



City of Dallas

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Dallas City Hall – 1500 Marilla, L1FN Conference Room “C”
Regular Meeting
November 6, 2006
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Members Present

James Mitchell, Chair
Diane Benjamin
Jon (Tad) Heimbürger
Keith Kwoh
Sylvia Lagos
Barbara Pittman
Linda Sharp
Mary Vogelsson
Mary Warner

Members Absent

Chris Schulz

Public Present

Dr. John Carlo, MD, DCHHSD
Dr. Mary Catherine Sanchez, Pandemic Influenza Coordinator, DCHHSD

Staff Present

Joey Zapata, Assistant Director, EHS
Lilia Gonzalez, Coordinator, EHS
Kenny Shaw, Director, Office of Emergency Management
Caleb Bartley, Office of Emergency Management
Josh Hathaway, Office of Emergency Management
Dionne Driscoll – Office of Environmental Quality
David Howe, City Attorney’s Office

Minutes

Mr. James Mitchell, Chair, called the regular meeting of the Environmental Health Commission to order at 9:07 a.m. The minutes from the October 9, 2006 meeting were approved.

Discussion of Preparations of a Potential Flu Pandemic Emergency

Kenny Shaw, Director of Office of Emergency Management

Mr. Kenny Shaw said that his planning team asked the Departments of the City to provide them with information that would help the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) prepare for Pandemic Influenza. OEM asked for a line of succession which is a list of individuals that would take charge in the extended absence of a supervisor due to illness. A listing of functions to be considered for critical services was also requested.

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Critical Services are services that are essential and must continue despite a local or national pandemic outbreak. It fills the critical services functions in the case of expected staff absentee rates cross-training is being considered. Cross-training is the training of city department employees in "non-critical" positions to fill critical positions. For example, in the event of staff shortages, the employee is trained to perform critical job functions such as 911 operators. Updated contact lists have been provided to OEM. These lists include directors, assistant directors, key leadership, and critical service personnel. A flu task force was created consisting of employees from various city departments to focus on citywide pandemic influenza preparation.

Mr. Shaw provided a copy of a flyer that went out to all departments and passed out to all employees. The flyer includes information sources to check into.

Mr. James Mitchell asked if 311 has a downloadable flyer for citizens that have questions. Mr. Shaw's response was that the downloadable flyer is on the Office of Emergency Management website and not on the 311 website. Mr. Mitchell suggested that a link be put on the website for 311 for easy access.

Mr. Shaw informed the commission of the in-house plan to approve and update the continuity plan. OEM is finishing the pandemic flu version of the plan and will be expanded to be broader than just the pandemic flu incidents.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the pandemic plan would be in place by the end of March 07. Mr. Shaw said yes.

A copy of Mr. Shaw's presentation was provided to member of the Environmental Health Commission.

Discussion of Preparations of a Potential Flu Pandemic Emergency
Dr. John Carlo, MD, DCHHSD

Dr. John Carlo gave an update on the pandemic flu preparedness managed by his office. He stated that there has not been much on the news and in the media. Dr. Carlo mentioned a story that was reported by the media from over the summer.

The first was in Indonesia where a cluster of 2 generations, 9 members, slept in a confined home were the 42 year old female had contracted bird flu from the birds she cared for. Five of those individuals died of a disease confirmed to be Avian Influenza N1H5. One caretaker that cared for one of the children in that household also died.

The second case concerned a hospital in a neighboring county that had an individual report to the hospital. The patient had just returned from Vietnam and went to the emergency room with flu-like symptoms. She was quickly tested for N1H5 and the results were negative. That hospital reported that some employees did not show up to work, presumable because of this situation.

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One area Dr. Carlo focuses on is mass casualty triage. He regularly talks to the physicians about the ethics associated with an event like that. Dr. Carlo talks to physicians about how to care for four people when there is only one bed available. He talks to them about how they are going to make the decision on which patient gets a ventilator and who doesn't. Dr. Carlo stated that in a time of a disaster with not all the normal resources available, delivery of healthcare will be difficult.

Another area of focus is the allocation of available vaccines and antiviral medicines, if they do become available. First strategy is to identify a case and go to anyone that was in contact with that infectious person and give them the available medication. The second strategy is the first responder strategy. It gives out the available resources to essential people that run government and infrastructure. For example, nurses, doctors, EMS workers. The third strategy is to prioritize the available resources and put them in priority groups. The priority groups would be the groups that would most likely have complications from the disease.

A copy of Dr. Carlo's presentation was not provided to the member of the Environmental Health Commission.

Discussion of Preparations of a Potential Flu Pandemic Emergency
Ms. Mary Catherine Sanchez, DCHHS

Ms. Sanchez updated the commission about some of the things being done at Dallas County in reference to the potential flu pandemic. She stated that efforts are being made to bring community based and faith based organizations to the table. During a pandemic these agencies and religious groups would be called upon more than during regular times. Dallas County has discussed with them issues the agencies would be faced with. A lot of the agencies have funeral issues and other would have homeless issues.

Agencies are working together on a plan to set up under one umbrella and share resources across the county. Dallas County has had a Medical Examiner's Tabletop that discussed issues that is specific to medical examiners, coroner's office, body identification, body storage, and funeral services.

Dallas County has been working a lot with school and school nurses across the county and other counties as well. Dallas County discussed human resource issues. This includes a discussion on at what point an employee can be sent home and over what period of time. Also discussed, is disinfecting surfaces, telephones, tables, door knobs, etc. The Health Department meets regularly with school administrators.

DCHHS also works with hospital council meetings. Infectious Control Practitioner's from the council meetings also report to Dallas County. There is increase seasonal employee surveillance across the county. The way it works is that Dallas County is obtaining zip codes for each flu case to see if there is a virus in that area.

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Dallas County also has private businesses report absentee rates to them. Long term care facility and home health agencies report to them as well. Environmental Health Commission members suggested that Dallas County begin contacting nursing schools to educate and train nurses on the potential flu pandemic.

A copy of Dr. Sanchez' presentation was not provided.

Brief Discussion of Request by Transportation and Environment Committee
James Mitchell, Chair, Environmental Health Commission

Mr. Mitchell stated that the Commission's recommendation about rodents was been forwarded to the Transportation and Environment Committee. Mr. Mitchell has received an acknowledgement from Councilmember Koop. The recommendation suggested that the Committee invite Rodger Jayroe, Manager, Environmental Assessments to present the briefing with the recommendations that were endorsed by the Commission.

Mr. Mitchell informed the commission that he would meet with Councilmember Koop to talk about that issue.

Mr. Mitchell also stated that next month the commission would need to talk about the letter that he received on EHC's plans and priorities. He decided that he would not discuss that with the commission until he discussed those issues with Mrs. Jill Jordan, Assistant City Manager.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he would update the commission on the meeting being held with Mrs. Jill Jordan.

Staff Reports

Mr. Joey Zapata informed the commission that there were only 15 minutes left in the meeting and it was not enough time to review the Open Government Training movie.

Mrs. Linda Sharp suggested that members of the commission log on to the Attorney's General Office website. She stated that you watch the video online. At the end of the video a code is given to you. That code is entered and a course completion certificate will be printed out with the members name on it.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that Mr. Zapata send the member an email informing the of the website address.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

