

THE SECOND FRIDAY REPORT – #1

A monthly, newsletter update on local, state, national and worldwide events and happenings concerning Pandemic Influenza brought to you by the York/Adams Metropolitan Medical Response System (YAMMRS)

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1. Avian Influenza

In 2006, experts predicted that North American migrating birds summering in the Arctic Circle would mix with H5N1-infected birds from Europe and Asia and then would bring the Avian Influenza virus south along their migratory paths into the U.S. So far, this scenario hasn't seemed to have happened. Wildlife agencies continue to monitor the situation. Winter has barely begun – and a mild Winter at that!

2. Human H5N1 Influenza

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports as of January 11, 2007, there have been 264 confirmed cases of human H5N1 influenza in 10 countries, resulting in 158 deaths (60% fatality rate). We continue in the WHO's Phase 3, which means a new influenza virus (H5N1) causes human cases but there is no or very limited sustained human-to-human transmission. We have been in Phase 3 for several years now. (www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html)

3. Seasonal Influenza

Seasonal Influenza – the kind we experience each winter – has had a slow start in York County this year. The Pennsylvania Department of Health is reporting “regional activity” in the State at this time. Some states and regions in the nation are experiencing widespread seasonal Influenza activity. Influenza in York County should pick up in January and February. Remember -- Influenza and its complications kill approximately 35,000 people every year in the U.S. This is tragic because so many of these deaths could be prevented if more people took advantage of the Influenza vaccine. It is still not too late to get a flu shot if you haven't already done so.

4. Items of Interest from the American Red Cross

Marnie Sippel, School and Community Education Manager from the York County Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC), reports that the York County Chapter has trained just under 100 people in their Flu and Disaster Preparedness Presentation. Forty businesses, schools and community organizations sent representatives to the training so they could then offer the program to their employees. The program was well received and evaluations were quite positive.

Marnie also reports that the National ARC recently released a new 18-minute DVD that reviews the facts about a pandemic flu, what items people

should be sure they have on hand and how to prevent the spread of the flu. Contact Marnie Sippel at 771-3571 or sippelm@usa.redcross.org if you are interested in obtaining a copy for your organization.

In addition to the DVD, there is a new 11-page ARC brochure “Pandemic Flu – Family Preparedness Guide.” The brochure is free, so please contact Marnie if you would like brochures for your organization. As an attachment to this Report you will also find a hand washing skill sheet. Marnie says, “Please feel free to laminate it and post it in your restrooms and kitchens as a reference guide.”

Thanks, Marnie for your informative report – DLH

A final note: This is our first issue of “The Second Friday Report”. Please let me know about items that you would like to share with others concerning Pandemic Influenza. Also, if you would like to hear about a particular Influenza topic, please feel free to contact me at dhawk@yorkcity.org. Initially we will be sending this Report out to registrants of the Pandemic Influenza Summit held in August 2006 at the Holiday Inn Holidome here in York. If others would like to be added to the mailing list, please forward email addresses either to me at the above email address or to Bernadette Lauer at bklauder@ycdes.org.