

Region II Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition
Steering Committee / Minutes
Tuesday, March 14, 2006

In attendance: *Joyce Crouse (Holden), Nancy Allen (Shrewsbury), Howard Ziff (New Braintree), Roger Mallet (Orange), Paul McNulty (Westborough), Jana Ferguson (MDPH), Derek Brindisi (Worcester / Millbury), Christopher Montiverdi (MDPH / Leicester), Ed Wirtanen (Pepperell), Lois Luniewicz (Grafton), Cheryl Rawinski (Sutton), Sandra Knipe (Hubbardston), Jane Anderson (MDPH), Phil Leger (Athol), Jared Woods (Consultant), Walter DePaolo (Consultant), Kerry Clark (Consultant), Karyn E. Card (HHS Project Administrator / Lancaster BOH), Peter MacDonald (Program Manager), Dr. Leonard Morse (Worcester), Trisha Parent (Upton), Barbara Mard (West Boylston), Andrew Pelletier (Auburn), Bernie Sullivan (Gardner), Dennis Costello (Boylston / Northborough), Lee Jarvis (Spencer), Sarah Allen (West Brookfield / Warren), Marleen Bacon (Douglas), Jeanne Gniadek (Northbridge), Mike Graf (Bellingham / Millville), Bill Fisher (Medway / Blackstone), Christine Dauphenais.*

Absent: *Jim Garreffa*, all other Region II communities not listed above.

** Denotes Executive Committee Members*

Approval of January 26, 2006 Minutes: m/s/a

Time, date and location of next meeting: Thursday, April 13th at 10:00 AM / Worcester

Surge / Pandemic Update: Chris Montiverdi, MDPH / Chair of Leicester BOH. Giving updates around the state, interaction between hospitals and public health. (See attached power point handout). Region II Flu Surge (last page). Asking hospitals to be prepared for 40 % staff reduction but to vamp up for 50 % increase in patients. Proposing to hospitals to help locate alternate care / triage sites away from the hospital – direct patients to go to these sites. Once seen, medical staff will determine if they need an Rx, go to the hospital, etc. Looking at 80 sites, state wide. Mass.gov – volunteer database link, MSAR (statewide database list) and MRC (Medical Reserve Corp – local asset), also linked to this site. Paul – pneumococcal vaccine, a common byproduct of the flu. It is only recommended now for seniors. Has there been talk about expanding that? The SNS has been pushing this vaccine. During the first wave of the pandemic, could push this vaccine. Jane – not sure why it is not given to younger folks (exceptions are made). It only covers certain types of bacteria of pneumococcus. Dr. Morse – those over 65 and those who had spleens removed. In favor of everyone getting the flu shot to avoid cross contamination. We as public health agencies have to be concerned about vaccine this year because of the manufacturer selling the 60 million doses in 24 hours, most will have to get the vaccine at their doctor's office. Chris – statewide surge committee that meets once a month, ME office rep – trying to plan for mass burials. What are their legal responsibilities? Would you embalm? Jana – mass cremation or burial regs will be forthcoming from the World Health Organization or CDC. Jane – about 800 deaths per

year due to “regular” flu. The 1968 death rates were comparable to a “regular” flu season. The surge numbers are based on that and 1918. Dr. Morse – review death certificates each day, about 70 die each week. 3,600 die each year in Worcester (not all Worcester residents). How do we know when the flu enters our community and how do we recognize the upslope of a possible outbreak? Look for an increased number of people dieing. Are the hospitals keeping track of stats? Jana – doing surveillance already, looking at 21 communities that have flu deaths vs. every community. Pre-event surveillance, spike in flu like illness but also monitor what is going on through the WHO and CDC. Will also watch what the pharmacies are selling out of. Dr. Morse – Region II, have a central reporting of absenteeism in schools, work place, etc. and review death certificates and reporting of communicable diseases. Audience – DPH needs to send out clear guidance on what it is they want to see, some BOH’s receiving calls on flu outbreaks from various nursing homes. There is a reporting form that DPH has but some folks are unaware this is available. Jane – needs to find out what group handles this and what it is they want. March 22nd meeting in Shrewsbury, will find out. Nancy – all providers got a letter from Shrewsbury stating how to report but she has not received any back. Jane – more pandemic trainings are in the works, need to choose dates that don’t conflict with other trainings.

Coalition Staff Updates: went over territories on the new map created by Barry Lein. Encouraged the committee to locate what town their Consultant is covering and to make an appointment. Jared Woods, Walter DePaolo, Kerry Clark were introduced. Message from Consultants: you are our customers, we want to help. We are a resource for the Coalition. Peter – Barry Lein, tech consultant, not here but made the new territory map. Working on a web page – section on templates, links, public area, private area, compare how your town is doing to the one next door.

