



CITY OF MANCHESTER

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INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS IN THE CITY OF MANCHESTER

The Role of the City of Manchester Health Department

During the mid 1800s, the Manchester Board of Health was established by a special act of the New Hampshire legislature, and the first City Health Officer was appointed to enforce public health laws and regulations and investigate sanitary public health threats. The mission of the City of Manchester Health Department (MHD) is "To improve the health of individuals, families, and the community through disease prevention, health promotion and protection from environmental threats." The vision of the MHD is "To be a healthy community where the public can enjoy a high quality of health in a clean environment, enjoy protection from public health threats and can access high quality of health care". Since the Department's formation in 1885, the MHD has diligently worked to adhere to its mission and has met the changing public health needs of its population with great vigor. As a *governmental entity*, the MHD has the authority and responsibility to develop a cohesive local public health system; one that is prepared at all times to ward off threats and respond to crises, while at the same time, through community partnerships and efficacious interventions, is eliciting improvements in the health of its community residents.

Surveillance and Early Detection

The fundamental objective of syndromic surveillance is to identify illness clusters early, before diagnoses are confirmed and reported to public health agencies, and to mobilize a rapid response, thereby reducing morbidity and mortality. In Manchester, the local health department has worked collaboratively with the emergency departments of Elliot Hospital and Catholic Medical Center to compile daily reports of respiratory complaints, rashes, gastroenteritis and fever. A similar system, also known as "STEMS", tracks daily reports from Manchester's 24 public schools on approximately 25 symptoms or problems among school children, serving as a potential first indication of an outbreak or public health threat.

Working with the Community to Improve and Protect the Public Health Through Planning and Preparedness

The City of Manchester Health Department has continually developed and disseminated community action plans around priority public health issues. These include such topics as adolescent pregnancy prevention, oral health improvement, HIV prevention, lead poisoning prevention and immunizations. In 1999, the Department issued its first comprehensive Influenza Plan, with its most recent update completed in September of 2005. The Department has also completed both a SARS Response Plan in 2003, a Smallpox Response Plan, along with a Mass Vaccination Plan.

For the past several years, the Greater Manchester Public Health Preparedness Advisory Council, which includes leaders from Manchester’s Health, Police, Fire and School Departments, Mayor’s Office, Catholic Medical Center, Elliot Hospital, VA Medical Center, Manchester Community Health Center, Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic, Greater Manchester Mental Health Center, Rockingham Ambulance, American Red Cross, NH Department of Health Human Services, NH Department of Safety and representatives from eight surrounding communities (Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Goffstown, Hooksett, New Boston), has convened on a monthly basis to write plans designed to prepare the City of Manchester and its neighboring towns for a variety of public health threats. One such plan details how the Manchester Health Department and its partners would open and staff mass prophylaxis clinics. These clinics would be used to provide vaccinations, antibiotics, antivirals or other medications to a large number of people in a short period of time.

Understanding Our Role in a Larger System

While the Manchester Health Department has been in the lead in community planning for public health preparedness issues, we understand that we are part of a larger emergency management system within the City of Manchester. During an emergency within the City of Manchester, the Public Health Director becomes part of the City’s Emergency Operations Center and reports directly to the Emergency Management Director. Manchester Health Department staff, through an incident management system, will then support and carry out the directives of the Emergency Operations Center. It is this relationship, understanding and structure, that allows for an efficient response to any emergency.

