key emergency preparedness topics included:

- The importance of having a one-to-two week supply of extra medications, food, and water.
- Encouragement to set up a plan with a close family member or friend as to what they would do, and who would take care of them, if there were an emergency and services were unavailable to them.
- Development of emergency phone number, medication, and insurance lists.
- Discussion of disaster plans in the case of a fire, severe weather, and/or power outage.

The seniors were very receptive to this information and many stated that they were already in the process planning or implementing an emergency plan.

CLINIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Date: September 28, 2006 • 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Place: Haeg Conference Room (2nd floor)

Bloomington Civic Plaza

Contact: Lisa Brodsky: 952-563-4962

Emergency Preparedness for Neighborhoods

– Rosalind Johnson

The Bloomington Police Department has built a successful Neighborhood Watch Program consisting of 650 Block Captains and 330 Neighborhood Watch groups. To better prepare its residents for emergencies and disasters, Bloomington Public Health teamed up with Bloomington Police and conducted workshops for Block Captains and their neighbors.

Sessions focused on what families and neighborhoods can do to prepare for all types of emergencies, including a potential pandemic flu outbreak.

In a community emergency and/or disaster, Block Captains can play a vital role. They know their neighbors and can help prepare for emergencies by hosting neighborhood presentations and discussing basic steps in preparedness. Block Captains can also help disseminate emergency communications to their neighbors and provide feedback to local officials.

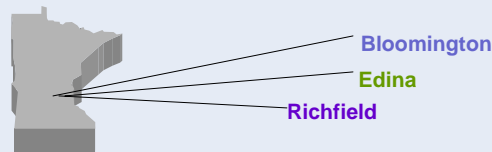
Since Spring, the following activities have taken place:

- Over 100 Block Captains were trained at Annual Block Captains Training.
- Several Block Captains hosted “Are You Prepared?” educational sessions, held on front lawns and in garages.
- Approximately 8,000 “Are You Prepared?” flyers were distributed during the National Night Out on August 1st.

Some families are beginning to stockpile supplies; however, many families have not. You can start preparing by accessing a copy of the “Are You Prepared?” flyer and other tools available on the City of Bloomington’s Website: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, under LATE BREAKING: *September is National Preparedness Month*.

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



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