

# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department THE PUBLIC HEALTH PRESS



Health Health Disease  
~Protection \* Education \* Prevention~

Volume 4, Issue I

~An Active Member of the Dickinson-Iron County Community Collaboratives~

Winter '05/'06

## Our Mission

**"To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve."**

## Inside this issue:

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## Pandemic Influenza and Bird Flu FAQ's

By Sheila McNulty, Emergency Preparedness Coord.

There are no cases of bird flu in Michigan or the United States. We are actively looking for human cases in Michigan and have plans in place to respond, if necessary. It is difficult to predict if the bird flu virus will become a pandemic, but Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is prepared to respond to any public health emergency. The frequently asked questions below provide additional information on the pandemics and the bird flu.

### What is the difference between a pandemic and an epidemic?

The main difference is the number of people infected and the area that is hit by a disease. An epidemic affects many people within a population, community or region at the same time. A pandemic affects an exceptionally high number of people in a wide geographic area, such as worldwide.

### When will the next pandemic happen?

We do not know when the next influenza pandemic will occur. Historically, influenza pandemics occur three to four times every 100 years.

### Why are health officials concerned about the bird flu?

The virus that is circulating in Southeast Asia is a new virus, so people's immune systems may not be prepared to fight this infection, causing more

people to become sick than the typical flu season.

### Is the bird flu going to cause a pandemic?

The virus in Southeast Asia has not mutated to a point where it could easily spread from person-to-person and it's difficult to predict if – or when – that might happen, or if it will result in an influenza pandemic. The people who have gotten the bird flu in Southeast Asia have been in direct contact with infected birds.

### How is Michigan preparing for the bird flu?

Michigan has created a pandemic influenza plan that is designed to limit sickness and death during an influenza pandemic. It involves continued surveillance for the virus, infection control methods and assuring sufficient medical services. It also defines the role of state and local government in order to help control the spread of bird flu.

### How is Dickinson-Iron District Health Department preparing for the bird flu?

We are developing a pandemic influenza response plan that details local strategies to combat an influenza outbreak. We have been conducting exercises with local and regional emergency response partners to test our ability to dispense vaccine and medication to our county residents.

### Is there a vaccine I can get to protect me against bird flu?

Not at this time. The National Institutes of Health is developing a vaccine to protect against the current strain (H5N1) of the bird flu virus. Although this vaccine may not match the final bird flu strain that could infect humans, it may be close enough to provide some protection and reduce symptoms of the virus until a final version of the vaccine can be created.

### What is Tamiflu® and how can it help me?

Tamiflu® is an antiviral medication that is used to reduce the severity of flu symptoms and the amount of time the person is sick. The federal government is working to stockpile antivirals in the event of a bird flu pandemic, which the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will distribute to each state.

### Should I buy some Tamiflu®?

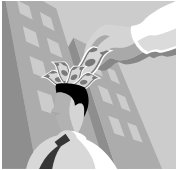
It is not recommended to purchase Tamiflu® or any other antiviral medication at this time. Doctors will need antivirals this season to treat people who have the typical influenza virus. Also, if Tamiflu® is used incorrectly, the drug may become less effective against the bird flu, if it were needed.

(Cont. on back page)

## “Health Tracks” A Health and Wellness Program to Reduce Healthcare Costs and Produce Healthier Employees *(By Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator)*



Health care costs pose a serious threat to the ability of U.S. businesses to compete in today’s global marketplace. Employers continue to pass increasing health care costs on to workers through premium sharing, high deductibles, and higher co-pays, but the reality cannot be ignored: This short-term fix does not address the primary driver of soaring health costs - *inadequate investment in health through primary prevention, health risk reduction, and disease management*. Some forward-thinking organizations are integrating employee health as a business strategy that enables them to manage costs effectively, while investing in the potential of their human capital.



Invest in your employees' health.

In response to these realities faced by the business community, the health department has developed a new **“Health Tracks” Wellness Program!**

**Health Tracks** is a worksite and community health promotion program designed to produce a healthier workforce and community. **Health Tracks** will increase awareness of and reduce behavioral risk factors which lead to cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases through health risk assessments and risk reduction services.



Poor health is risky business.

### Service Tracks include:

**Health Risk Appraisal** – Participants complete a questionnaire about personal and family medical history and current lifestyle practices. Confidential, personalized computer generated reports reveal what participants are doing right and which health behaviors could use improvement. The report suggests preventive procedures and lifestyle changes to improve the individual’s score and reduce their risks. A group summary report is also available.

**Healthy Heart Program** – Blood pressure & cholesterol education provided in a classroom setting to achieve a healthy heart. Two-hour class that can be broken down to meet the employer’s needs and timeframe.

