



Kansas Preparedness Times

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As the state's environmental protection and public health agency, KDHE promotes responsible choices to protect the health and environment for all Kansans.

Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.

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KHEL Remains Vigilant for Virus

By Brian Hart, Microbiologist

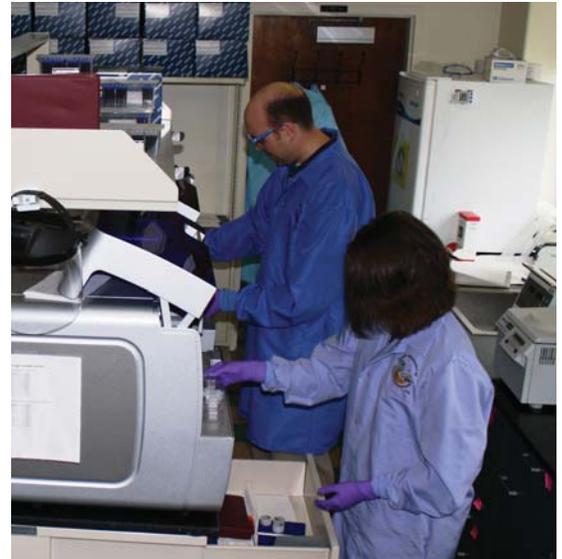
Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories

This time last year at the Kansas Health & Environmental Laboratories (KHEL), we were elbows-deep in influenza specimens from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. This required our laboratory staff to ramp up our response capabilities through cross-training and the development of new processes to handle the increased specimen load.

Currently, KHEL receives specimens from select surveillance sites around the state, but not at the same rate as a year ago.

Surveillance information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that influenza activity in the U.S. is mostly "no activity" to "sporadic," with the southeast part of the country experiencing some stronger local activity.

Unlike last year, in which the 2009 A/H1N1 strain predominated, the surveillance data shows a fairly equal mix of influenza B, influenza A 2009 H1N1 and influenza A/H3N2. Because of this trend, we have adapted our testing methods to maximize our resource efficiency. Last year, since 2009 A/H1N1 was almost exclusively the predominant strain, we were able to test directly for that target. For this season, we are screening for both influenza A and B types. Specimens that test positive for influenza A are set up for additional sub-



Brian Hart and Sherrie Stawanski, microbiologists, process influenza samples at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories.

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A Minute with Mindee

by Mindee Reece, BPHP Director

A recent news article I read described the role of a mentor in a person’s life as follows: “Most successful individuals have used the help of mentors in their life. To understand the complexity of life and their environment, these mentors shared with their protégé all their knowledge, their expertise on how to become a better person, how to help people, how to get involved in their society and become a better person overall. Mentors share their experience with the beginners so they can slowly adapt to some personal changes.”

I have been very fortunate to have a wonderful mentor in my life for the past 22 years, Richard (Dick) Morrissey. My career at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) began in 1988 (at age 22) when I accepted a keyboard operator position right out of college. I was fortunate enough to be employed by the Bureau of Adult and Child Care, with Dick as the bureau director. Since that time, he has continued to serve as a guiding force in my career. Always willing to lend advice or an ear, depending on the circumstance, Dick has been a key part of every major event, decision, failure, and success I’ve experienced during my years at KDHE.

For half of my life and my entire career, I have relied on Dick’s sound judgment, wisdom and decades of experience to guide me as part of our mentor/protégé relationship. With his retirement on December 10, life as I know it is dramatically changing. My mentor will no longer be just around the corner from my office.

I hope I will be able to remember everything he’s taught me over the years through observing him successfully maneuver through difficult policy issues.



I’ve seen him lead by setting a great example and heard him communicate challenging messages in tactful and understandable ways. Dick inspires others to work hard and remain dedicated, even during times of change and transition. He’s built and fostered partnerships that stand the tests of adversity and time.

The definition shown at the start of this article truly does reflect the role Dick has played in my life

and career.

There’s no one I admire more than Dick Morrissey, who has helped develop my initial interest in public health into a lifelong career. As future challenges and issues come my way, I imagine my mantra will be “WWDD.” What would Dick do?

Dick says it’s now my turn to become a mentor for others who are following in our footsteps. The good news is that I know I learned from the best.

Cherokee County Health Dept. Holds Drive-Thru Flu Clinic



Health workers provide a vaccination to a client at the Cherokee County drive-thru flu clinic on October 1.

Hospital Tabletop Exercise Posted on KS-TRAIN

By Cait Purinton-Day, Exercise & Training Coordinator

The upcoming KDHE-BPHP: Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise (TTX), scheduled for January 3-7, 2011, has been posted on KS-TRAIN (Course ID **1024962**) and is open for registration. Participation in the TTX is not mandatory, but it will meet the exercise requirements for hospitals within the FY2010 Community Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Grant. A second TTX will be offered in April for meeting the exercise requirements on the grant.

