



CITY OF WEST ALLIS

WISCONSIN



Health Department

TERRY L. BRANDENBURG
Health Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bell
Administration and Finance Committee

FROM: Terry Brandenburg, Health Commissioner

DATE: June 2, 2006

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATION FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER
REGARDING A PANEMIC INFLUENZA GRANT AND
PROPOSED COMMUNITY OUTREATH CAMPAIGN

I would like to provide an update on our continuing efforts to better prepare for public health emergencies in West Allis. Specifically, this is an update on preparations and planning for pandemic influenza.

The Centers for Disease Control has released pandemic influenza planning grants to states, and states, in turn, have added pandemic influenza funds to our existing public health preparedness grant. The funding, in the amount of \$11,684, has just arrived and must be spent or encumbered by August 30 of this year. The grant requires that we draft a pandemic influenza response plan, conduct an exercise of the plan, and hold an event for community stakeholders.

As you are aware, we have been working cooperatively with other health departments in the Milwaukee Metro area to develop emergency public health preparedness plans. We know that if a large disease outbreak occurred it would encompass the entire area and a consistent, coordinated plan would need to be implemented. We have been in some intense meetings with other health departments on the issue of pandemic influenza planning and collectively feel that it is in our best interest to draft a regional response plan that would encompass all of southeastern Wisconsin. This would provide uniform, consistent response activities and communications to our residents.

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In order to meet the grant requirements by the August 30 deadline, we have agreed to contract with the Medical College of Wisconsin to draft the plan, organize an exercise of the plan and hold a regional event for stakeholders from southeastern Wisconsin, which is tentatively scheduled for August 1. Wauwatosa has agreed to be the organization that initiates the contract with each health department contributing \$2,500.

We also know that there needs to be much more education of our residents about pandemic influenza. It is very clear from the numerous calls we receive that there is widespread confusion about pandemic influenza and how it differs from the regular, seasonal flu, or from Avian flu. With the balance of the grant funds that must be expended by August 30, we propose to develop a clear communication piece for our citizens on pandemic influenza. This communication piece would be developed in the month of August, again to meet the grant deadline, by two Health Department health educators who were reduced to school-term positions during the latest round of budget cuts. All salaries and benefits would be funded by the grant to complete this one-time project. Although distribution is yet to be decided, it may take shape as an enclosure in the City Newsletter or some other mechanism to ensure that it reaches all citizens.

This is a very short time frame to complete the deliverables required to receive the funding, however, we feel that by working cooperatively with the other health department in the region we can accomplish this task.

I would be pleased to provide any additional information on our overall efforts to better prepare for public health emergencies.

TB/gs

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