Protecting Justice From A Pandemic Flu Outbreak: Preparation

Presentation by:
Judge Linda L. Chezem (Retired)
Health and Human Services
Secretary Mike Leavitt

“Avian flu . . . will severely test the best-laid plans . . . and many companies are not making any plans at all. Those expecting the federal government to ride in and come to their rescue [will] be sorely disappointed.” [emphasis added]
Not Your Usual Emergency

- Planning is essential to assuring the orderly administration of justice.

- The health of the justice system workers, as well as the health of the community, may depend on preparedness.

- Good luck happens to the best prepared.
The Lack of Working Knowledge

- Most current office holders have never experienced a pandemic outbreak.

- Case law is dated.

- Public health uses some of the same terminology as that used in legal settings, but they don’t always mean what you think they mean.
JUSTICE and HEALTH

Justice Goal: Preserve Rule of Law
Public Health Goal: Use the Law to Protect Health
Starting with You

- Get a flu shot. There is no vaccine for avian flu but it may boost your overall immunity, health officials say.
- Wash your hands to wash away the flu virus
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Stay home if you are sick.
Critical Roles for the State Justice Agency

- Communication
- Coordination
- Careful Allocation of Resources
  - Strategic
  - Cost benefit
  - Tracking
- Examples:
Inoculate Your System with Low Contact Ideas

- Devise a Screening process for justice employees who patrol or work in known outbreak areas before they return to the agency to avoid spreading infection.
- Beef up audio and video conferencing to avoid face to face meeting with ill people or where outbreaks have occurred.
Protect Staff

- Identify workers who may be added to the remote access rolls in the event of an outbreak

- Make sure they have the gear and authorization they need to work from home
Who Can Advise on Sick Leave Policy?

- Encourage those who have symptoms to report to work or stay home?
- Address reporting to work with a cold or flu?
- Provide guidance on reporting exposure to contagious disease?
Personnel Plans

1. Adequate number of people for safe operation
2. Qualified staff (cross training) to do all essential duties
3. Working conditions, telework, as well as personal needs such as assistance for transportation
4. Protection for staff
   1. Safety and protective gear
   2. Vaccinations
   3. Safe water and air
Physical Facilities Templates

- Safety
  - Is air handling done by a recirculation system?
  - Are hand washing facilities convenient?

- Security

- Accessibility

- Use of alternate facilities
Work with the Courts

Indiana Supreme Court has tasked the Court Management Committee to engage in an all hazards planning review.

Template for the local courts – Justice coordination is essential
Service of Court Papers

- How will departments make proper service of orders to protect provide due process and not endanger personnel?
More Tough Questions

- What planning is needed for the programs that are administered by the judicial branch such as detention centers, probation and casework services, DUI services but closely impact Sheriff’s duties?

- How will we protect the mentally ill, alcoholic, addicted, and others with disabilities that will affect their compliance with court orders?
RESOURCES

- http://spa.american.edu/justice/csdp.php
- http://www.publichealthlaw.info/
- http://www.in.gov/isdh/trainingop/virt_lib_prep.htm
- www.pandemicflu.gov