Thank you to members the Preparedness Grant Advisory Council (PGAC) Exercise Committee for their input and insight into developing this year's KDHE-BPHP Tabletop Exercise for hospitals. Gary Martin, Kansas City Regional Coordinator; Charlie Keeton, South-Central Regional Coordinator; Tami Wood, Northwest Regional Coordinator; Karry Moore, Southeast Regional Coordinator; and Dan Leong, Kansas Hospital Association, were critical in putting the TTX materials together and providing feedback on how to make the exercise design applicable to hospitals statewide.

New this year: KDHE will be offering an instructional webinar prior to the TTX.

The webinar will be offered twice: December 8 from 10 a.m.-noon and December 20 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The webinar is designed for individuals who will be facilitating the KDHE-BPHP: Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise (TTX) at their local hospitals.

Purpose of the Webinar

- Learn how to register your hospital for the exercise on KS-TRAIN
- Learn how to use the situation manual, exercise evaluation guides, PowerPoint presentation, after action report, and other materials for the exercise
- Learn how to modify these materials to meet the individual needs and size of your hospital and community
- Participate in a question and answer session

How to Register for the Webinar

- Registration for the webinar is available on KS-TRAIN (Course ID **1024985**). You only need to register for one date.
- Registration is by approval. Because the webinar is targeted specifically at facilitators (not exercise players, evaluators, observers, etc.), only one person will be approved from each hospital for the webinar.
- You will receive an email from KS-TRAIN confirming your approval for the webinar, including a web link for you to download all of the exercise materials for discussion during the webinar. You will receive another email from KS-TRAIN that includes directions for logging into Go To Meeting for the webinar on the date for which you have registered. Webinar participants will be expected to have reviewed the documents prior to the webinar.

Webinar Participation is Voluntary

Participation in the webinar is not required to register for and participate in the KDHE-BPHP: Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise (TTX). If you wish to register for the exercise without attending the webinar, please contact Cait Purinton-Day at cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov or Debbie Nickels at dnickels@kdheks.gov.

***Do you have news
about your agency's
preparedness efforts?***

If you would like to include it in the next issue of the Kansas Preparedness Times, please e-mail your news to Mike Heideman at mheideman@kdheks.gov.

Lawrence-Douglas Co. Health Dept. Hosts First Drive-Thru Flu Clinic



The youngest member of the Flake family enjoys a sticker after receiving his flu shot at the drive-thru clinic held October 16 in Lawrence.



Catherine Bird, a nurse from Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, watches as volunteer Tiffany Belland, a student in the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy, prepares a flu shot during Lawrence's first drive-thru flu shot clinic.

KHEL Remains Vigilant for Virus (continued)

typing to characterize them as 2009 A/H1N1 or A/H3N2.

Since influenza has not been very prevalent yet this season, which is not uncommon compared to most previous years, we don't yet know the level of flu activity to expect. We are anticipating activity to pick up after January 1, 2011. Our current testing policy states that we will accept specimens for influenza testing from our surveillance sites and also from hospitalized patients with influenza-like-illness (ILI). We are confident that the experience that we gained last year will continue to pay dividends this season and in years to come.

Additionally, we will soon have another tool in



The KHEL H1N1 Team at the laboratories in Topeka.

our surveillance testing arsenal. In late summer 2010, we applied for and were awarded grant funding to purchase a bead-based multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) system that can simultaneously detect 12 respiratory viral targets in a single specimen. We plan to use this on a limited basis for enhanced surveillance later this season. We

hope to have this technology operational in the first quarter of 2011.

With this new technology, KHEL will be able to provide a broader surveillance picture. Our team is devoted to the health and environmental needs of Kansas and is here to support the public health response.

**Hospital Exercise Requirements
Reminder**

*By Cait Purinton-Day
Exercise & Training Coordinator*

Please remember that hospitals that are designing their own exercises or participating in local community-wide exercises must give KDHE 60 days’ notice of the exercise date and Target Capabilities.

According to Page 12 of the FY2010 Community Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) Grant Guidance, “Should a participating hospital decide to develop their own exercise, KDHE requires that the list of Target Capabilities and associated Critical Tasks addressed, as well as the exercise evaluation tool, be submitted to the KDHE Exercise and Training Coordinator no less than 60 days prior to the date of the exercise. The exercise must be completed by June 1, 2011.”

The work plans also require hospitals to test interoperable communications capabilities. According to pages 5-6 of the FY2010 Community HPP Grant Guidance, “Hospitals must demonstrate dedicated, redundant communications capability, during an exercise or incident, and show evidence of such through evaluations or after action reports. In addition, hospitals must also demonstrate the capability of sustaining two-way communications with the local [Emergency Operations Center] or other Tier 2 partners, during an exercise or incident, and show evidence of such through evaluations or after action reports. Hospitals will be asked to document the amount of time they were able to sustain the two-way communications and identify at least two Tier 2 partners with which they sustained two-way communications.”

