



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

University at Albany
Center for Public Health Preparedness

Grand Rounds Series



**Engaging the Public in
Pandemic Flu Planning**

Speaker

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Division of Public Health
and the Center for the Advancement of
Collaborative Strategies in Health
(www.cacsh.org)
The New York Academy of Medicine

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Evaluation

www.UAlbanyCPHP.org/evals

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Two Related Challenges in Pandemic Flu Planning

- Production of an effective vaccine will probably take at least 6 months.
- Plans to protect the public are being developed without directly involving the public.


Redefining Readiness Study

- In a deadly contagious disease outbreak, two-thirds of Americans want to avoid contact with people outside their household by isolating themselves at home.
- This protective predisposition is not fear-based.

EpiSimS Modeling of Protective Home Isolation

Reduce proportion of people infected by:

- Half if 30% stay home
- Two-thirds if 40% stay home



Reduce duration of epidemic by:

- One-third if 30% stay home for months

Quarantine vs. Protective Home Isolation

Isolation and Quarantine

- Forcible isolation of people who are sick or exposed to prevent them from making others sick

Protective Home Isolation

- Voluntary isolation of healthy people to limit their contact with others who could make them sick

Four Redefining Readiness Demonstration Sites

- **Urban and rural with diverse populations**
 - City of Carlsbad and South Eddy County, New Mexico
 - Humboldt Park in Chicago, Illinois
 - Benjamin Van Clark, Dixon Park, Live Oak and Eastside Concerned Citizens in Savannah, Georgia
 - Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties, SE Oklahoma

The Redefining Readiness Community Engagement Process

- **Phase I:** Small group discussions with the people who live and work in each community
- **Phase II:** Larger interactive gatherings to share the discussion findings with the broader community
- **Phase III:** Community teams to act on the findings

Small Group Discussions with Community Residents

- Designed to tap into the public's common-sense knowledge and build resilience.
- Organized very differently than traditional focus groups, public deliberations, and town hall meetings.

Situation-Based Discussions

- In a two-hour session, ten people consider two specific and realistic emergency scenarios.
- They explore the problems they would face trying to protect themselves in each situation.
- Then they explore the kinds of actions that they and others in the community could take to address those problems.

The Small Group Discussions were Structured to:

- Involve a large and representative group of people in the community.
- Make participation as comfortable and easy as possible for all community members.
- Enable participants to express what really matters to them.
- Provide participants, and the community as a whole, with a complete and accurate record of what everyone said.

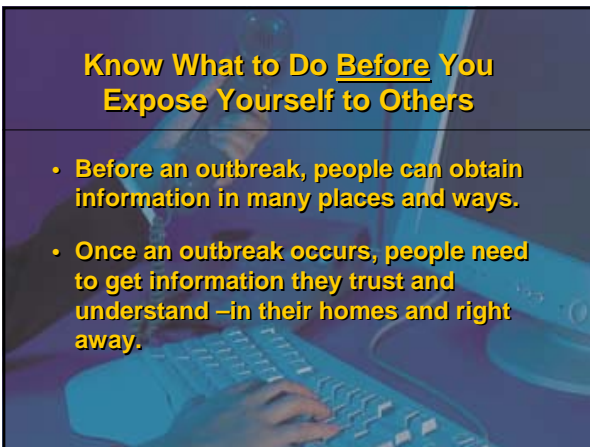
To Isolate Yourself At Home, You Need to:

- Know what to do *before* you expose yourself to a lot of other people
- Be able to maintain an isolated household
- Be able to deal with the emotional challenges of household isolation
- Be able to stay at home without sacrificing things you value



Know What to Do Before You Expose Yourself to Others

- **Before an outbreak, people can obtain information in many places and ways.**
- **Once an outbreak occurs, people need to get information they trust and understand –in their homes and right away.**



Maintain an Isolated Household

You need:

- A place to isolate yourself
- To carry out the activities of daily life and bring in needed supplies and assistance without exposing yourself to people who could make you sick



Emotional Challenges of Household Isolation

- Need for social interactions
- Exacerbation of mental health problems
- Worry about people elsewhere
- Strained relationships
- Anger and violence
- Boredom
- Need to go outside or exercise
- Important work responsibilities that can't be fulfill at home



Sacrifices Involved in Household Isolation

- Well-being of other people and animals who depend on you
- Your family's education
- Your household's jobs, income, essential services, and possessions



Can These Problems be Addressed?

