

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

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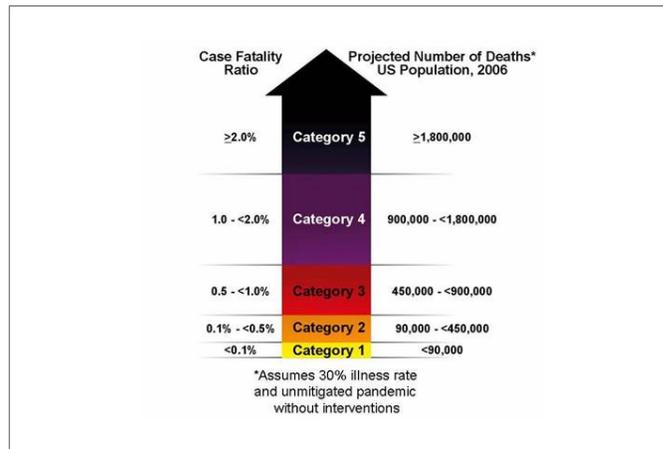
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Feds Release Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation



Pandemic Influenza Severity Index introduced by Feds.

The Centers for Disease Control and other federal agencies have worked together to develop non-pharmaceutical guidance to slow the spread of a possible future pandemic influenza outbreaks.

Linking the Pandemic Influenza Severity Index pictured above would provide specific interventions for a community to take based on the severity of the outbreak. The Index categorizes a pandemic flu

outbreak based on the Case Fatality Ratio. Similar indices are used to rate hurricanes and tornados.

Among the guidance interventions are:

1. Isolation and treatment.
2. Voluntary home quarantine
3. Dismissal of students from school
4. Use of social distancing

Isolation and treatment entails use of antivirals and isolation at home or in a healthcare facility depending on severity of illness.

Members of families who have confirmed or probable influenza would voluntarily quarantine themselves at home to prevent further transmission.

Students in daycare through colleges and universities as well as faculty and staff might be affected by school closings.

Social distancing would reduce contact between adults in the community and workplace. Work schedules might be altered. Large community events could be cancelled.

The entire 108 page document is available at: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/commitigation.html#1>

Texas Seasonal Flu Surveillance Information is Available

During flu season, the Texas Department of State Health Services issues weekly reports on seasonal flu activity.

The weekly reports can be found at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/flu.shtm#news>

Sentinel healthcare providers submit reports. The report include total illnesses observed and Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI). The ILIs are reported by age brackets of those who were ill.

A map at this site county level information on the type of flu (A or B) and type of confirma-

tion being used by the sentinel providers.

Definitions of Flu Activity Levels is at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/influenza/surveillance/>

Reportable Diseases Call

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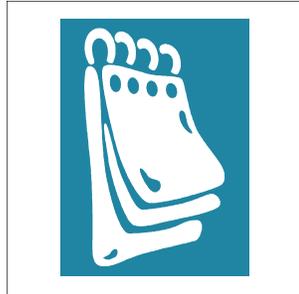
Burton Berry, Program
Specialist

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

National Public Health Week will be celebrated from **Monday, April 2, 2007 to Sunday, April 8, 2007.**

The Public Health community around the nation will use a week of activities to inform the public about the role of



April 2-8, 2007

Public Health. Specific activities will vary across the country.

Nationally the activities will have a daily focus.

Monday: Unique needs of mothers with children in the household.

Tuesday: Unique needs of local Food Banks.

Wednesday: Unique needs of hourly-wage workers & employers.

Thursday: Unique needs of schools K-12.

Friday: Unique needs of individuals with chronic health conditions, with a focus on diabetes, asthma, cancer, and high blood pressure.

Fact sheets about each of these foci are available at: http://www.nphw.org/2007/pg_fact_sheet.htm

Logos, banners, posters, games for kids, and other resources are also available at the web site.

CRISIS & EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATIONS (CERC)

The Texas Department of State Health Services has resources available on CERC planning.

CERC planning provides the policies and procedures needed to coordinate communications internally and externally during an emergency or disaster situation. In other words, a concept of operations.

The plans should outline internal message verification and clearance approval processes.

Who (person or position) has the responsibility and authority to release information should be a part of the plan.

Procedures for working in a Joint Information Center where a number of entities

with various responsibilities come together for the purpose of a unified message should be an element.

Checklists may be used to guide the planning and implementation of CERC.

DSHS resources are at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/riskcomm/tools/default.shtm

DSHS PANDEMIC FLU FACT SHEETS

The Texas Department of State Health Services has a set of four Fact Sheets about Pandemic Flu.

