

# Public Health Preparedness Update

Serving Benton, Franklin, Klickitat, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties



November 2008

**Points of Interest:**

**Region 8 Healthcare Coalition Meetings**

January 14, April 8 and July 8

10:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.  
Richland  
Red Lion Hotel

**Hot Topics**

Putting Preparedness into Context

Tuesday, November 25  
Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Ethical Decision Making in Times of Public Health Catastrophe

Tuesday, December 9  
Noon - 1:00 p.m.

[www.nwcp.org/htip](http://www.nwcp.org/htip)

**Inside:**

Portable Supplies 2

Newsletter Assessment 2

Training and Education 3

2008 Flu Season 4

WHO Revises Pandemic Flu Guidance 4

## A New Year for the Healthcare Coalition

**Welcome to WATrac**

Coordinating emergency response includes knowing who has room and resources for those affected. To better share that information, many of the hospitals in Washington are moving to a new, on-line bed capacity and resource tracking system ~ WATrac. But reporting bed capacity isn't all it can do.

Allison Schletzbaum and Barbara Andrews, of WATrac, gave an overview of the new system to members of the Region 8 Healthcare Coalition on October 8<sup>th</sup>, at the first meeting of the 2008 – 2009 grant cycle. This meeting followed the monthly meeting of the Region 8 Healthcare Systems Planning meeting.



WATrac began as a bed capacity tracking system for King County. The Washington State Department of Health recognized the need to replace the existing system, and offered funding and support for the system to expand throughout the state. While similar coordination occurs with WebEOC in an emergency, this is a system that should be used and updated daily for maximum efficiency and interaction.

Attendees discussed their user account configuration preferences, diversion settings, and bed tracking. The communication activities were reviewed as part of a demonstration of WATrac Phase II activities to be added over the next year.

The group voted on a training schedule for the 12 hospitals, which was completed the last week of October.

**Region 8 Healthcare Coalition 2008 - 2009**

This grant cycle we look forward to many exciting changes and challenges. The **workgroups are going to reconfigure** and there are many possibilities: Communications, Mass Fatality Management, Facility Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place, Surge Capacity, At-Risk Populations/Mental Health, MOU/MAA, Federal Medical Station (s)/Alternative Care Facilities and others that may be applicable. **We will discuss these groups and suggestions for reconfiguration at the Healthcare Systems Planning Meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> at Kennewick General Hospital (10 am – Noon).**

The **exercise schedule/requirements** for this grant cycle: Each local health jurisdiction will conduct a tabletop or more complex exercise within their jurisdiction. The Coalition will conduct a tabletop that leads into a functional exercise. The tabletop will be conducted prior to the functional – not on the same day!

The components to be tested this year: Memoranda of Understandings (those in place), Interoperable Communications, ESAR-VHP (WAHVE), Alternative Care Facilities (if you are planning any), and two of the following: Fatality Management, Medical Evacuation/Shelter-in-Place, or tracking bed availability. Others may be added to this list during exercise planning. Accreditation/deliverables for your facility may also be added. As in years past, an exercise design group will be convened. If you would like to volunteer or have other questions, please contact Leslie Koenig at [lesliek@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:lesliek@bfhd.wa.gov) and/or 509-460-4530. She will sign you up for the email distribution list, sign you up for the group of your choice, and distribute follow up information. If you know of someone who you would like to invite, please send their contact information to Leslie.

## Portable Supplies Make Emergency Response Faster and Easier

In an emergency, local health jurisdictions and other Region 8 partners may run short of supplies. To be ready, Region 8 has purchased supplies to augment those of local health jurisdictions. These supplies are available to be used in exercises, flu clinics, or during an emergency. A trailer is used for storage as well as to provide delivery.



The Region has incident command system vests, radios with chargers, traffic flashlights, and traffic cones available. A portable badging and tracking system, Salamander Technologies, is also available. Different

types of badges can be created and used to do such things as track the number of hours that an employee or volunteer worked.

Local emergency response coordinators at each local health jurisdiction will have inventory lists. Please contact your local health jurisdiction if you are interested in borrowing supplies for an event.

Some partners have also stocked trailers with supplies. If you would like guidance in developing a plan to stock an emergency trailer, contact John Franco at 509-460-4531, or [johnf@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:johnf@bfhd.wa.gov).



## Newsletter Assessment: Is it News You Use?



For the past three years we've produced the Region 8 newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. Now we would appreciate some feedback from you.

- Is the newsletter a resource you use?
- What do you use?
- What information would you like to see?

Please send your thoughts and comments to Angela Seydel, [angelas@bfhd.wa.gov](mailto:angelas@bfhd.wa.gov).

## *Training and Education*

Training and education are vital components in developing and maintaining emergency response personnel and teams. To meet that need, Region 8 Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response provides training opportunities to our partners. These include in-person trainings, video or dvds, and web-based learning opportunities. New trainings and materials are added to the Region 8 library on a regular basis and by request.

### *In-person trainings include:*

Learn about federal grants and the appropriations process at a **Federal Funding Symposium** conducted by the staff of Senator Patty Murray and Senator Maria Cantwell. Included will be tips on submitting a successful grant application, finding the right funding source for your project, and the current outlook and trends for appropriations.

