



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

Date: September 19, 2006

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, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
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: Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health
Aggie Leitheiser, Director, Office of Emergency Preparedness,
MN Department of Health
Pam Blixt, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

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.

Aggie Leitheiser, Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness at the Minnesota Department of Health, will present on pandemic influenza and emergency planning at the state level.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING
Department of Health & Family Support (MDHFS)
CITY COUNCIL UPDATE: FOURTH QUARTER 2006

Planning

1. Major accomplishments have been achieved over the summer by the work of many City staff in the continuity of operations plan for city services in the event of pandemic flu. Barrett Lane, a consultant hired for the effort through emergency management, has assisted MDHFS in leading much of the efforts. A draft plan is complete and will be tested this fall in a drill and with a tabletop exercise this winter.
2. Efforts have been made to reach out to residents in the African American and American Indian communities to increase the level of preparedness and improve communications for emergency planning. The groups have progressed to the point of wanting to establish formal Memorandums of Understanding with MDHFS for the purposes of establishing plans to be utilized in the event of an emergency that will affect them. MDHFS will be working to finalize agreements with Sabathani Community Center, the Urban League, and the Little Earth Community within the next few months.
3. A program to initiate community preparedness efforts for pandemic influenza was completed over the summer with 11 agencies that serve vulnerable populations, including six clinics (NorthPoint, Southside, Indian Health Board, Native American Community Clinic, Fremont Clinic, and St. Marys/Carondelet), Neighborhood Health Care Network, Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency, and the city's three Block Nurse Programs. The program resulted in all hazards plans including pandemic flu, exercises, and supply and equipment requirement lists for each agency. This program will be offered to more agencies serving vulnerable populations this new grant year.
4. A significant milestone was completed in August with the signing of a mutual aid agreement by the eleven local public health agencies in the metro region. The agreement provides a framework to allow each agency to assist the others in an emergency.
5. MDHFS has been helping to lead planning with home health agencies to increase their preparedness to serve vulnerable populations. We helped with a poster session at the state conference in May, helped organize a regional meeting between public health and home health agencies in July, and are assisting with the process of the state association to establish planning committees.
6. The current grant year begins on September 1st with a continued funding stream for public health preparedness, Cities Readiness Initiative, and pandemic influenza planning. The total for the year which ends in August 2007 is \$626,541.

Training and Exercise

1. Throughout the summer staff continued to complete the NIMS (National Incident Management System) ICS (Incident Command System) 100 and 200 training. All MDHFS staff has now completed this federal training requirement for the City to retain eligibility for federal Department of Homeland Security grant support.
2. Seven emergency responders from the Twin Cities metro area, including MDHFS staff member Erin Schroeder, shadowed the Pacific Northwest Level 1 incident management team July 26-August 3 in the Boundary Waters. The shadowing is part of the process to achieving a Level 3 All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) for the metro area. The metro team will have members from various disciplines such as Fire, Police, Public Health, EMS and Healthcare. Team members shadowed a position in the Boundary Waters on the Cavity Lake Fire that began July 14. Erin worked with the public information team to keep the community informed on the progress to contain the fire.

Other metro staff shadowed Incident Command, Operations, Logistics, Planning, Safety and Liaison areas. Even though it was a wild land fire and a new type of disaster for all the Twin Cities responders, the incident management principles observed and learned can be transferred to any incident. Erin reported the amazing sight of the organization, professionalism and concern for safety on an incident as large as the Cavity Lake Fire that at its peak had over 500 staff working on the fire.

3. As part of the formation of an AHIMT, team members must attend position specific training. Erin Schroeder attended the four-day training for Finance/Administration Section Chief in Emmitsburg, Maryland at the National Fire Academy. Pam Blixt will be attending the Public Information Officer course in September.
4. Upon request, our staff provided expertise to the University of Minnesota for the development of their "Special Populations" skill development guide for national release under a federal grant. We provided suggestions on content and skill building activities.
5. The physical installation of the satellite project for MDHFS is completed. Staff will now be able to view the many training satellite broadcasts without having to travel to another location.
6. MDHFS staff led efforts to recruit a record amount of volunteers (680) to serve as victims for "Operation Pez", a public health mass dispensing exercise in Eden Prairie and Apple Valley on June 16th. Participation from Sabathani Community Center, Urban League, and Little Earth was organized that resulted in the improvement of relationships and plans for future preparedness expansion plans.
7. We hosted two Master of Public Health students who worked on plans for the public health exercises and the pandemic flu continuity of operations plan. One of the students also researched the fascinating history of pandemic flu response efforts in Minneapolis in 1918. A separate article is included with that information.
8. MDHFS has developed training materials and presentations that are available for delivery to community organizations regarding pandemic flu. Criteria and a request form were also compiled to ensure demand can be managed with the limits of staff constraints.

Response and Recovery

1. Our department responded during two extreme heat events. The focus was to provide the public with information on how to protect themselves. Cooling tips provided by various government agencies helped to keep heat related injuries and sickness to a minimum. City Fire and Police staff also helped cool down attendees at the Aquatennial festivities. Pam Blixt, Emergency Preparedness Manager for MDHFS and Kristi Rollwagen, Deputy Chief of Emergency Preparedness for the Fire Department served as spokespersons many times for the health concerns about heat, culminating in a call from "The Today Show" and a live interview at Lake Calhoun with the Weather Channel.

Despite the record heat, the metro area did not any experience deaths attributable to heat. It appears that the public responded to the educational message and utilized the programs that were put in place to assist them. In appreciation of the community's responsiveness, Gretchen Musicant and Pam Blixt submitted to the Star Tribune a thank you to the public, which made "Letter of the Day" on the editorial section.

2. Improvements to the City's public health laboratory's security system are complete, and included installation of a manually activated, silent, dual intrusion alarm system.