The Fact Sheets are entitled "What You Need to Know About":

1. Flu and Pandemic Flu
2. Avian Influenza
3. Pets and the Flu
4. Pandemic Flu Key Points

The Fact Sheets are available

at: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/pandemic_flu/public/

Additional information at this web site are links to the DSHS Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan and Executive Summary, DSHS's Public's Guide to Planning and Preparation, Centers for Disease Control sites on Pandemic and Avian Flu, US De-

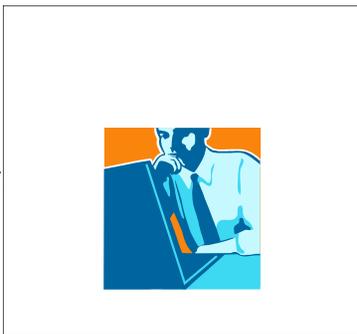


Web-Based Information

partment of Human Services site on Pandemic Influenza Information, and the World Health Organization site.

SOUTH CENTRAL CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS
ON-LINE TRAINING COURSES

The South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness has 33 courses available on-line. No prerequisites are required to take the courses.



Some of the broad categories of topics are:

- Risk Communications
- Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Terrorism
- Emerging Infectious Diseases
- Epidemiology, Surveillance and Investigation
- Public Health Leadership

Contact hours are available for all of the courses. "CEs" are available for some but not all

of the courses. Contact hours range from two to seven hours per course. Enrollees have seven weeks to complete a course.

Both brief and extended course descriptions. There are ratings of the course,

the instructor, and the format using a "bean" system of one to five. All participants are asked to provide their satisfaction ratings in these three areas.

The South Central Center for Public Health Preparedness is comprised of four state health departments (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi), Tulane University and the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Access to these on-line courses: <http://138.26.144.80/websites/SCCPHP/default.asp?ID=10>

FOCUS ON BT AGENTS:
BRUCELLOSIS

Primarily a zoonotic disease, Brucellosis may be contracted by humans. Sheep, goats, cattle, deer, pigs, dogs, and several other animals are affected by the bacteria, Brucella.

Brucellosis is a Category B Bioterrorism Disease. Category B agents are moderately easy to transmit from person to person. They have moder-

ate morbidity and mortality rates. They might cause public panic or disruption.

Humans may be infected by eating or drinking a contaminated item, inhalation of the bacteria, or through skin wounds.

The infection causes flu like symptoms. In severe cases the central nervous system

and heart lining may be affected.

Treatment with antibiotics for 6-8 weeks is needed to prevent a reoccurrence.

The CDC web site has details about Brucellosis at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/brucellosis_g.htm

NIMS ICS-200 COURSES IN REGION

DSHS contracted with the Texas Forest Service to conduct two NIMS ICS-200 courses. The course in San Angelo was on February 12 & 13th. In El Paso, the course was held on February 19 & 29th.

Other sponsors for the course were the Concho Valley Council of Governments, San Angelo-Tom Green County Health Department, and El Paso City-County Health & Environmental District.

Participants were from DSHS, state and local government/agencies, hospitals, emergency management, first responder organizations, and others.

The goal of the course was to give participants a better understanding of the National Incident Management System and the National Response Plan and how to function in that structure during an emergency or disaster.

The 75+ participants were complementary of the course content and instruction. Each received a certificate of course completion.



Help Save
Lives

Become A

Protect

Texas

Volunteer

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/comprep/protect/>

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9/10**

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HSR 9/10 TAKES ROLE IN FUNCTIONAL EXERCISE

DSHS Health Service Region 9/10 offices participated in a functional exercise in the Rio Grande area on February 27 & 28, 2007.

DSHS HSR 9/10 activated its Regional Operations Center (ROC) in El Paso to direct the agency's response. The ROC was staffed by representatives from a number of DSHS programs to respond to an imaginary event.

The exercise tested multiple communications capabilities of the agency and other participants. HSR 9/10 tested use of various 2-way radios, satellite phones, Public Health Information Network (PHIN), cell phones, WebEOC, EMResources, and faxes. Communications took place between the DSHS HSR ROC and Emergency Operations

Centers (EOC), District Disaster Committee (DDC), other DSHS offices and players in the exercise.

The imaginary event was an explosion in El Paso that also spread a radio-active material. The site of the imaginary explosion offered a number of problems in beyond the significant number of people who were killed or injured. Two of the problems were uninjured persons who were contaminated by the radio-active material, and uninjured people who were stranded in buildings in the affected area.

The event stressed the capabilities of first responders including ambulances. Hospitals became quickly filled in the make-belief event.

Among DSHS activities were

access of ambulances from outside the area, provide radiation control information, track hospital surge capability, map radio-active material spread using GIS, and use risk communications messaging techniques to inform the public.

A similar exercise is scheduled for the Permian Basin area in May.

