

Get Informed. Be Prepared.



Pandemic Influenza

Sedgwick County
Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
and Response Plan



Sedgwick County...
working for you

Sedgwick County
Health Department
316-660-7300
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An informed and prepared public can take appropriate actions to decrease their risk during a pandemic.

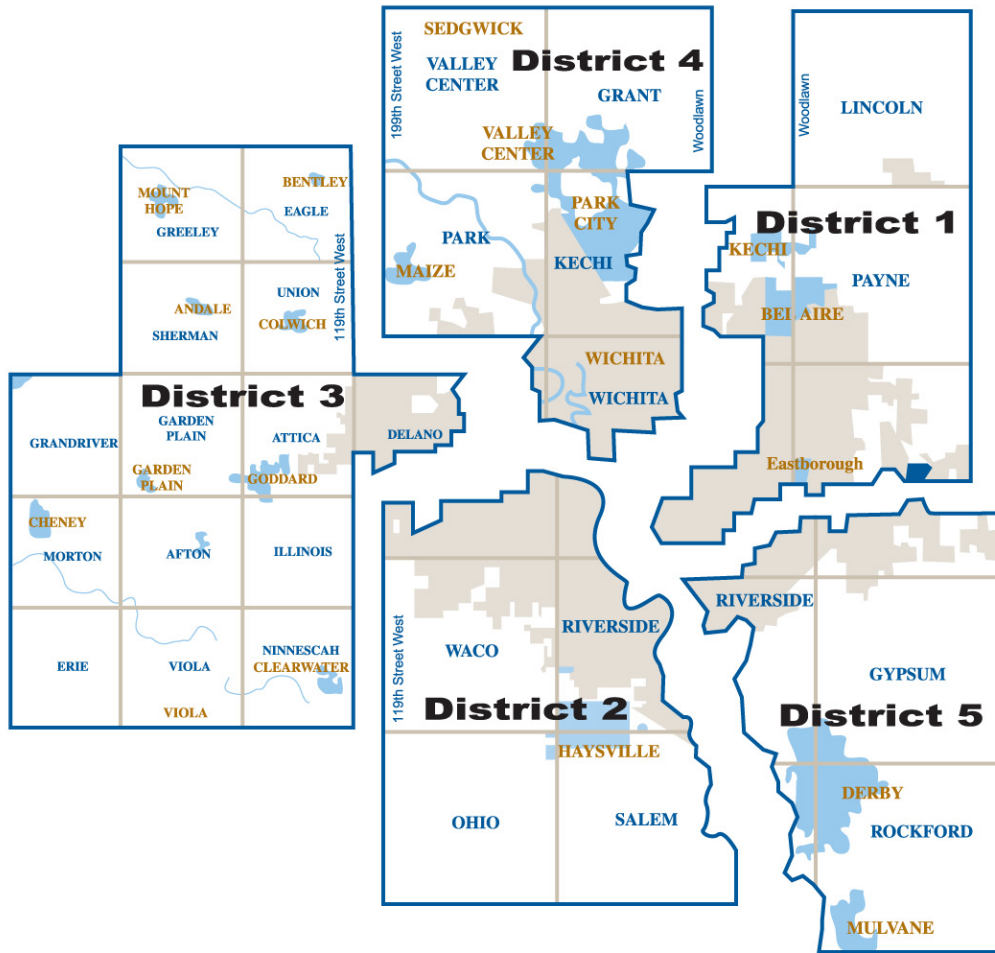
Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners



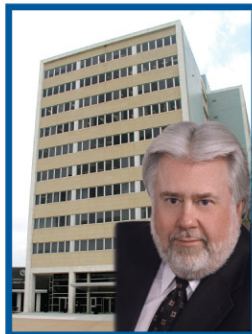
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Sedgwick County
Commissioner - 4th District



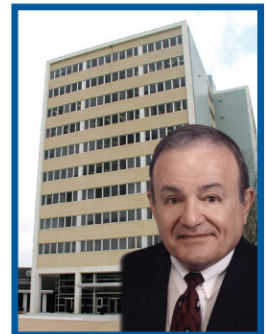
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Sedgwick County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An influenza pandemic – which means worldwide outbreak of disease – has the potential to cause more death and illness than any other public health threat. It is likely that another influenza pandemic will occur sometime in the future; however, no one knows exactly if or when the next influenza pandemic will happen. The Spanish Flu [A H1N1] pandemic of 1918-1919 was the worst natural disaster of the 20th century. When the Spanish Flu ended, it had killed 650,000 people in the U.S. The second pandemic of the 20th century, the Asian Flu [A H2N2] was identified in China in late February 1957, taking only a few months to spread and reach the U.S. where it was responsible for causing approximately 70,000 deaths. The third and most recent pandemic was detected in early 1968 in Hong Kong [AH3N2]; the Hong Kong flu killed approximately 34,000 people in the U.S.

