



**Request for City Council Committee Action  
From the Department of Health & Family Support**

**Date:** March 24, 2008

**To:** HEALTH, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**Subject:** QUARTERLY UPDATE ON PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS

**Recommendation:** Receive and file.

**Previous Directives:** None

**Prepared or Submitted by:** Pam Blixt, Manager, Public Health Preparedness  
Phone: x3933

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health & Family Support

**Permanent Review Committee (PRC):** Approval \_\_\_\_ Not Applicable X  
**Policy Review Group (PRG)** Approval \_\_\_\_ Date of Approval \_\_\_\_ Not Applicable X

**Presenters in Committee:** Pam Blixt, Manager, Public Health Emergency Preparedness  
R. Craig Vana, Associate Superintendent, Minneapolis Public Schools  
Marie Hauser, Pandemic Preparation Specialist

**Financial Impact (Check those that apply)**

X No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).

**Background/Supporting Information Attached**

The Department is requesting to provide a mandatory quarterly update by Pam Blixt on progress in activities for our federal Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Cities Readiness Initiative, and Pandemic Influenza Grants. Information about the collaborative planning efforts with Minneapolis Public Schools will be presented.

# PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Department of Health & Family Support (MDHFS)

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE: FIRST QUARTER GRANT YEAR 2007-08

## Planning

1. H5N1 avian influenza continues to spread in Asia and Egypt, although it receives little media attention. Despite massive culling in India, it is very widespread. It has not yet shown increased adaptation to humans, but is continuing to mutate. The number of human cases of H5N1 during seasonal flu season is a concern because the strains may mix. This may make H5N1 much more adapted to humans, and increase the risk of a pandemic situation. Public health work continues on planning for pandemic flu. The areas of concentrated work have been to emphasize preventing seasonal flu and preparing for the continuity of operations, both for the City as well as community and business groups. Some of the areas of focus include:
  - a. Development of a plan for Minneapolis and Hennepin County 911/EMS to handle a surge of calls.
  - b. Increasing public information through efforts such as the American Lung Association's "Faces of Influenza" vaccination campaign.
  - c. Improving the number of flu vaccinations provided to City employees and their dependents through increased education and advertising of opportunities for participation.
  - d. Increasing our stockpile of personal protective equipment for use by critical personnel.
2. Active work continues with health care clinics to ensure their preparation for emergencies. Staff participate in the Clinic Partnership and Metro Clinic Coordination Workgroup (MCCW) to plan for pharmaceutical distribution to clinic staff during an emergency.
3. MDHFS has improved communication and collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) significantly. Staff have actively supported and assisted with the emergency planning done by MPS, especially in regards to pandemic and family support planning, and have also participated with them in training on school violence interventions.
4. In response to Hurricane Katrina survivors relocating to the Twin Cities, a variety of community based, non-profit, faith based and government organizations came together to coordinate efforts that would most effectively and efficiently meet their needs. Each organization had its own specialized services which enabled them to address a variety of concerns and issues. Out of this experience came the idea to formalize a group, Twin Cities Metro COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster), that would meet regularly, develop protocols, and be prepared for any future disasters.

With the collapse of the I-35W Bridge, several organizations came together to address the needs of victims of this event, indicating the importance of having a formalized group. While not a direct response agency, the goal of the Twin Cities Metro COAD is to increase communication, cooperation, collaboration and coordination of resources among member organizations and to effectively and respectfully address the needs of victims. The Twin Cities Metro COAD is currently in the planning stages and the group is looking for funding to support the development efforts. MDHFS staff provide technical assistance in support of their efforts.
5. A national presentation at the Public Health Preparedness Summit held in Atlanta, GA in February highlighted department leadership with the 35W bridge collapse. Staff presented a breakout session titled "When the Bridge Fell and the Waters Rose." The presentation described the behavioral health response to the I35W Bridge Collapse and the SE Minnesota flooding in August 2007.
6. The second annual report of the Public Health Emergency Coordinators is published and distributed. It highlights the work of the nine local public health boards that have coordinated planning efforts to reduce duplication and share resources to achieve better results in emergency preparedness with fewer dollars.
7. Modifications were made to the metro regional public health mutual aid agreement to include environmental health, so that any of the nine jurisdictions may request or supply help in the event of a food born outbreak.

## **Training and Exercise**

1. The emergency preparedness team is planning a training this May on mass prophylaxis. Texas Engineering Extension Service will be coming to provide two, two-day sessions at no cost. Participants will include staff that will be providing a leadership role at a mass dispensing site including: MDHFS, Regulatory Services, Finance, Communications, Public Works, GIS, Police, Fire, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota Department of Health, and Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health . The first day will be discussions on the many aspects of mass dispensing planning and the second day participants will simulate a mass dispensing site with a tabletop game.
2. Five staff from MDHFS attended training at FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, AL. Two staff attended the Weapons of Mass Destruction Incident Command, and three attended Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response. Both classes included lectures followed by a daylong tabletop exercise.
3. MDHFS leadership is currently trained and ready to use MNTrac. This system is an online password protected application that tracks hospital bed capacity, pharmaceuticals, and other resources from all hospitals in the state to support surge capacity needs. Another use will be emergency chat and online conferencing to assist in improving collaboration and communication during an emergency.
4. In the first quarter MDHFS delivered seven presentations and staffed several fairs reaching over 250 people. These included diverse audiences such as the Division of Indian Work, faith groups, and nursing home staff.
5. One of our staff will be co-leading a regional public health exercise planning workgroup. The charge of the group is to facilitate coordinated, comprehensive testing of public health emergency response functions in the metro region.
6. Staff completed the training necessary to achieve compliance with requirements for the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program. All metro jurisdictions participated in weeklong hands on training at Camp Ripley in December.

## **Response and Recovery**

1. Staff supported a response to the recent influenza death of the 12 year old Minneapolis girl. The department monitored the supply of vaccine in Minneapolis and helped to establish additional flu clinics by the MN Visiting Nurse Agency at 20 Cub locations. In addition, a reminder was sent to employees and the public on the importance of flu shots and the times and locations of additional clinics in March.
2. Chief Tim Dolan recognized Pam Blixt at the annual police awards banquet for her role in the response to the 35W Bridge disaster and specifically for leadership at the Family Assistance Center.
3. At the March annual convention of the MN Social Service Association, the department's emergency preparedness team will be honored for their work with the Family Assistance Center after the 35W Bridge collapse.