**Pasco:**            **Thursday, November 13, 2008 10 a.m.— Noon**  
**Columbia Basin Community College, Gjerde Center**  
**2600 North 20th Avenue**

**Yakima:**         **Friday, November 14, 2008 10 a.m.— Noon**  
**Yakima Valley Community College, Parker Room**  
**South 16th and Nob Hill Boulevard**

**RSVP:**            [workshop@murray.senate.gov](mailto:workshop@murray.senate.gov)

### *On-line training and learning opportunities:*

#### **Public Health Survival: Leadership in a Falling Market**

*As funding falls in this economic downturn, demands for public health are likely to rise. Join a panel of public health leaders talking about operating public health systems in a down ecology and identify new strategies and networks to continue the work of public health.*

Live Webcast December 15, 2008 11:00 a.m.

North Carolina Institute for Public Health [www.sph.unc.edu/nciph](http://www.sph.unc.edu/nciph)

#### **The Hospital Safety Index**

*This tool for assessing the existing safety level in health facilities affected by a disaster was developed by the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization Disaster Mitigation Advisory Group.*

Originally broadcast October 22, 2008

Emergency Management Forum <http://www.emforum.org/>

### *On-line resources:*

“**States of Preparedness**” is the second edition of the 2006 ASTHO report describing how state and territorial health agencies are working to meet public health preparedness goals. This edition offers a closer look at how public health agencies responded to ten different emergencies, including a New York snowstorm, a mass shooting in Virginia, pediatric disease outbreaks in Alaska, and a meningitis scare in Illinois.

<http://www.astho.org/>

### *From the video library :*

Contact Angela Seydel 509-460-4532 for the following programs.

#### **Upcoming Broadcast:**

**Mass Antibiotic Dispensing: Partnering with Tribal Governments and Communities**

10:00—11:30 a.m. December 4, 2008

<http://www2.cdc.gov/phtn/tribal/default.asp>

## Region 8 Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

### Kennewick

7102 W. Okanogan  
Kennewick WA 99336  
Phone: 509-460-4200  
Fax: 509-460-4535

Leslie Koenig, Coordinator  
John Franco, Epidemiology  
Angela Seydel, Communications  
Nathan Sheeran, Database  
Craig Ferguson, VISTA  
Volunteer / MRC Support

## Regional Websites

### Benton-Franklin Health District

[www.bfhd.wa.gov](http://www.bfhd.wa.gov)

### Klickitat County Health Department

[www.klickitatcounty.org/health/](http://www.klickitatcounty.org/health/)

### Walla Walla County Health Department

<http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/departments/phd/index.shtml>

### Yakima Health District

[www.yakimapublichealth.org](http://www.yakimapublichealth.org)

### Pandemic Influenza Where are we now?

**PHASE 3**

CDC  
November 2008

## 2008 Flu Season Update

Flu season preparation has begun with vaccine available at various locations throughout Region 8.

The CDC's Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity Conference Call (COCA) on October 28 reviewed current US vaccine recommendations, antiviral medications and recommendations for use, and the influenza-related illnesses and deaths that should be reported to health departments and the CDC. The powerpoint slides and audio file are available on the COCA website. <http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/coca/callinfo.asp>

The CDC's Seasonal Flu Vaccination campaign has a variety of products available to encourage people to Get Vaccinated!



National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 8 –14, 2008. You can add a button to your website to remind people to get vaccinated. There are also podcasts and e-cards available.

### Medical Conditions for Which Influenza Vaccination Recommended

- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Chronic heart or lung disease
- Metabolic disease, including diabetes
- Renal disease
- Hemoglobinopathies
- Weakened immune system due to illness or medication, including HIV/AIDS
- Conditions that interfere with lung function/control of secretions, e.g. neurologic or neuromuscular disorders
- 6m – 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Pregnant during influenza season



[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)



Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity  
Conference Call:

Seasonal Influenza Update October 28, 2008  
<http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/coca/ppi/Influenza-10-28-08.ppt#1>

Walla Walla County Health Department held a three day vaccination clinic in October, giving over 6,000 shots. Benton-Franklin Health District has given over 5,000 shots. Klickitat County Health Department will conduct flu shot clinics in Goldendale and White Salmon the first week of November. As of the week of October 25, the CDC reports sporadic flu activity in 13 states, including Washington.

**On October 28, the University of Minnesota gave 11,538 flu shots in one day, shattering the previous Guinness World Record.**

## WHO Revises Pandemic Flu Guidance

*October 24, 2008 (CIDRAP News) ~ The World Health Organization (WHO) has drafted a revised pandemic influenza preparedness plan that updates the definitions of pandemic phases and puts more emphasis on the social and economic effects of a global epidemic, among other changes.*

*The plan is intended to replace the existing one published in 2005, presenting "simpler and more precise definitions" of the six pandemic phases and groups them to emphasize planning and preparedness considerations. The draft also defines "post-peak" and "possible new wave" phases.*

Comments on the draft are due November 3rd, and the final version in December. [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/EN\\_guidancereview/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/EN_guidancereview/en/)

- Each phase is linked to an "estimated probability of a pandemic" in the new draft guidance. Probability is listed as "uncertain" for phases 1, 2, and 3, and rises for the remaining steps.
- Emphasis is placed on the principle that all of society should prepare for a pandemic.
- Many of the recommended activities are the same or similar to the existing guidance, but some have changed.

*The WHO plans to publish a collection of "support technical documents" with the final guidance, one of which will cover non-health sector preparedness. Others will cover disease-control measures, outbreak communications, and tools such as checklists and training manuals. ~ <http://www.cidrap.unm.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/biz-plan/news/oct2408who.html>*