

LONG-DISTANCE AMATEUR RADIO EXERCISE

The North Country region plans to hold a hospital-based amateur radio exercise on July 7 that incorporates a high frequency (long distance) net. This would enable hospitals in one part of the state to communicate information to hospitals or points of contact in another region via high frequency amateur radio.

If your hospital has high frequency radio capacity and is interested in participating in the exercise, please forward your contact information to NorMet. High frequency amateur radio operators may also contact Craig Ballard at CBallard@co.st-lawrence.ny.us or 315-379-2240 with technical and operational questions or to discuss their interest.

REMINDER: SURVEY RESPONSES DUE

NorMet is conducting an online survey about hospital H1N1 (swine flu) response activities, as well as state and local Health Department support to hospitals. The survey is intended to quantify informal and anecdotal information shared with NorMet by member hospitals. In order to improve communication and integrated planning and response, aggregate results and/or non-identifiable individual responses may be shared with the NYSDOH Health Emergency Preparedness Program. A summary will also be provided to member hospitals.

Survey responses are confidential. The survey should take between 10 and 30 minutes to complete, and responses are appreciated by Friday, June 3. E-mail drougeux@normet.org for the survey link.

H1N1 UPDATE

On a conference call this afternoon, the CDC stated that H1N1 activity had declined overall nationally, but that some areas of the country are still showing activity. To date, there have been 11,468 H1N1 cases nationally. CDC again stated that young people between the ages of 5 and 24 seemed to be inordinately affected by the H1N1 novel virus, with 60% of the overall confirmed cases and 42% of the hospitalizations due to H1N1 in this age category. Typically, seasonal flu most adversely affects those over 65 and the very young, which has not been the case with H1N1. (Editor's note: Hospitals may therefore want to consider their preparedness for pediatric flu patients in advance of the fall flu season, including training and education and specialized supplies and equipment.)

The CDC said that the World Health Organization (WHO) has indicated that it may move its pandemic phase to Phase 6; CDC emphasized that this does not reflect the severity of the disease, only its spread and communicability.

TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH H1N1 REPORT

The *Pandemic Flu: Lessons from the Frontlines* (<http://healthyamericans.org/report/64/pandemic-flu-frontlines>) report reviews 10 early lessons learned from the response to the H1N1 (swine) flu outbreak:

1. Investments in pandemic planning and stockpiling antiviral medications paid off;
2. Public health departments did not have enough resources to carry out plans;
3. Response plans must be adaptable and science-driven;
4. Providing clear, straightforward information to the public was essential for allaying fears and building trust;
5. School closings have major ramifications for students, parents and employers;
6. Sick leave and policies for limiting mass gatherings were also problematic;
7. Even with a mild outbreak, the health care delivery system was overwhelmed;
8. Communication between the public health system and health providers was not well coordinated;
9. WHO pandemic alert phases caused confusion; and
10. International coordination was more complicated than expected.