Scientists around the world believe that the current avian flu virus, also known as bird flu, is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 variant is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. To date, there has been limited human-to-human transmission of the H5N1 influenza virus. If a pandemic influenza virus with the same virulence as the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919 were to emerge today, in the absence of interventions, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated that 1.9 million Americans could die and almost 10 million could be hospitalized over the course of the pandemic. It is estimated that a pandemic could last for over a year or more. Although the timing, nature and severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted with any certainty, preparedness planning is imperative to lessen the impact of a pandemic.

Experts at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), at the World Health Organization (WHO), and elsewhere believe that the world is now closer to another influenza pandemic than at any time since 1968, when the last of the previous century's three pandemics occurred. Due to the prolonged nature of a pandemic influenza event, the WHO has defined phases of a pandemic in order to facilitate coordinated plans. The WHO determined six phases (phases 1-6) of pandemic alert as a system for informing the world of the seriousness of the threat and of the need to launch progressively more intense preparedness activities. Phase 1 is defined as no new influenza virus subtypes detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. Phase 6 is defined as increased and sustained transmission of influenza in the general population, and coincides with easy transmission from person-to-person. The world is presently in phase 3; a new influenza virus subtype is causing disease in humans, but is not yet spreading efficiently and sustainably among humans.

Sedgwick County Preparedness

In accordance with the federal and state pandemic influenza plans, the Sedgwick County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan (hereafter referred to as the SC PanFlu Plan) has identified responsible parties and prescribes necessary actions, based on the WHO/HHS pandemic phases. The goals of this plan are first, to minimize serious illness and death and second, to limit societal disruption and economic losses. Sedgwick County is working with federal, state, and other local government agencies to prepare for pandemic influenza and to maintain essential health care and community services if an outbreak should occur.

While a pandemic response is primarily a public health response, many agencies, organizations, and private institutions will need to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to ensure an effective overall response in our community. The Sedgwick County Health Department will assume primary responsibility for planning and response.

The Sedgwick County Division of Public Safety will have important manpower and logistical resources that will be necessary for ensuring the safety of Sedgwick County citizens. Sedgwick County Emergency Management will play a critical role by ensuring overall coordination of government resources. Continuity of government issues will be essential to maintain critical functions, and as such, a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) blueprint for Sedgwick County government is being developed and will be integrated across all County departments/divisions. Other public and private sector stakeholders anticipate and are preparing for a pandemic by defining roles and responsibilities and developing their respective continuity of operations plans.

In November 2005, the Sedgwick County Health Department convened a Pandemic Influenza Work Group (PIWG). The PIWG is comprised of various organizations such as Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce, United Way of the Plains, area hospitals/clinics, Veterans Affairs (VA), Wichita Mid-Continent Airport - Public Safety, Diocese of Wichita/parochial schools, McConnell Air Force Base, University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, Wichita State University, and USD 259, faith-based organizations, private industry, and social service organizations. The intent of the PIWG is to make recommendations on a local pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan, and to better inform planning for their own organizations. Additionally, the establishment of various PIWG subcommittees assures that local subject matter experts are collaborating to address specific sections of the SC PanFlu Plan.

Sedgwick County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan

The Sedgwick County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan provides response guidelines to an influenza pandemic through ten chapters that provide planning and response activities. The SC PanFlu Plan is considered a living document with information that is subject to change. This plan is coordinated with state and federal plans. The information in the plan is updated with changes in assumptions, response capacities, and known status of the disease.

