



## Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

April 2006

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### Avian Flu —Influenza A (H5N1)

*Flu Viruses are categorized into types A, B and C. Types A and B affect human health, but only type A viruses can cause pandemics. Avian Flu (Influenza A (H5N1)) virus – also called “H5N1 virus” — is an influenza A virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds, is highly contagious among birds, and can be deadly to them. H5N1 virus does not usually infect people, but infections with these viruses have occurred in humans. Most of these cases have resulted from people having direct or close contact with H5N1-infected poultry or H5N1-contaminated surfaces.*

Efforts have been made by the world’s leading health officials to monitor and prevent the spread of infection in live bird markets, to treat live poultry with vaccines, and to implement prevention measures of the virus spreading through bird populations. The H5N1 strain is disturbing because of its rapid high number of outbreaks being seen in

Asia and Europe. Although avian influenza does not normally spread from birds to humans, the H5N1 strain has been documented in more than 100 people and has an associated mortality rate of approximately 50%. Almost all of the infected people had either direct or extremely close contact with live birds affected with H5N1. Human to human transmission is very rare.

The fear that easy human-to-human transmission could lead to a worldwide pandemic similar to the flu outbreak in 1919 is a major concern for public health. An influenza pandemic—avian or other—could overwhelm hospitals and emergency responders and disrupt businesses and public services. When a pandemic occurs, it will hit our community hard. As volunteers in our Emergency Preparedness Program, you may be asked to play a role in the response to a pandemic. The initial training which volunteers received for staffing a POD (point of

dispensing) will apply to opening a mass vaccination clinic for influenza. Because volunteers will be called on to assist public health in staffing PODs, it is important that volunteers remember to use good hygiene to keep themselves well. Washing your hands and using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer properly can be over 99% effective in killing viruses, including influenza viruses. This is a good habit to promote and practice now for controlling infection.

No one can predict when a flu pandemic might occur. Research studies to test a vaccine to protect humans against H5N1 virus began in April 2005. For more information on Avian Flu (Influenza A (H5N1)) or pandemic flu, visit these websites: Center for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)), World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) or the Official U. S. Government web site ([www.PandemicFlu.gov](http://www.PandemicFlu.gov)).

### Tennessee Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan

The looming threat of a global influenza pandemic demands preparation by our nation, state and community.

The Department of Health and Human Services released its pandemic influenza plan on November 3, 2005. The Tennessee Department of Health is currently revising the Tennessee Pandemic Influenza Response Plan based on this HHS document. Integrating the federal, state and local plans will enable all sectors of government to work together for a comprehensive approach to a possible pandemic flu outbreak in our nation. The Tennessee Plan will be combined with other preparedness activities in the

Tennessee Emergency Response Plan (TEMP). Incorporating the Pandemic Flu Plan into the TEMP will provide a guideline for responding to and recovering from a pandemic outbreak in our state. The Department of Health will be the lead agency for this response.

How will the Tennessee Pandemic Influenza Response Plan affect our area? The Plan will stress the importance of communities, businesses and individuals taking actions to protect themselves. In the event of a pandemic flu, many businesses may be effected due to employee absence. Businesses are encouraged to find alternate methods of continuing operations such as re-calling retired employees into service. Communities may be asked to cancel worship services, close schools temporarily, or postpone sports activities. Individuals will be cautioned about hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and remaining at home in an effort to contain any outbreaks or pre-

vent the spreading of the disease. The Plan will also address the use of limited antiviral stockpiles and vaccines and how to utilize this supply.

Hamilton County is working to improve our own pandemic influenza preparedness. Response to a pandemic is a shared responsibility. A partnership between business, government and private sector will strengthen our ability to prepare and respond to a pandemic situation. Becky Barnes, Administrator of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department, has been appointed by the state to be a part of the planning committee for developing Tennessee’s Influenza Response Plan. Ms. Barnes is dedicated to doing all she can to assure that our community is healthy and stays that way.

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[health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)



## *CHCHD Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer*

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### **April is National Public Health Week**



Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department will join public health groups across the nation in observing National Public Health Week during the week of April 3-7, 2006.

This year, the theme of public health week is Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids.

The local Health Department's public health week activities will highlight the wide variety of activities it is involved in which are aimed at improving the health of our community's young people. These activities range from providing childhood immunizations, to helping families with young children eat healthy diets, to urging families to vaccinate pets against rabies – thus protecting themselves as well as their pets, to exploring old and new ideas to encourage children to exercise.

During the week, tabletop displays will be set up in health department hallways featuring ways in which various departments help improve the health of young people here. Members of the public are invited to visit the Health Department and walk through the halls so they can see the displays. These displays will incorporate the Health Department's mission of "doing all we can to assure a healthy community".

### **When a Band Aid Won't Work**

#### Emergency Kit

While we watch events being broadcast daily from the front lines, let us not forget the need to be prepared here at home. Knowing what to do during an emergency, whether man made disasters or natural ones, may make all the difference when seconds count.

When preparing for an emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival: Fresh water, food, clean air and warmth. You should prepare and store enough water and food for at least three days of survival. You will need a gallon of water per person per day and include canned and dried foods that are easy to store and prepare. Have a well-stocked First Aid Kit. Include in the First Aid Kit a sufficient quantity of over-the-counter pain/fever reducers, etc. Knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency. Develop a check list. Assemble clothing and bedding, tools and other basic supplies such as fresh batteries, flashlight, and a battery operated radio. Be sure to include any special needs such as medication, formula for infants, etc. Duct tape and heavy-weight garbage bags can be used to seal windows and doors to create a barrier between yourself and any contamination outside. Consider putting together two kits. In one, put everything needed to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

For detailed information on emergency preparedness, visit these web sites:

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

[www.tema.gov](http://www.tema.gov)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

#### **Volunteer Information Update**

If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or are no longer interested in being a volunteer, please complete the form below and return to the address at the top of this page or e-mail Susan McNabb at [susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov](mailto:susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to be a volunteer at this time. Please remove my name from the active volunteer list.