Trainings / Workshops: Peter – working hard. Risk Communications, hired the Consortium, did some work back in November. A full day training, two days in May, no dates yet (one in Leominster, for sure). Will use templates developed for us back in November, take it forward – do some role playing on an emergency. Six trainings for IC for 100 and 700, will be offered in various locations throughout the Region. Will be asking for folks to offer space, contact Jared or Walter if you can assist. Will need some night classes for BOH or other town officials who work during the day. Could also have someone come in / expert and then take the test on line. There are options. Also contracting with PeopleForever, on Stafford Street, Worcester. Will purchase virtual coupons for training – you can go to their site for the trainings or they will go out into the community (minimum five people). This training is for the BOH and any person(s) who are or will assist with EDS plans. Will do workshops – Mutual Aid. Joyce – HHAN training? Walter – spoke to Scott Kenfield, there are many issues with the HHAN, they are revamping the system in July / August. Made the case that this would be a valuable resource for the Region. There is an online training now, need headphones to plug into the computer. Jana – there are also CD Roms available, you just need to get registered. Will look into this further. Will get program coordinators on there to get familiar and share with communities but also let Jana know who out in the community is not on and let her know. Phil – problem is that we still don’t have anyone approved in Region II as

an administrator. Derek – if you need to get on right away, go to: alert.network@state.ma.us some BOH's need to access food recalls! Peter – has sent out a News Alert but will continue to update once a week to the Coalition.

Mutual Aid: Peter – reviewed the “Basics of Mutual Aid” Power Point Presentation – designed to take on the road and present to the various boards to include article language. If you don't get on for this spring meeting, you might not be able to get on til next year. Phil – submitted the warrant to Athol, they voted no due to some of the language. They added “with approval of town manager” and “to provide emergency public health services.” They were confused, they thought Phil was setting up a regional health district. They did not want three people making the decision – they wanted the select board to be another check and balance. Phil said no to that board. Be prepared to argue. “What's in it for us?” Assumption: if you are in a larger community you must have more resources. Phil – work with other BOH's that are already trained. Also, make sure the explanation document is included in the presentation not just the warrant language. Phil – bottom line issues: BOH / 3 people to make a decision, what's in it for us? Prep your board members! Sandra – Hubbardston's passed, but stressed it wouldn't cost the town anything. Created worst case scenario – small pox outbreak, we would need to enter into mutual aid with towns. Peter – this presentation is to help make this clear to your board and any other town officials. Jane – this should go into the newsletter. Dr. Morse – isn't there already a president with Fire? Derek – where does the Region stand to get them on for the Town meeting? Peter – we have four that have passed but we don't know the ongoing status of other towns at this point. Program Consultants will be assessing. Jana – if you have problems with this, let me know. Might be able to help provide additional information to help make this clear. Info on liability on the DPH website. Will send the link out. Phil – check and see what your article needs – signatures? Jana – article just gives permission to enter into agreements with other towns (blanket basis). When we go forward, ideally we will get regional mutual aid. Best case scenario, state legislature would avoid having to go to Town Meetings. Howard – reality for little towns, would only ask contiguous towns. Peter – get it passed. Then, fill in Region II and the Towns you want to enter into agreements with. Highlight real world examples where your town has utilized the resources of neighboring communities. This is already being used by other emergency agencies. Public Health has become an emergency service. Peter – consultants will help you with COOP (due at the end of this month). Jana – reviewing them now. Peter – AED's, do you need one for your EDS? Contact Karyn.

Special Populations Forum: June 8th at the Worcester Senior Center, 128 Providence Street. Elders, multi-lingual, deaf & hard of hearing. 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM. Need to register! **Please note: this forum will be held as a Coalition Training as it will take place the same day as the standing Steering Committee meeting (2nd Thursday of the month – see below under New / Old Business).**

New / Old Business: Thermometers, planning to provide 200 probe covers to each town that received one. Part B of the Go-Kit (suggestions made by Equipment Sub-Committee): probe covers, backup batteries for radios, masks, alcohol hand cleaners,

volunteer placards, flashlights, caution tape, etc. \$30,000 approximately left over to honor individual town requests. Steering Committee meetings / when to meet? Jana – we need to meet more frequently, we could offer trainings during those meetings, set a day. ***Phil made a motion to meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM in Worcester, Division of Public Health.*** Next meeting will be April 13th at 10:00 AM.

Adjourn. m/s/a