



**PANDEMIC INFLUENZA AND AVIAN INFLUENZA
MARYLAND PREPARES!
Status Report, July 2007**

What Maryland is Doing - Human Health Pandemic Preparedness

Providing Pandemic Flu community awareness presentations to a variety of private and public sectors about pandemic influenza, its impact, and need for advanced preparations.

Holding a statewide Pandemic Flu functional exercise.

Coordinating response planning with state agencies and departments.

Conducting a detailed assessment of local public health and healthcare systems capacity to respond to influenza pandemic.

Refining health department methods for vaccination of target priority groups in the event of vaccine shortages and determining how to meet the demand for vaccine by groups not considered 'priority'.

Enhancing the existing influenza sentinel provider surveillance network and other influenza surveillance systems.

Refining recommendations on isolation, quarantine and community containment measures (e.g., school closure, 'snow days'), and other control measures.

Training at local level to educate all sectors about pandemic influenza, its impact, and need for advanced preparedness.

Updating the Maryland pandemic influenza response plan to make it more operational and comprehensive in scope.

What Maryland Has Done – Human Health Pandemic Preparedness

Maryland was one of the first states to develop its own pandemic influenza response plan. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) began work on this plan in 1999. The current pandemic influenza response plan is available at the website *flu.Maryland.gov*. This informative influenza Web site was launched in fall of 2005.

DHMH has conducted several pandemic influenza conferences and tabletop exercises to raise awareness among the public health community, healthcare providers, schools, businesses, industries, and other public and private stakeholders.

What Maryland Has Done – Human Health Pandemic Preparedness

DHMH leads the statewide planning and preparedness effort for treatment of large numbers of acutely ill patients, including those going to inpatient and outpatient facilities.

Maryland hospitals are better now prepared to handle beds over usual capacity and many of these of these beds can provide respiratory isolation.

Developed “FRED” (Facility Resources Emergency Database), which is an Internet-based application that assists hospitals, health care facilities, and emergency medical providers in gathering and disseminating critical information during major health incidents or mass casualty events.

DHMH has provided guidance on who should be laboratory tested for signs of pandemic influenza illness to local health departments, acute care hospitals, and other healthcare providers. The Department’s Laboratories Administration conducts screening PCR testing for H5N1 and other possible avian influenza (AI) and pandemic strains.

DHMH has worked with the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that existing statutes and regulations are sufficient for human health pandemic response.

Maryland has held a statewide pandemic influenza summit with U.S. Secretary of Health Michael Leavitt to discuss national and state planning for a wide array of stakeholders in Maryland

What Maryland Has Done -- Avian Influenza (AI) Preparedness

MD Department of Natural Resources is enhancing wild migratory bird surveillance.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is the lead state agency for prevention and control of poultry AI outbreaks.

MDA has conducted avian influenza response exercises and continues to refine its plans.

As of January 2006, birds on 100 percent of poultry farms are tested for avian influenza before being shipped to processing. In addition, poultry growers systematically monitor for increased deaths in their facilities.

MDA is testing birds going to fairs and shows, requiring testing for interstate movement of birds, and testing for avian influenza in backyard flocks.

A mandatory poultry registration program has begun to identify all locations in Maryland where birds are housed.

What Maryland Has Done -- Avian Influenza (AI) Preparedness

MDA tests for pathogens, including AI, when increased deaths are recognized. All positive tests are confirmed at the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Veterinary Services Laboratory Ames, Iowa.

In December 2004, following an avian influenza outbreak on the Delmarva Peninsula, the Worcester County Health Department convened the Delmarva Poultry Industries' Health Departments Joint Task Force.

The Joint Task Force membership includes representatives of DHMH, MDA and Maryland Eastern Shore local health departments. Other members include persons in similar capacities from Delaware and Virginia, major poultry producers (Mountaire, Purdue, Tyson, Allen Family), and the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. trade group.

With its unprecedented collaboration, the Joint Task Force is leading the nation in identifying procedures to prevent avian influenza or any other disease from entering poultry flocks.

Working collaboratively, this unique group developed and implemented guidelines to protect poultry workers and growers, veterinarians and others in close contact with poultry regularly or in a disease situation.

The guidelines are based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidance. Specific recommendations are shared for personal protective equipment, preventive antiviral medication use, vaccination, clinical monitoring, follow-up, and testing of all persons potentially exposed to infected birds.

In May 2006, the group completed a brochure for poultry growers entitled "[Answers to Common Questions about Avian Influenza for Poultry Growers](#)." For copies, call MDA at 410-841-5810 or log onto www.mda.state.md.us on avian influenza page or click direct link, www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/birdflu_trifold.pdf

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