- Not by community residents on their own
- Not by public health agencies, working alone
- Very possibly by a broad array of people and organizations in the community – in ways that would sustain the economy
- Five keys to the solution

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Key #1

- People who can be protected safely with pharmacological agents can help others protect themselves by staying home.
- These assistance providers need to be prioritized to receive antiviral agents or vaccine in an outbreak.
- This approach to prioritization is equitable because everyone is protected – one way or another.

Key #2

- People isolating themselves at home can still play a valuable role in society, fulfilling current or modified job responsibilities or taking on new tasks to respond to the epidemic.
- By making this possible, communities can promote business continuity as well as the economic viability of isolated households.

Key #3

As many households as possible need a working telephone, radio, TV, and access to the Internet in order to:

- Receive information
- Communicate with people outside
- Request assistance
- Continue work and education
- Have access to entertainment and activities to deal with emotional stress.

Key #4

Local networks of residents and organizations can provide support by:

- Serving as trusted points of contact
- Knowing and keeping track of people in the neighborhood
- Establishing local call-in centers
- Identifying/training residents to provide assistance to isolated households
- Organizing the delivery of supplies and assistance to isolated households

Key #5

- People who are isolating themselves during a deadly contagious disease outbreak are contributing to the public good.
- Because they are protecting others as well as themselves, they deserve all of the protections that society owes to people under quarantine.

From Understanding to Action

- Findings of the small group discussions include many specific actions that community residents, organizations, and agencies can take to make protective home isolation possible
- Findings are a starting point for “community conversations” in demonstration sites
- Will be publicly available in February

Roles for Public Health

- Stockpiling and prioritization of antiviral drugs and vaccines
- Oversight systems
- Public health “home” workforce
- Relationships with local networks
- Medical support for isolated households
- Extension of quarantine protections

Antiviral Drugs and Vaccines

- Promote the stockpiling of adequate supplies
- Prioritize provision to people who:
 - Provide face-to-face assistance to isolated households
 - Provide other essential community services
 - Need to go outside to work to maintain the economic viability of their household

Oversight Systems

Develop systems to:

- Document that people providing face-to-face assistance to isolated households are protected and safe
- Verify the need for certain groups of people to protect themselves by staying home in different kinds of outbreaks

Public Health “Home” Workforce

- Think in advance about ways that public health professionals and others in the community can support public health activities from their homes during an influenza pandemic.
- Take steps to provide those people with the technology and training they need to make that possible.

Relationships with Local Networks

- Build relationships with the people and organizations in these networks to help your agency:
 - Communicate with diverse population groups
 - Assure that isolated households (and their dependents elsewhere) receive the supplies and assistance they need
 - Understand and address other complex public health problems

Provision of Medical Assistance

- Organize in advance to provide phone, on-line, and face-to-face assistance to help people in isolated households deal with physical and mental health problems.
- Develop special programming to help people in isolated households deal with emotional stress.



Extension of Quarantine Protections

- Work to extend the protections that exist for people under enforced quarantine to people who are voluntarily isolating themselves in contagious disease outbreaks.

Next Steps for Public Health

- If you want the public to be able to protect themselves in a flu pandemic, get involved now.
- Opportunities for state and local health departments in the *Redefining Readiness* demonstration sites
- Opportunities for other public health agencies, institutions, and professionals

Contact Information

**Redefining Readiness:
www.redefiningreadiness.net**

Dr. Lasker: rlasker@nyam.org

Additional Resources

**Center for the Advancement of
Collaborative Strategies in Health:
www.cacsh.org**

**Citizen Voices on Pandemic Flu Choices:
www.pandemicflu.gov/vaccine/index.html#vprioritization**

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Expanding Health Care Preparedness

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