**Heart Health Screening** – Blood Pressure, Cho-

lesterol, HDL, Glucose, Height, Weight and Heart Health History are measured and assessed. *(Additional cost for LDL & Triglycerides)*

**Medical Self-Care** – Designed to provide tips on becoming a smart, informed health care consumer. Employees are empowered to make better health care decisions. One-hour program.

**Safety Supplement Program** – Does your company require you to provide a health and wellness program to meet your occupational safety needs? If so, please call to discuss a customized program for you. Typically a one-hour program.

**Smokers** – A customized smoking cessation program to help your employees quit smoking. Four one-hour group sessions that take place twice weekly over a two-week period.

### Free Programs:

**Eat 5** – Eat five fruits and veggies a day. A free manual tracking program where participants track the number of fruits and veggies eaten daily.

**Get Moving U.P.** – Free physical activity program where participants count minutes of activity and keep track on the fitUP.org website.

**Lunch & Learn** – Don’t know what to offer, then maybe the Lunch & Learn program is for you. During this 30-minute period, we will introduce you to our wellness programs along with a brief discussion on what it means to be “heart healthy.”

**Quit Kits** - Free Quit Kits are available for those employees and dependents who want to quit smoking.

**StepUP Program** – Free physical activity program where participants count the number of steps taken with the use of a pedometer and keep track on the fitUP.org website.

**Call us today for service fees and a tailored program for your employees!**

Get on the  
“Health Track”  
today!



# MI VOLUNTEER REGISTRY

## What You Should Know About Being A Volunteer

### WHO CAN BE A VOLUNTEER?



MI Volunteer Registry seeks people with health care backgrounds and experience, interested in volunteering during an emergency. We are looking for people with all skill levels and experiences. The initial focus will be on doctors, nurses, behavioral



health, emergency medical services personnel and ancillary support staff. In addition, other persons are encouraged to register as well.

### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF VOLUNTEERS?

Those who volunteer agree to be contacted, should their area of expertise be needed during a natural or public emergency. Registering does not obligate you to volunteer during an emergency. Once notified, each volunteer will determine their current availability, based on the following:

- What kind of incident are you willing to respond to?
- What distance are you willing to travel?
- How long are you willing to be deployed?



### WHERE CAN I REGISTER TO BE A VOLUNTEER?



To register, go online to:

<http://www.michigan.gov/ophp>  
OR

<http://www.mivolunteerregistry.org>

### HOW WILL YOU BE CONTACTED?

Volunteers may be contacted via email or text pager (if applicable) after an emergency if local, regional, or state responder resources are not sufficient to meet the need for response and recovery efforts resulting from the incident.

### WHAT ARE THE LIABILITY PROTECTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS?

Volunteers may be protected from civil liability through the following laws:

- Governmental Immunity Act (*MCL 691.140*)
- The Good Samaritan Act (*MCL 691.1501*)
- Emergency Management Act (*1976 PA 390*)
- Public Health Code (*1978 PA 368*)
- Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (*42 USC Chapter 139*)

## Why do we need Volunteers to register?

During an emergency or crisis, the services that volunteers provide can play a crucial role. Being able to efficiently utilize the capabilities of volunteers in a time of emergency often presents a major challenge.

Immediately after the attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001, thousands of people arrived at ground zero to volunteer their assistance. Many of those that arrived wanted to provide medical assistance to the victims of the attacks. In most cases, one could not distinguish qualified volunteers from unqualified. There was no mechanism for coordination; therefore, response effectiveness was reduced. Advanced registration of health care volunteers will provide hospitals, public health, and emergency authorities immediate access to personnel that may be needed in the event of an emergency.



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We're on the web!  
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trict Health Department

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## Pandemic Influenza and Bird Flu FAQ's

*(Cont. from front page)*

### **Should I bother to get the flu vaccine this year since it wouldn't protect me against bird flu?**

The bird flu strain that has been detected in Southeast Asia is *not* the same as the typical influenza virus that circulates each year in Michigan. Health officials encourage you to get your flu vaccine to help prevent complications caused by the typical flu, such as pneumonia or hospitalization. To get your influenza vaccine, contact your health care provider or your local public health department.

### **What can I do to protect myself and my family?**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizer.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze – then throw the tissue away. This will help pre-

vent spreading any germs to other people.

- Avoid exposing your infant unnecessarily to large crowds.
- Do not share food utensils such as cups, straws, forks or spoons.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces such as door knobs, refrigerator handle, telephone, or water faucets.
- Do not smoke around children.
- If you think you have the flu, stay home, get rest, drink plenty of liquids and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.

### **Where can I find more information?**

It's important to get information from trusted, reputable medical sources.

- Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at [www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org)
- Michigan Pandemic Flu Plan at [http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940\\_2955\\_22779-122092--\\_00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_22779-122092--_00.html)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>

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