

Office of Emergency Preparedness Southern Tier Briefing

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ELEVATED

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Threat Level

February 24, 2005

Avian Influenza (H5N1) Update

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that as of February 17, 2005, there have been 55 human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) in Vietnam (37), Thailand (17) and Cambodia (1) resulting in 42 deaths and notes that the avian influenza A (H5N1) epizootic outbreak in Asia is not expected to diminish significantly in the short term. "It is likely that H5N1 infection among birds has become endemic to the region and that human infections will continue to occur. So far, no sustained human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 virus has been identified and no evidence for genetic reassortment between human and avian influenza virus genes has been found; however, the epizootic outbreak in Asia poses an important public health threat. If these H5N1 viruses gain the ability for efficient and sustained transmission between humans, there is little preexisting natural immunity to H5N1 in the human population, and an influenza pandemic could result, with high rates of illness and death."
(<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/asia.htm>).
- CDC is working collaboratively with Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists and others to assist states with pandemic planning efforts and with other agencies such as the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration on antiviral stockpile issues. For CDC's surveillance, diagnostic evaluation, and infection control precautions for avian influenza A (H5N1), visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/professional/han081304.htm>.
- YNH Center of Excellence is working with the Connecticut DPH in the development of a statewide response to pandemic influenza.

TOPOFF3 Update

- A southern tier hospital TOPOFF3 controller meeting was held on February 24, 2005 at the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) in Wallingford. Those in attendance had the opportunity to discuss their roles, responsibilities, and expectations during the April 4, 2005 TOPOFF3 drill. Please contact Mukesh Roy at (203) 688-2563 or mukesh.roy@ynhh.org with questions.
- The Virtual News Network (VNN), the official news network of the National Exercise program and the TOPOFF exercise series, consists of two key elements: VNN LIVE and VNN.COM. VNN Live will be on air on Monday, April 4, 2005 through April 8. VNN Live will broadcast via KU and C band satellite downlink to all participants. Information regarding registration for VNN Live and VNN.COM is attached to this briefing. Please ensure your hospital has the downlink capability to view the live program during TOPOFF3. VNN will also be conducting signal tests on the following dates:
 - March 28, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. & from 1:00 p.m. – 2 p.m.
 - March 29, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. & from 1:00 p.m. – 2 p.m.
 - April 3, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. & from 1:00 p.m. – 2 p.m.
- A mandatory 1-day training program for TOPOFF3 controllers and evaluators will be held at the Coast Guard Academy during the week of March 28 – April 1, 2005. Registration forms will be sent by TOPOFF3 planners directly to the individuals previously identified by the southern tier hospitals. Hospital funding for TOPOFF3 participation may be used to reimburse costs associated with attendance at this training. Please notify Mukesh Roy at (203) 688-2563 or mukesh.roy@ynhh.org if your controllers and evaluators do not receive registration materials by March 1, 2005.

Biodosimetry Functional Drill

- The Statewide Biodosimetry Laboratory operated by YNHHS is currently conducting a statewide lymphocyte isolation drill for Level A laboratories participating in the biodosimetry initiative. The functional drill will continue through the first week of March. An analysis of the drill results will permit the Statewide Biodosimetry Laboratory to assess the efficacy of the training provided to participating laboratories throughout Connecticut. All hospitals are requested to participate and contribute to fulfillment of the drills and exercise commitment to DPH. For further information, please contact Dr. Joe Albanese at (203) 688-3316 or joseph.albanese@ynhh.org.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Training/Education
- 2 Emergency Credentialing Program Expansion
- 2 Tsunami Response Web Seminar

Training/Education

- Twelve thousand five hundred fourteen (12,514) personnel representing other healthcare delivery agencies in the southern tier of Connecticut have completed EM 101 or EM 102 as part of their emergency preparedness efforts.
- Evaluation of EM 201: Bioterrorism Preparedness for Clinicians, the intervention portion of an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) agreement led by Dr. Louise Dembry, has been extended to the end of February to encourage additional physician participation. Physicians completing the pilot will receive 1.0 CME. Please contact David Burich at (203) 688-3721 or david.burich@ynhh.org with questions or comments.
- Work has begun on Emergency Management 103 (EM 103), a further enhancement of EM 102 that provides basic information on the disaster response needs of special populations, including the elderly, children, disabled and non-English speaking individuals.
- Additional courses under development include Incident Command Systems for Healthcare, Principles of Decontamination and PPE, and an intermediate level mental health program. For more information on any of these courses, please contact Scott Selig at (203) 688-2587 or scott.selig@ynhh.org.

Recruitment

- YNH Center of Excellence is initiating the recruitment process for two positions in the Education and Training division: Training and Evaluation Specialist and Instructor Trainer. Job descriptions are available for viewing at: http://yalenewhavenhealth.org/s_info/jobs.html or questions can be directed to Scott Selig at (203) 688-25878 or scott.selig@ynhh.org.

Tsunami Response Web Seminar

- YNH Center of Excellence will be hosting a 90-minute web-based seminar on "The Indian Ocean Tsunami Response: Lessons Learned in Public Health and Medical Preparedness." The program's objectives are to gain an understanding of what systems work, to explore the challenges of coordination of the response resources and to obtain a better understanding of the role that rapid response plays in averting pandemic disease. The program is being presented by Scott R. Lillibridge, M.D., Professor of Epidemiology and Director of the Center for Biosecurity and Public Health Preparedness at the University of Texas School of Public Health. Details of the date, time and location will follow in next week's briefing. Please contact Virginia Kristie at (203) 688-2594 or virginia.kristie@ynhh.org if you are interested in attending. Your response will help YNH Center of Excellence determine the size of the viewing site that will be needed.

Emergency Credentialing Program Expansion

- On February 18, 2005, approximately 97,000 Emergency Credentialing Program recruitment brochures were mailed to licensed healthcare professionals in Connecticut. Posters announcing the program and providing contact information for healthcare professionals not receiving the brochure but interested in volunteering will be sent to each of the individuals designated as the hospital contact person for the program. Providing an opportunity for everyone to consider becoming a volunteer is important to the success of the program. Please forward the name of the hospital contact person to Carol Luddy, RN by email at carol.luddy@ynhh.org or by phone at (203) 688-5544. Hospital contact people are asked to distribute the posters to appropriate internal hospital departments, and to endorse the program as an important strategy for meeting an unexpected surge in patients resulting from a wide-scale disaster. For more information about the program or to arrange a brief program, please contact Carol Luddy as indicated above.

ACH Contract Funding

- The ACH Contract Funding expires February 28, 2005. All financial and progress reports need to be returned to Debbie Gross no later the close of business on March 2, 2005 in order to receive funding. For more information, please contact Debbie Gross at (203) 688-3317 or debbie.gross@ynhh.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
SEPC	3/2/05	8:30 AM	BH EDUC CONF ROOM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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