Prior to June 2, 2011, hospitals must test the Target Capabilities of Medical Surge and Communications, either through an exercise or real-world event, and document the exercise or test in an after action report or improvement plan.

Contact Cait Purinton-Day, Exercise and Training Coordinator, at cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov or (785) 296-1984 if you have questions.

**KC Counties Develop New
Disease Surveillance System**

*By Larry Franken, MSPH
Epidemiology Surveillance Coordinator
Wyandotte County Public Health
Emergency Preparedness*

Kansas and Missouri counties (including Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, and Miami) in the Kansas City region have joined together to help develop a new disease surveillance system that links databases from both states. The X-Sentinel system is the first of its kind in the United States and was created through a joint effort between Kansas City metro health departments, Mid-America Regional Council, Scientific Technologies Corporation, and state health departments.



Counties in the Kansas City Metro Area

The X-Sentinel system has several key benefits over current communication methods which are limited to email, fax and telephone calls between health departments. The new system will allow health departments in the Kansas City metro area to electronically notify one another of disease cases that may belong to another jurisdiction. This is especially helpful when a person living in Kansas seeks treatment in Missouri.

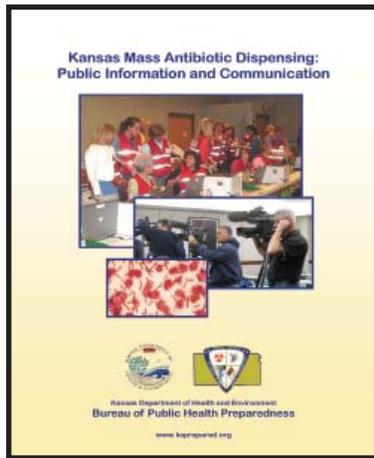
X-Sentinel has an event notification tool which allows any health department in the metro to alert other regional counties of a possible outbreak, regardless of what state they reside. Finally, a surveillance function gives health departments a way to conduct surveillance through the use of epidemiology tools such as epi-curves, line lists, and case mapping. This will help health departments in Kansas and Missouri better track disease throughout the entire region. The X-Sentinel system should be fully operational sometime in early 2011.

**BPHP Hosts SNS Public Information Trainings
New Course to be Posted to KS-TRAIN**

By Mike Heideman, Communications and Training Specialist

The KDHE Bureau of Public Health Preparedness (BPHP) hosted a series of seven public information trainings related to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) throughout Kansas during fall 2010.

The introductory course, “Kansas Mass Antibiotic Dispensing – Public Information and Communication,” was implemented to help local and state communicators better understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of an SNS deployment. The training course focused on the development of messages, methods, and materials necessary for disseminating information to specific population groups before, during and after a public health emergency.



The trainings were held during September and October in Garden City, Hays, Topeka, Chanute, Wichita, Salina and Overland Park. Group exercises involving audio and video media clips, message development and role playing made the sessions interesting and exciting. In all, more than 100 individuals from the disciplines of public health, health care and emergency management participated.

BPHP will soon post a refresher version of the course to KS-TRAIN. Local health departments will be able to use the course for meeting the objectives of Section 5 of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Preparedness Technical Assistance Review.

The SNS contains large amounts of medicine and medical supplies to protect people if there is a public health emergency severe enough to cause local supplies to run out. Medicines can be delivered to Kansas within 12 hours of a decision to send them. Kansas, along with every other state, has plans to receive and

distribute SNS medicine and medical supplies to local communities as quickly as possible. Local communities are responsible for dispensing SNS resources to the public once they arrive within their jurisdictions. The SNS is managed at the federal level by the CDC.

Upcoming Trainings & Exercises

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP): The Bureau of Public Health Preparedness (BPHP) is partnering with the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM) to co-sponsor trainings for HSEEP. The following dates have been selected and will be posted on KS-TRAIN for registration. Watch for these sessions under Course ID **1023667**:

- **February 8-10: Salina**
- **February 22-24: Topeka**
- **March 29-31: Wichita**
- **May 3-5: SE Kansas**
- **May 24-26: NW Kansas**

If you have questions about the HSEEP trainings, please contact Cait Purinton-Day at cpurinton-day@kdheks.gov or (785) 296-1984, or Michael Paz-Torres at michael.paz@us.army.mil or (785) 861-3020.

(PER-211) Medical Management of CBRNE Events: This two-day course will equip firstresponders and first receivers with the skills needed to ensure proper patient triage, treatment, and transportation in the event of exposure to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) weapons. Register on KS-TRAIN - Course ID **1025004**.

- **April 12: Hays**

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