



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & PUBLIC HEALTH **BLOOMINGTON**

February 2004 • No. 2

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Planning Update

- Karen Stanley

With the possible re-emergence of SARS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with state and local public health agencies, are working on plans to:

- promote early reporting of possible SARS cases
- follow-up with contacts of possible/suspected SARS cases
- understand how to implement quarantine and isolation in accordance with the law
- control community spread of SARS

In late October 2003, the Minnesota Commissioner of Health issued a public notice to request reporting of suspected and probable cases of SARS, and cases of health workers who have patient contact and are hospitalized with pneumonia or Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS).

Additionally, metro public health agencies and Minnesota Department of Health staff have been planning for the possible re-emergence of SARS. Groups have formed to work on specific issues, including:

- follow-up phone calls to those in isolation and quarantine
- coordination of needs for persons in isolation and quarantine that are stipulated in the law, i.e., food, shelter, medications, medical care, communication
- the need for safe haven
- hotline and other communication issues

Currently, four possible SARS cases in China are under investigation (3 confirmed, 1 probable).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

March 18: Mass Vaccination Clinics: A Reality Check
Satellite broadcast presented by the California Department of Health Services & CDC
Location: Bloomington Public Health
For more information: Denise Dunn, 952-563-4962

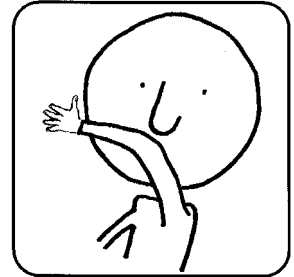
April 15: Clinic Partnership Meeting
For Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield clinics
Location: to be determined
For more information: Joleen Manley, 952-563-8918

May 19: Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication
A regional workshop for public health agency, information staff, emergency spokespersons, and clinic coordinators.
Location: Bloomington Civic Plaza
For more information: Roz Johnson, 952-563-8995

COVER YOUR COUGH

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue; dispose of used tissue in a wastebasket.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels, or other personal items.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If possible, avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Source: Minnesota Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/infectioncontrol/cover/

Influenza Update:

- The 2003-04 flu season began early with several states finding that a variant form of flu was causing illness.
- There is no clear evidence that children face an unusual risk this year. State and local public health agencies have not received reports of unusual influenza activity among Minnesota children. Nationally, 93 children have died of flu this season. There are no data from previous years to indicate if this represents an increase in the consequences of flu compared to previous outbreaks, or whether there is something unique about the 2003-04 flu season.
- Early reports of influenza deaths in children heightened media attention; consequently, in December, demand for vaccine was greater than availability.
- Currently, second doses of vaccine for children six months to nine years of age are available, as well as doses for those who have not yet received their flu shot.
- Bloomington Public Health administered over 4,200 flu vaccines to residents of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield this flu season. For more information call Bloomington Public Health, 952-563-8900.

ECHO (Emergency and Community Health Outreach) Project designed to reach populations with limited English skills



Over the last few years, Minnesota has become home to a rich tapestry of immigrant and refugee communities with many different languages and cultures.

A challenge facing Minnesota is how to effectively communicate emergency information to people within refugee and immigrant communities. A coalition of metro public health agencies and community groups are working on a communication project that focuses on this issue.

The project is organized through the Emergency and Community Health Outreach (ECHO) collaborative. Membership of ECHO includes the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, a number of local public health agencies from the metro area, private voluntary sector organizations, and leaders from the cultural communities to be served by this project.

The proposed strategy uses a statewide network of local public television stations to reach ethnically diverse groups through a series of monthly broadcasts on health and emergency preparedness topics. Programming for the project will be produced in cooperation with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT), with the first segment scheduled to air in late spring.

Initially, the monthly broadcasts will be two hours in length and include 20-minute segments in six different languages: Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Each broadcast will focus on a particular theme or issue, using culturally appropriate messages to reach the intended audience for each language.

MDH has already committed \$50,000 in federal bioterrorism grant funds, and local public health agencies have agreed to provide an additional \$50,000. The cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield are contributing \$3,150.

For more information contact Roz Johnson, Bloomington Public Health, at 952-563-8995.

Outreach to Bloomington, Edina, & Richfield Clinics

The first Clinic Partnership Meeting took place in January; the next is scheduled for April. We plan to offer these meetings several times a year as a way to build stronger connections with local clinics in Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield.

Possible topics to explore include emergency preparedness and planning, immunization activities, and disease reporting. For more information contact Joleen Manley: 952-563-8918.

Volunteers recruited for Hennepin County's Medical Reserve Corps

- Roz Johnson

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is part of the Citizen Corps, a national initiative to mobilize and coordinate volunteers so communities across America can better respond to emergencies. MRC is being organized by Hennepin County Community Health Department to prepare volunteers to respond to public health emergencies. Bloomington Public Health staff are actively recruiting volunteers in Bloomington, Richfield, and Edina.

Who is being recruited for MRC?

Currently, health professionals are being recruited, i.e., nurses, doctors, pharmacists, dentists, and other licensed personnel. Other volunteers to be recruited include interpreters, clergy, and social workers. Hennepin County volunteers must live in Hennepin County.*

Examples of what MRC volunteers would do in a public health emergency:

- gather information on patients
- staff hotline
- help in mass dispensing clinic or give vaccinations
- phone contact with families if placed in quarantine and isolation

Requirements and benefits of being a volunteer:

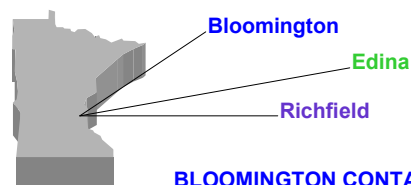
- volunteers are asked to make a 2-year commitment
- participation in an orientation and training program in 2004 (6-10 hours)
- continuing education credits available

For an application or to learn more call 952-351-5234 or visit website at www.mrc-hennepin.org.

(*Note: If you don't live in Hennepin County but are interested in becoming a MRC volunteer, contact information for other counties can be found on the above website.)

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:

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