

Continuity IQ

from  DSPN

May 2007

Fast Facts for Our Valued Friends and Clients

Dear Paul,

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at DSPN. In this issue, we update our information on pandemics. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Pandemics

Did you know....

1. A World Health Organization (WHO) [report](#) states that the H5N1 strain of bird flu has killed at least 172 people since 2003, mostly in Southeast Asia.
2. Click here to review the [basic facts about pandemic influenza](#).
3. The WHO website also maintains an excellent [Pandemic FAQ](#).
4. The WHO met in Turkey during April to [report the latest findings](#) regarding clinical aspects of human infection. Since the last meeting in Hanoi, May 2005, eight new countries have reported human infections. Participants agreed that standardizing care and promptly sharing clinical and treatment information are critically important to understanding the disease in humans and to improving clinical management.
5. According to Jacquelyn Polder of the Center for Disease Control, the 1918 epidemic had its strongest impact during early stages in cities where practices such as quarantine and other social-distancing measures were not quickly implemented.
6. If a pandemic emerges, it will take 4 to 6 months for a vaccine to be produced using current technology, health officials say, so anti-viral drugs such as Tamiflu will be the main pharmaceutical stopgap available during the first months.
7. USA Today points out that national stockpiles of Tamiflu vary. Greece is storing enough to treat 5% of its population, while France is planning for more than 50%. The United States is stockpiling 81 million courses, enough for about 25% of the population. Additionally, some 350 U.S. companies have ordered 5 million treatment courses for employees.
8. According to Japan Times, Tamiflu is enormously popular in Japan, where a total of 35 million people have taken it for flu treatment since its approval in 2001. But the blockbuster drug is under a cloud of doubt. Between 2000 and October 2006, 54 people, including 16 children, died after taking Tamiflu, health ministry statistics show.
9. According to HealthDay Reporter, the FDA approved in April the first bird flu vaccine for use in humans. That vaccine, developed by drug maker Sanofi

Aventis, is far from perfect, however, and was described as an "interim measure" by Norman Baylor, director of the FDA's Office of Vaccines Research and Review. According to the FDA, only 45 percent of people who received the vaccine produced infection-fighting antibodies to the virus. This rate of effectiveness does not make this drug a total "preventative" for bird flu, but it would lessen the impact of a pandemic during the early stages before other more effective vaccines become available. The vaccine has been purchased by the federal government for inclusion within the National Stockpile for distribution by public health officials if needed.

10. Nathaniel Forbes, founder of Forbes Calamity Prevention in Singapore, says that most pandemic plans assume someone else will get sick first, and that plans will be activated when the WHO or a national health authority raises the alert level. "Most company's pandemic plans are defeated," Forbes says, "by a scenario in which the company's employees are the first to be infected."

Brain Teasers

True or False:

1. The two states most vulnerable to economic decline due to a pandemic are Nevada and Hawaii.
2. A recent study suggests that school closings would not have a substantial effect on pandemic-related outcomes in the absence of measures to reduce out-of-school contacts.
3. Dallas pandemic plans include the possibility of training librarians as temporary 911 operators.
4. The manufacturer of Tamiflu is still 12 months behind on filling world-wide orders.
5. In 1918, the death rate from Spanish flu was twice as high in Philadelphia compared to the rate in St. Louis.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. True. Click here to see a [state-by-state analysis](#) of economic vulnerability.
2. True. [Findings from the study](#) are reported in the Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal (April 2007).
3. True. Click here to see other [state-by-state preparations](#).
4. False. Swiss-based Roche said in April that it was cutting production because supply of Tamiflu now exceeds demand.
5. True. [Early action in St. Louis](#) appears to have saved thousands of lives.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Have you established policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a pandemic (e.g. non-punitive, liberal leave), including policies on when a previously-ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness?

2. Have you established policies for flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts)?
3. Have you established policies for preventing influenza spread at the worksite (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms)?
4. Have you established policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas (consider both domestic and international sites), evacuating employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and guidance for employees returning from affected areas?
5. Have you collaborated with insurers, health plans, major local healthcare facilities, and governmental agencies to share your pandemic plans and understand their capabilities and plans?

New From DSPN

Check these out on our website:

1. DSPN's [2007 schedule of public workshops](#) is now available on our website.
2. Want to provide a [pandemic experience for your executives](#)? DSPN can help you design and facilitate a tabletop exercise for them.
3. Want to participate in a [mock disaster simulating an earthquake](#)? DSPN is hosting two earthquake simulations in California during June 2007.

Contributors to This Issue

- Paul Klier, DSPN

Comments and Contributions



Tell us what you think...

Thanks to all of you who have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

Paul

Popular Services from DSPN



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Contact Information

email: pklier@dspnetwork.com

phone: 800-601-3776

web: <http://www.dspnetwork.com>