Command and Control

Various local and state public officials have distinct and overlapping authorities with regard to protecting the public's health and safety. The Governor, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Secretary of Health, County Manager, local Board of Health, Board of County Commission, and the local health officer can each direct actions within the scope of their jurisdiction. The authorities' focus is on protecting the public health, which may include introducing social distancing measures, such as closing public and/or private facilities and events. Command and control identifies for all stakeholders legal authorities responsible for executing the operational plan, especially those authorities responsible for isolation, quarantine, movement restriction, healthcare services, emergency care, and mutual aid.

Surveillance

The Health Surveillance and Disease Control (HSDC) section of the Sedgwick County Health Department is responsible for disease surveillance in the county. The HSDC section will monitor data needed to guide response efforts during an influenza pandemic. HSDC will implement enhanced surveillance measures, based on increasing phases, to initiate appropriate containment protocols.

Community Response

Public health interventions such as quarantine and social distancing may be necessary during a pandemic to slow the transmission of the disease in the community. Community leaders will play an important role in providing timely and accurate information and updates, and determining appropriate actions to protect the general public.

Communications

Communications are a critical component of pandemic influenza planning, preparedness and response. Sedgwick County will instill and maintain public confidence in the County's public health and health care systems by addressing misinformation and rumors as quickly as possible. Sedgwick County Communications will continue to collaborate with the PIWG Communications subcommittee to ensure that well-coordinated health communications support public health interventions designed to help limit influenza-associated illness and death. In addition, communications strategies around the mental health impact on individuals and families will be a critical and ongoing focus.

Vaccine and Antivirals Delivery

In the event of an influenza pandemic, vaccine and antiviral delivery may or may not be available to prevent and treat influenza. Priority groups, including numerical estimates, for receipt of vaccine and antivirals have been identified according to federal guidelines and are subject to change based on availability of pharmaceuticals. Plans for dispensing pharmaceuticals and mass vaccinations are included in the attachments of the plan. The Sedgwick County Health Department has developed comprehensive methods for distribution of pharmaceuticals.

Infrastructure and Continuity of Operations

In the event of an influenza pandemic, movement of essential personnel, goods and services, and maintenance of critical infrastructure will be necessary functions. The continuity of operations (COOP) plan includes three components that strategically integrate the Sedgwick County Health Department COOP plan, the COOP blueprint for Sedgwick County government, and the COOP plan for businesses, community organizations and other entities. The infrastructure and COOP plans include details to activate contingency plans to ensure that personnel are protected, that delivery of essential goods and services are maintained, and that sectors remain functional despite significant and sustained worker absenteeism.

Health Care Response

The medical burden of an influenza pandemic could potentially stretch over an extended period of time. Local public health and medical surge plans have been developed to enhance existing hospital bed capacity, medical treatment supplies, and provide supportive care to ill persons. As a federally-designated National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) jurisdiction, Sedgwick County will coordinate with medical facilities to support national medical surge requirements. Additionally, an operating guide for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) materiel management has been developed.

Unique Communities and Populations

Special considerations will need to be addressed for unique and vulnerable populations. Unique populations may include ethnic populations and non-English speakers. Vulnerable populations may include frail elderly, single parent homes with small children, the homeless, the homebound, immunosuppressed individuals, and people with disabilities. Collaborative strategies will be implemented to reach these specific target audiences, such as the utilization of culturally and linguistically appropriate public information materials. Additionally, non-traditional methods of communication will be implemented through existing networks such as the Sedgwick County Department on Aging, Community Development, and COMCARE.

Recovery

Unlike other natural disasters, an influenza pandemic may last for many months and occur in repeated waves. Recovery from an influenza pandemic begins while the pandemic is still in progress, and continues during the periods between waves and following the pandemic. Recovery issues that are addressed include evaluating the effectiveness of disease containment measures and emergency management strategies. The Sedgwick County Health Department will be responsible for minimizing subsequent waves of influenza by using current vaccine and/or antiviral resources as they become available. Mental health services will assist in facilitating recovery with self-care messages.

Conclusion

Local preparedness is the foundation of pandemic readiness. The threat of an influenza pandemic is one of the most important health threats that we face today. Through the solid leadership of the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners, we will continue to work together to meet this challenge.

The Sedgwick County Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan is a living document. As more information evolves on this particular influenza strain and its potential to become an influenza pandemic, the plan is subject to improvement and change as we continue to develop better strategies and practices.