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# LESSON LEARNED

## Hospital Preparedness: Pandemic Influenza Training for Staff

### SUMMARY

Hospitals should consider providing staff with training on pandemic influenza basics, the use of personal protective equipment, and work responsibilities in a pandemic influenza emergency.

### DESCRIPTION

On September 14, 2006, the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the San Francisco Infection Control Working Group, and the San Francisco Hospital Council Emergency Preparedness Taskforce hosted a 4-hour tabletop exercise (TTX). All nine hospitals in San Francisco as well as the Seton Medical Center of San Mateo County participated in the TTX. The TTX focused on hospitals' responses to three scenarios:

- A rule-out H5N1 avian influenza case during a World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Alert Phase 3 (no or very limited human-to-human transmission);
- A confirmed H5N1 case in San Francisco during a WHO Pandemic Alert Phase 4 (evidence of increased human-to-human transmission); and
- Widespread H5N3 influenza cases in San Francisco during a WHO Pandemic Alert Phase 6 (efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission) with hospital supply and staffing shortages.

The main goal of this TTX was to practice coordination and communication activities during a pandemic influenza scenario among hospital infection control professionals, hospital emergency preparedness coordinators, and sections of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. One objective was to improve communication between emergency preparedness coordinators and infection control professionals. Participants also sought to identify thresholds that would trigger an emergency response activation or a change in infection control standards.

### HEICS/HICS

HEICS/HICS is an emergency management system that employs a logical and unified management (command) structure, defined responsibilities, clear reporting channels, and a common nomenclature to help unify hospitals with other emergency responders.

Many hospitals recognized the need to improve training for all hospital staff. To accomplish this, participants suggested that hospitals could host grand rounds, lectures, management training classes, and internal tabletop exercises. Training activities should focus on:

- Recognizing the signs and symptoms of infection;
- Who to notify and when to activate the Hospital Emergency or Hospital Incident Command Structure (HEICS/HICS);
- Basic information about the influenza virus;

- The use and proper fitting of personal protective equipment;
- Information for families of hospital employees;
- Housing requirements; and
- Work schedules.

Hospitals should consider providing staff with training on pandemic influenza basics, the use of personal protective equipment, and work responsibilities in a pandemic influenza emergency.

### **CITATIONS**

San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco Infection Control Working Group and the Hospital Council Emergency Preparedness Taskforce. *2006 Pandemic Influenza Infection Control Tabletop Exercise After Action Report*. 14 Sep 2006.

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California Emergency Medical Services Authority. *2006 Statewide Medical & Health Disaster Exercise Guidebook and Toolkit*. 16 Nov 2006.

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